

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 9 December 2012

We wish everyone seasons greetings and best wishes for 2013.

In this issue we look at:

- * Strata Plan 80117 - recognition for it's sustainable and harmonious living by SCA
- * How does the Bankstown fire affect you?

INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER - WHAT CO-OPERATION CAN ACHIEVE !

We are proud to manage SP80117 in Regent Street, Redfern. This scheme of 103 mixed use lots, have been recognized by our industry for all it has achieved for its owners and residents. It has won the Strata Community Award for Excellence as an Owners Corporation.



The committee has done a range of things to improve the community mindedness of the residents of this large complex. Part of this, has been by making themselves available via social media (eg a facebook page) thereby seeking input by owners and tenants alike, regarding issues or suggestions, which are then reviewed and when implemented are undertaken within budget.

The committee has worked with City of Sydney Council to achieve sustainable living options which incorporates a community garden with planter beds throughout the complex where both flowers and vegetables are grown.

The sustainable living options implemented have been achieved whilst not needing to increase the scheme's budget for 2 years. Government grants and rebates have been used to install systems that have saved the scheme money, allowing even more projects to be taken on to assist and benefit the residents.

Huge savings have been achieved as most owners in this large scheme have signed up to receive their notices of meetings via email. We expect that, as we now also provide levies via email, that they will avail themselves of this option also. With the current legal requirement of all owners having to receive notice of all Executive agenda's and minutes of Meetings (in scheme's of 100 lots or more) on top of the AGM agenda and minutes, the photocopying bill has been drastically reduced by their taking up this email option.

There are many other ideas that owners can consider to improve their scheme. Ideas that can make it a caring community, achieve cost savings and utilise sustainable living options. If you wish to review the full submission which made SP80117 the winner of this industry Award, visit our blog and then follow the link.

THE BANKSTOWN FIRE – WHAT SHOULD EVERY SCHEME REVIEW?

With one girl sadly deceased and another spending considerable time in hospital recovering from serious injuries, there are many in the industry who not only wonder where the fault(s) will be found by the courts but it is also expected there will be a review of processes, such as occurred after Childers, which could affect all multistory dwellings.

The following are worth considering by all schemes, in a bid to avoid such potential pitfalls that may have caused this dreadful incident. Whilst no doubt the insurers will pay for the loss of what was destroyed, it is quite possible that charges will be brought against individuals, the committee, builder or strata manager, depending on what is found to have gone wrong at Bankstown that day. With a death, sometimes comes legal liability and consequences.

Please consider if any of the following may be an issue for your scheme and rectify it without delay, in order to remove any responsibility for loss of life or property as a result of your actions or inactions.

The media focused on the builder and the query as to who installed the atrium roof. But it also raises questions about why, what seems to be an illegal structure installed post the strata plan being registered, was it not noted by anyone as illegal? Many parties should have been aware this was not part of the original design approved by council, starting with whomever authorised it to be put there (builder, manager, committee members), and how did it come to be built without council being aware of it?

Were the fire services company suitably qualified or had the scheme taken the cheapest option without checking their ability to do the job properly? Had they or anyone else involved issued warnings that had not been heeded?

Was the unit door propped open, or was the door closer in working condition? If the door was not closed - either before the fire, or after some of the occupant(s) left when the fire began - this would change how the air flow may have fanned the fire. Further this could change how quickly it got out of hand, thus making it more difficult to escape the flames, but also result in the atrium filling with smoke, as was reported in the media. Fire doors and how they work are designed by the fire consultants pre-construction. If not maintained or are propped open, they do not work as intended.

Questions have been asked by various people and organisations in the industry as to whether there were defects with the fire equipment. The building seemed to be relatively new, so were there unaddressed fire services defects? Furthermore was the equipment being maintained? When was the equipment last certified to be in working order?

It is extremely important that when repairs to fire equipment are identified by the scheme's fire services company, instructions to rectify should be given to fix these without delay. Should you fail to do so – and there is a fire – then you as a committee member may be found liable.

Care must be taken during renovations to

- i) ensure the unit door and it's frame is not damaged, and
 - ii) any cover over the fire detectors is removed post building works
 - iii) finally, that no damage is sustained to any of the fire services, including in the common areas.
- This ensures all can work as designed, when the property is occupied.

It generally takes more than one thing to go wrong for the outcome of a fire to be so severe. Everyone plays a part in making a building fire safe.

During the festive season please be aware we do provide emergency repair services to look after you whilst we are closed. This information is detailed on our website and is on our office phone number whenever we are closed throughout the year. It is included as part of our services to you and included in your management fee.

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