

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 33 APRIL 2021

IN THIS EDITION

- I) CHEAP WAYS TO IMPROVE THE VALUE OF YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET**
- II) NEW LEGISLATION ADDED TO THE STRATA SCHEMES MANAGEMENT ACT REGARDING PETS**
- III) SYDNEY CITY COUNCIL PLAN FOR ZERO WASTE BY 2030**
- IV) HOW TO RESOLVE BUILDING DEFECTS AND A MAINTENANCE GUIDE – CITY FUTURES AND UTS**

Easily improving the value of your asset

It only takes a few hundred dollars to dramatically change the perception of your property and add true value.

We have all seen those tidbits on TV or Youtube that show with a few minor additions (or sometimes removal of a tired item shoved in a corner), that you can significantly alter the look of a room or yard. It may be a wall that becomes a “hanging garden”, laying fake grass in a place where the real thing cannot grow, adding a table and chair, a picture, or a plant to the foyer. And just like that, it changes the feeling and perception of a place. It feels inviting, homely and cared for. These items can be purchased cheaply at a hardware store and if you are unable to install yourself, we can suggest a handyman who can.

If this is something that interests you, please reach out to your strata manager, who can discuss this with your committee.

Inside your unit, you can also do small things to make it feel fresh, even if you are not looking to sell. Changing cupboard door handles in the kitchen, new taps, refresh light switches or if possible, light fixtures (now considered “cosmetic” under the NSW Strata legislation) which can dramatically change the look and feel of a space. In the kitchen, change the splashback, or upgrade kitchen appliances.

Even changing pillow coverings and floor rugs or doona covers can have a dramatic new effect in important spaces like your lounge and bedrooms. Choosing a new design and colour for curtains is another option, and if more funds are available, depending on your budget, you could re-paint the entry area where you receive guests into your apartment. With little effort you can feel like you have moved to a new home with all the conveniences of location and amenity that were the reason you purchased the property in the first place.

Start by walking through your property, from the gutter at the front, to each room in your unit, listing the ideas that appeal and can make the most impact. Once done put a budget against each item then move them around based on cost and priority. In the case of your unit, perhaps choosing just one room to start with, and before you know it you will have a plan and a place to start.

In the case of the common areas, prepare the above and give it to the strata manager to seek approval from the committee.

If you would like a complimentary common area report or internal assessment of how to enhance your property please contact Ashley Johnson – ashley@johnsonandcompany.com.au

Pets – What if your scheme has a “No Pets Bylaw”?

Many of you are aware, that whilst we were all coming to terms with how Covid 19 affected us in 2020, at work and at home, various pet disputes and enforcement of bylaws that provided for “No Pets” was being played out in the Supreme Court and NSW Court of Appeal.

The final show down came down to the decision that schemes cannot simply say to all owners, via a blanket bylaw, “You can’t have a pet”. Your unit is your castle, and you are free to do as you wish, right up till it affects others.

Accordingly the legal advice from lawyers in the industry is that schemes with “No Pets” bylaws need to revoke this, and make provision for things such as an application process, review of each submission on it’s merits, and as appropriate, approval



with conditions that protect everyone who lives in their strata complex.

Doing this provides anyone wishing to have a pet to know the conditions that need to be met and thus increasing the likelihood that a pet would be approved. The scheme can include the option to refuse pets that are dangerous breeds, ensure any faeces is suitably disposed of in bins in the manner that suits them, minimise the impact of noise, and require of a dog owner, that the animal attends obedience school and is vaccinated etc.



Part of the bylaw also provides how, if there is an issue, this is to be dealt with by way of warnings, how many over what period, before the animal is required to be removed. Doing these things ensures people who are good pet owners can have one, and enjoy their little companions whilst the rest of the building is not inconvenienced by it's presence, thus ensuring everyone is able to live together harmoniously.

The NSW Government has passed legislation that deals with this court decision, and it is expected to be gazetted soon.

S137B(1) includes the following *Each of the following has no force or effect to the extent that it would unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot— (a) a by-law, (b) a decision by an owners corporation under a by-law.*

Food scraps recycling – Sydney City Council's plan for zero waste by 2030

For 12 months, 53 apartment buildings and 330 houses in the Sydney City Council area participated in the stage 1 trial of this new initiative. From January 2021 they were looking to expand this group of properties. This will see the collection twice a week of all food scraps, raw or cooked, including:

- leftovers, plate scrapings and spoiled food
- fruit and vegetable peelings
- dairy products
- eggs and egg shells
- meat, small bones, fish and seafood (no shells)
- bread, pastries, cakes and biscuits
- rice, grains, cereals, and noodles
- tea bags, loose tea leaves, and coffee grounds
- food soiled paper towels or napkins



Reviews are positive from residents, and so if this continues to be mutually beneficial, you can expect it will be rolled out by other councils in the Greater Sydney area in the years to come just as recycling bins were.

For more information visit:

foodscrapsrecyclingtrial@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

City Futures – how to maintain your building – a defects & general maintenance guide

At the end of 2020 Jimmy Thomson, writing for the Financial Review covered the UNSW's Built Environment Department work with UTS, Strata Managers, service providers and Strata Community Australia (NSW)) to create an interactive, user-friendly online guide to identifying and ultimately rectify defects in unit buildings. (article here <https://todayspaper.smedia.com.au/afr/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=AFR%2F2020%2F12%2F12&entity=Ar03202&sk=34EDC01F&mode=text>)

The guide has been developed by Caitlin Buckle, Sian Thompson, Hazel Easthope, Laura Crommelin, Martin Loosemore and Bill Randolph at UNSW Sydney, with input from research partners at Strata Community Association (NSW), Strata Community Insurance, Australian College of Strata Lawyers (special thanks to Allison Benson), Lannock Strata Finance, Ross Taylor & Associates and the Owners Corporation Network of Australia. The research has been funded by Strata Community Association (NSW) and by Australian Research Council Grant LP170100126.

If you, a friend or family member are dealing with building defects in NSW – or before you jump into buying into a new unit building in NSW, please read the guide. It has been developed to help people through the defects process, whilst the NSW Govt continues to amend legislation and regulations to better protect consumers in this market into the future.

<https://cityfutures.be.unsw.edu.au/research/projects/defect-rectification/>

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