

# STRATA & COMMUNITY LIVING

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AUTUMN 2016

1 IN 10 PEOPLE  
ACROSS AUSTRALIA  
LIVE IN STRATA



## THE CHANGING FACE OF STRATA

Strata title was first introduced in Australia in 1961 and largely replaced company-title which until then facilitated shared ownership of buildings. Strata has come a long way since the 1960s. According to Strata Community Australia (SCA) figures, there are over 270,000 strata schemes around Australia. That's more than two million individual lots. Over half of all residential sales and leases in Sydney are in strata.

So you might ask who are the people who live in strata today?

### In the beginning

Traditionally, when the 'Great Australian Dream' was alive and well and was still achievable for most, strata title living was for those that could not afford a house and land option. It became a default choice for lower income earners, first home-buyers and retirees as an alternative to buy and as investors saw the potential this also became home for lower socio-economic tenants.

### Lifestyle choice

With the mushrooming of strata apartments on coast lines and in the bustling cities, the people attracted to strata living changed from predominantly those that had to, to those making it their lifestyle choice. This has brought about a shift and now professionals, high-fliers and families opt for the lower maintenance lifestyle.

A boom in apartment building across NSW means people are able to live in new apartments that may come with a variety of extras such as access to the NBN, gyms and pools – things owners and tenants may not be able to afford if they were to try and buy or build

new houses in the outer suburbs. This makes apartment living very attractive to a range of people who are driven by location rather than the type of property they live in or own.

### Culture and age

Strata-titled property has fast become a lifestyle choice for young professionals, families and baby boomers trading their family home for a neat lifestyle apartment. Add the continuing interest in Australian real estate from overseas and the recent push from Gen X and Yers using strata title to get into the property market, and you have a diverse mix of strata owners and tenants.

With 1 in 10 people across Australia living in strata, according to City Futures research, our growing population and the continuing demand for inner city living and affordable housing, strata title remains the top choice for a range of buyers. Close proximity to transport, education and entertainment are strong influences that will see strata schemes continue to flourish into the future.

### Diverse communities

According to the ABS, one in four Australians is born abroad with the UK, New Zealand, China and India leading the score board. Many choose to live around the cities, and close to universities and work centres. Having people from diverse backgrounds, at different stages of life living in the same strata scheme makes for a diverse community of strata dwellers.

Living in strata has changed since the 1960s and we can only imagine what it will become in 20 or 30 years' time.



## DISRUPTERS EXPLAINED

You've heard about Airbnb and other disrupters but what exactly are they? Is it a problem for owners corporations? Well yes and no. This is what it's all about.

We have seen the sharing economy disrupt many industries and empowering consumers right across the globe, with the likes of Uber, Skype, Netflix and Airbnb making headlines and putting money back into people's pockets.

These concepts break the traditional business model and engage directly benefiting both the providers and the consumer. For example, Airbnb has now grown into the largest global accommodation provider, yet does not own any properties meaning it is not responsible for all the things that come with being a property owner, such as ongoing maintenance.

The concept is simple. People – owners and tenants - offer up their spare room, flat or house. It might be while they are on holidays so they are making some money while they are away. It has become a growing trend, with over 40,000 people hosting around Australia, a figure that has doubled from last year. Sydney has seen over 10,000 listings alone, many of which are apartments.

### How does it work?

For those not familiar with the booming concept of private letting, the online platform lets you list your property for free, upload images and a description and set rates for the available dates in the online calendar. Travellers from near or far (domestic travel is huge) looking for accommodation, will find your property popping up among others for these dates in their search.

The booking process is secure, as people need to be registered in order to book, and payments are made through PayPal making the whole transaction a pretty safe and effective undertaking.

For strata owners in convenient and attractive locations, the earning scope is quite lucrative (between \$80 - \$250 per night) depending on your apartment of course. Many enjoy setting up their apartments specifically to appeal to holiday makers or even business men or women who are in town for a few days and prefer a flat over a hotel. You will be amazed what your place can look like with some interior design inspirations and a good de-clutter (see the article in this newsletter).

Keeping in mind, some strata schemes may limit the use for holiday rental and those with onsite management may require involving the managers too, but for the most part it's a great avenue for a little extra income or to cover costs while you travel.

### But it's not just accommodating people

With parking spaces at a premium in the city and in areas close to good public transport, some strata owners have cottoned on to renting out their car space to those in dire need of secure parking. The online platform [ParkingMadeEasy.com.au](http://ParkingMadeEasy.com.au) and [JustPark.com](http://JustPark.com) have pretty much followed the lead of the likes of Airbnb and Roomorama, but focus only on parking spaces. Owners can list for free and those looking for a safe spot or one that is not going to clock up super high costs, can pre-book a parking space. With parking spaces earning between \$40 to over \$300 per week, depending on location, we have seen more and more owners cashing in on this trend.

To not run into strife with your owners corporation or the neighbours, check with your strata scheme as to any restrictions on subletting, be it your apartment or your car space. And be mindful, that extra income of this type adds to your taxable income, with the ATO wanting its slice. Check with your accountant about GST requirements too.

### Resources

Airbnb - [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)  
Roomorama - [www.roomorama.com](http://www.roomorama.com)  
Parking Made Easy - [www.parkingmadeeasy.com.au](http://www.parkingmadeeasy.com.au)  
Just Park - [www.justpark.com](http://www.justpark.com)

## DE-CLUTTERING: AS GOOD AS RENOVATING

A thorough de-cluttering of unfinished projects, paper work, outdated things, unwanted gifts, junk, outgrown clothes and objects, is an ideal way to re-energize your apartment. In fact, with a touch of re-arranging and moving the odd bit of furniture around, it can be as good as renovating - only much cheaper.

### Before you start

Get four boxes or bags to sort things into; to keep: give-away: to decide on later and one for rubbish. Set yourself a target, no matter how small or grand, block out some time and go for it.

### How to sort and decide

Make quick decisions, the longer you 'ahm' and 'ah' about an item, the harder it gets.

If you have not worn or used something in the last 12 months or longer - lose it. Give it to someone that has immediate use for it.

### General Clutter

Ask yourself - 'do I love it? How does it make me feel?' If the answer is less than great or no, toss it or give it away. If you are really not sure, put it in the 'to decide' box. Don't let this become the end all for everything though, the idea is to reduce, and create more space for the right things.

### Wardrobe

Anything that does not fit well or does not make you feel great - give away or take to the charity shop. Anything that 'still' needs taking up or mending and things with tags need to go. That goes for shoes and accessories as well. Anything that is worn out goes in the rubbish or give away boxes.

### The Kitchen

Keep only appliances you use frequently on the counter or in handy places, the others can go. Things you have not used in the last six months or year, give them away. If you are like most, then the collection of take-out containers and tupperware tumbling around can be culled too, select the good ones, stack them neatly and lose the rest.

### Living Room

Remove wall decorations that don't make you feel good and replace them with something you absolutely love, this is good Feng Shui. Have designated places for letters, papers, keys, magazines, books and things. Create a place for them and keep putting them back after use.

Anything without a place will end up re-cluttering, so if in doubt, lose it.

### Bedrooms

This is where you are energetically most vulnerable, make sure things make you feel good and help you relax. Stacked up paper work, oodles of books or piles of laundry clutter you while you sleep.

Clean spaces with items that uplift you will make you feel good. If you have to clear the bed just to get into it then that's not really providing a sanctuary for rest which is what your bedroom should be.

### Kids rooms

Let them make the decision on what goes and what doesn't - especially toys. Often, things need a designated place while half the things that fill shelves and window sills are outgrown. Clothes that don't fit, are stained or have holes - say good bye; outgrown toys, school uniforms, ballet or soccer gear - give to someone younger.

### Do I need to De-Clutter?

If there is any area that feels too busy, cluttered or makes you feel less relaxed, then you need to do some work. If you would rather meet people out than have them visit your home then you definitely need to de-clutter.

Try it - you will love the way you feel having a de-cluttered life.

# Strata snip-its

Information, updates and the latest seminars all in one spot.

## Strata Owners Day update

Following feedback from our members we have changed the date and the venue. Please add this important date to your diary and come along.

**New date: SATURDAY 30 APRIL 2016**

**New venue: SYDNEY MASONIC CENTRE**

Registrations will open in March.

Any queries please email: [soc.nsw@stratacommunity.org.au](mailto:soc.nsw@stratacommunity.org.au)

## Strata Owners Seminars

Back for 2016 and as popular as ever, members and non-members are always welcome. We have lots of information on topics which you cannot miss out on. Find out more on our website [www.nsw.stratacommunity.org.au](http://www.nsw.stratacommunity.org.au)

**Wednesday 30 March** 'Saving energy in your apartment block'

6.00pm - 7.30pm

Waverley Library Theatre

1st Floor, 32-48 Denison Street, Bondi Junction

Places are limited so please register by emailing [soc.nsw@stratacommunity.org.au](mailto:soc.nsw@stratacommunity.org.au)

## New strata regulations – update

SCA (NSW) has been advised by NSW Fair Trading that the draft regulations that were due at the end of January won't be available until the end of March.

As soon as SCA (NSW) receives them it will circulate to members and co-ordinate a review and submission.

In the meantime SCA (NSW) understands the NSW Government will delay the start date of the legislation from 1 July 2016 to after September 2016. This will provide time for training and further preparation.

Look out for more updates on the SCA (NSW) website.

## Talking safety: window locks, balustrades and swimming pools

The first Strata Owners Seminar for 2016 looked at window locks, balustrades and swimming pool safety and was presented by two industry experts – one a solicitor and the other an engineer/builder.

By 13 March 2018 windows that are higher than two storeys must be fitted with child proof locks. Regulations were introduced by the NSW Government in December 2013 which detail what window locks are covered and how the locks are to work. Briefly, the locks must restrict the opening to less than 125mm (preventing a sphere from passing through it – i.e. a small babies/infants head); must be able to resist 250 newtons of force (a good shove); and have a child resistant release mechanism (if it can be removed, unlocked or overridden).

If your strata scheme has not yet addressed this issue you only have two years to get this done and there may be a few things to undertake. These are some recommended steps:

- Consider getting an audit done of windows in your strata scheme early.
- Determine how many windows require safety devices.
- Obtain quotations on the installation of those new devices.
- Consider budget and funding issues (including staggered arrangements, priority of works etc).
- When ready, pass the appropriate motions at a duly convened meeting.

Other parts of the presentation also looked at balustrades and swimming pool safety. For balustrades the Building Code is clear – they must not permit a 125mm sphere to pass through any part of the balustrade; must resist a horizontal force of 250N against it; and not have Horizontal Climbable elements between 150-760mm off the floor.

Swimming pools must be surrounded by a child-resistant barrier that separates it from any residential buildings; separates it from any moveable dwelling/tourist & visitor accommodation; is located immediately around the pool; contains no other structure and ancillary features and is designed, constructed and maintained to the relevant standards.

To find out about upcoming seminars visit the SCA (NSW) website.

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