

## Amendments to Victorian Building Laws Mirror Concerns and Feedback from State's Peak Strata Body

**Tuesday, 14 March 2023: Property peak body Strata Community Association (Vic) welcomes all changes aimed at improving building quality and consumer protections in the State of Victoria, under proposed legislation currently before Parliament.**

Under the terms of the Andrews Government's *Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023*, a plethora of amendments to the *Building Act 1993 (Building Act)*, *Architects Act 1991 (Architects Act)* and other relevant legislation have been proposed as a means of boosting consumer confidence in the quality and safety of buildings, many of which are under strata title.

In particular, **SCA (Vic) support the implementation of several proposed measures in the Bill directly reflective of its own feedback to the First Stage review of Victoria's Building System, aimed at better recognising and supporting owners corporations in preventing and responding to building defects, including:**

- **Implementing a mandatory, standardised Building Manual to be made accessible to owners corporations;**
- **Including a Building Manual as a condition for the issuing of an occupancy permit by a Building Surveyor;**
- **Creating and enforcing appropriate penalties for any refusal to hand over a building manual to an owner or owners corporation upon approval; and**
- **Establishing new registration requirements of building and design consultants and practitioners.**

"Today is an exciting day for strata communities and industry alike, as the first steps towards ensuring greater confidence in building quality and safety begin to take shape," said SCA (Vic) President Julie McLean.

Other proposed changes under the terms of the Bill, which have also attracted the support of SCA (Vic) include:

- **Formalising and strengthening the role of the State Building Surveyor;**
- **Establishing a statutory Building Monitor appointed by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA);**
- **Amending the distribution of the cladding rectification levy; and**
- **Strengthening and improving the governance arrangements of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria under the Architects Act.**

"We strongly support the intention and the terms proposed under the Government Bill and view these long-overdue changes to Victoria's building and architecture laws as a springboard for further reform to improve consumer outcomes and provide greater certainty and clarity for owners corporations about their rights and obligations," said Ms McLean.

"It is encouraging that the Andrews Government aims to address the key issue of building defects and accountability as it directly affects owners corporations, and to this degree, bodes well for future stages of the building system review.

"However, further improvement is needed, such as exploring the potential for replicating successful, data-driven building safety reforms such as iCIRT developer ratings, and the decennial liability insurance product available in New South Wales," she said.

## ENDS

### **About Strata Community Association (Vic)**

[Strata Community Association \(Vic\)](#) is the peak body for the Owners Corporations sector, which comprises commercial, industrial, and recreational properties ranging from two units in a suburban street to many hundreds of units in inner city apartment buildings.

Owners Corporations represent property valued at over \$300 billion dollars and encompass commercial, retail, lifestyle resorts, retirement villages, car parks, storage facilities, industrial and, increasingly, mixed developments.

More than \$1 billion per year is collected and spent. It is estimated that around 1.6 million Victorians — a quarter of the state's population — either live in, or own property in, an owners corporation.

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