

"Stronger Smarter Strata" - Victorian Strata Peak Body Releases 2022 State Election Platform

Thursday 27 October 2022: Property peak body Strata Community Association (Vic) has today released an ambitious suite of policy recommendations ahead of November's state election.

With apartment and townhouse living becoming more prolific in Victoria's urban landscape, **supporting lot owners and residents, rolling out sustainability in strata, and combatting building defects** are in focus during SCA (Vic)'s campaign in the lead up to polling day.

There is an untapped potential for Victoria's \$343 billion strata property sector to play a key role in addressing the issues of concern for Victorians in tandem with government, including cost of living, energy affordability and diversification.

One in four Victorians (or 1.6 million people) live in strata-titled properties such as apartments and townhouses governed by an owners corporation (formerly known as bodies corporate), with the strata industry contributing approximately \$1 billion annually to the Victorian economy.

"We represent 25 per cent of the population, yet this huge number of Victorians face significant hurdles finding the general information and advice about strata living and their owners corporation that they need, prior to seeking legal advice out of pocket, or even escalating a matter to dispute resolution," said SCA (Vic) President Gregor Evans.

"On issues that affect peoples' lives like can they install an electric vehicle charger, what do they do if their apartment starts leaking, can they keep a pet and if so what are the rules and how do they access safety and emergency plans, official sources of information and government funding are sorely lacking.

"That's why we are proposing a flagship **Strata Helpline**, to provide certainty to consumers in the form of a dedicated avenue for general advice and information about strata matters and how owners corporations operate," said Mr Evans.

The **Strata Helpline, to be funded by the next government**, would operate as a division of Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), with two dedicated staff being provided training and expert guidance from an employee appointed by SCA (Vic). They would **provide consumers with answers to common enquiries and questions, and general advice about their owners corporation.**

Another priority is to create **smarter, greener, and more liveable strata communities.**

The policy priorities outlined by SCA (Vic) includes subsidising NABERS water and energy efficiency ratings for up to 100 Victorian apartment buildings, extending the successful Solar Homes Program to apartments, and supporting the installation of EV charging in medium and large apartment buildings, on a scale similar to New South Wales.

"The current government and opposition have both committed to a Net Zero carbon emissions target in the near future, but without strata and the built environment effectively being incorporated into future strategy, it is hard to imagine this target being realistically met," said Mr Evans.

"Our election priorities also set out exactly how to establish opportunities for owners corporations to adopt sustainable living options for their buildings."

SCA (Vic)'s final priority is to **combat the high prevalence of building defects in strata.**

SCA (Vic) are also calling on the next government to **implement a base building information portal for the storage of building manuals, to be made accessible to owners corporations and managers in the event that defects are discovered in their buildings.**

"We also want to see **greater action taken to address any underlying issues affecting the Domestic Building Insurance (DBI) scheme, as well as phoenixing in the building and development sectors.**

"All of our recommendations are non-partisan and can be easily achieved within the next term of government, and we strongly encourage the major parties vying for Victorians' votes to ultimately commit to them, so that we can create a more liveable urban landscape in Victoria in the years to come," said Mr Evans.

Read the full SCA (Vic) Election Priorities document here - [SCA \(Vic\) 2022 Election Priorities](#). In short below:

- 1. Establishment of a dedicated Victorian strata helpline.** A commitment of \$381,000.00 per year, or \$1.524 million over the next term of government.
- 2. Establishment of a minimum educational standard** for owners corporation managers.
- 3. Establishment of a Victorian Strata Sustainability Fund including:**
 - a. Full rebates for NABERS Ratings of 100 private apartment buildings at \$261,000 per year, or \$1.044 million over the next term of government.**
 - b. Extension of the Solar Homes Program to apartments and townhouses.**
 - c. \$10 million towards co-funding of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in larger apartment buildings and complexes, with implementation overseen by an expert panel.**
- 4. Partnership between SCA (Vic) and Sustainability Victoria to provide education on sustainability and renewables programs and initiatives.** A \$200,000.00 per year commitment, or \$800,000.00 over the next term of government.
- 5. SCA (Vic) recommends the Victorian Government address building defects proactively.**
- 6. Greater action taken by the Victorian Government to address existing loopholes in the Domestic Building Insurance (DBI) scheme.**

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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