

**Submission
No 2**

**INQUIRY INTO REGULATION OF BUILDING
STANDARDS, BUILDING QUALITY AND BUILDING
DISPUTES**

Organisation: Strata Alert

Date Received: 5 July 2019

Our submission is in response to paragraph 1(c) of the terms of reference of the Parliamentary inquiry "the role of strata committees in responding to building defects discovered in common property, including the protections offered for all strata owners in disputes that impact on only a minority of strata owners"

If 85% of strata properties on completion have at least 1 major defect, how do strata property owners and occupants effectively communicate such defects, to ensure the committee together with the strata manager, respond and put in place, a strategy to resolve all strata issues?

The Sydney Opal Tower residents for 9 months had concerns about hearing cracking noises. The Mascot Tower residents also had concerns for several months. Such concerns and frustrations are well document by the owners and residents in the public domain and not in dispute.

This highlights major communication inefficiency breakdowns in strata management, that for several months, owners and occupants had grave concerns, but had no platform to express or share their issues.

Millions of Australians live or work in strata properties. Business or residential strata schemes rely on the committee (voluntary unpaid role to represent all owners), and make decisions on a day to day basis that impact all owners and occupants. The committee in part, rely heavily on an external Strata Manager who has the necessary skills and training to assist in compliance, regulatory and day to day issues.

However, how is it possible that any committee can adequately represent the concerns of all owners and occupants, if no electronic directory exists for every owner and occupant?

Not every property owner occupies the property.

For any commercial strata property, there can be hundreds of workers in each building. It is estimated by 2030, up to 20% of all Sydney City CBD, will have co-working spaces. Literally, hundreds of unrelated businesses, working in a single building.

For any residential strata property, there are hundreds of residents and with the advent of AirBnb, this figure is quantified exponentially.

It is impossible for the committee to respond to building defects, if you have no efficient ability for every owner and occupant to register any defects or issues raised.

Existing strata management procedures and systems, expecting owners to email or call about strata issues is broken and arcade. How is acceptable in a smart country, to think that 10 unrelated owners, email or call when a lift is not working on average, for any 10 level building?

The email is sitting in the inbox of a strata manager, waiting to be opened at their discretion.

Strata Alert is the only company in Australia to patent a electronic directory to on-board every owner and occupant for any business or residential strata property. Alerts, notifications, messages and groups plus all your property rules and "things to know"available to every owner and occupant at their fingertips on their own customized App.

All the latest strata issues such as those noted in Opal and Mascot Towers, are a digital record created in the App, allowing the strata manager to reach out to the committee and put in place an appropriate strategy to handle.

No more lost emails. No more flyers left around buildings. Smart city Westpac award winning technology, that improves the communication process and empowers owners and occupants with the necessary tools to make decisions, for day to day issues, and major building defects such as cladding, cracking and swaying concerns.

If you want to empower committee members to handle building issues, allow them the ability to instantly reply to automated messaging directly in their property App. Currently, a strata manager will email the committee, to please reply about strata issues. Did you know that the strata manager opens each email, puts the replies into excel, and then quantifies the replies waiting for a majority before attending to the issues.

If millions of Australians are working or living in shared spaces, in a highly regulated sector with complex strata laws in each state, it is encumbered upon state and local governments, to regulate that smart technology be used to assist committee members in handling building issues.

Millions of Australians use weather Apps. Nobody can influence the weather. However, we want to have the necessary information to make choices based on expected weather conditions.

No owner or committee member can stop strata issues. Buildings will always have issues on a day to day basis, and sadly, when building standards, codes or practices are ignored, contribute to more serious issues.

New building codes will be mandated. New standards documented. A new strata commissioner to be appointed. All very important steps in solving the inevitable tsunami about to hit strata owners with major defects about to surface for existing buildings.

Do you think all the above legislation will make any difference, to assist committee members in handling building issues, without an efficient communication process between the strata manger, committee members, owners and occupants?

It is time to create a digital DNA footprint for every building. For all future owners to access and to ensure, for all buildings, it is a safer place to work or a safer place to live.