

**Submission
No 80**

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

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To Whom It May Concern,

I write to you today, as an owner, the Chairman of the Strata Committee and Building Manager. I am submitting this to share our experience, being completed in 2015,

Our apartments (56 residential and 1 commercial) were sold off the plan around 2012. Although the development was late due to the sale of the development to a different developer, we settled and moved in mid-2015, excited and proud to have a brand new place to live in.

Having expensive Strata Plan defect experience, I became Building Manager after 8 months, due to the sheer amount of work involved and amount of defects we needed to have resolved. This was the most cost effective way of dealing with defects. This is my third building in 25 years I have bought into, whereby a huge amount of defects were in situ. The other two ended up in costly legal fights.

The amount of defects that were uncovered over the proceeding 2 years was staggering and unacceptable for a developed western nation. Ok, there was nothing as serious as what's happening in Opal Towers or Mascot Towers, but I think that it's important to understand what new buildings have gone through, and continue to go through due to private and self-certification.

It is also important to note that the current defect period of two years is simply not long enough. Some things aren't uncovered till later than this time period. One cannot see through walls!

We have just signed off defects after four years of very hard work. Each time the builder would assign resources to fix issues, after a varying amount of months they would move them on and bring in a different person. Each time this occurred (about 4 times I recall), the new person would not be briefed and we would have to jump through hoops and prove each defect over and over again. It was like a merry-go-round. This was continuous. It was tiring, time consuming and frustrating. We lost a lot of time by the tactics that the builder used, trying to wear us down. It did not work, as we were resilient and pushed everything.

Here's some highlights of what we've been through:

Plumbing wise, we've seen builders rubble left down drains causing blockages and issues at a later date, protective inserts left in pipe expansion joints not allowing pipes to move with the building and causing the pipes to crack and leak, double the standard water pressure on hot and cold water supply on lower levels (2 through to 14) being delivered to apartments causing mixers to fail and water to leak causing costly damage, general water leaks from the rooftop into the building, general water leaks into apartments from windows not being sealed correctly, lack of lagging installed on pipework.

Air conditioning pipework running up the core of the building was not clipped, thus allowing the copper pipes to rub on concrete and burst causing no climate control to 8 properties for many weeks until they agreed to fix.

Mechanical engineering wise, we had found that a large number of kitchen range hoods were not actually connected to their ductwork therefore rather than extracting bad cooking air to the outside as designed the air was blowing into the ceiling cavity and back inside, some bathrooms/laundries were found to not have extraction fans and upon investigation the ductwork was sitting in the ceiling cavity and no hole was cut-out in the ceiling with a grille to suck air.

On the electrical side of things, we've had light and power switches not wired in correctly, non sensical switches installed (such as a switch on the kitchen wall to turn the fridge off -?!?), the main electrical

panel for the entire building did not have any cable connections actually tightened which caused multiple hotspots and electrical arcing which caused a small fire in on the switchboard (we were very lucky...), the entire A/C system wired in a fashion that if mains power for each individual apartment is tuned off it affects other apartments A/C, when an apartment has their power cut by the energy supplier the A/C unit attached to said apartment and all other apartments on the same level and adjacent levels does not work.

The above is a sample of what we have been through.

Although most of the above was eventually fixed by the builder, I estimate that the Owners Corporation have spent in the vicinity of \$150-200k of our own funds since the building opened, fixing things such as water leaks, that should never have happened, due to un-workman like finishes or lack of doing the job properly in the first place.

It is clear that private and self-certification simply does not work. The lack of supervision and quality assurance is of major concern. Authorities need to play a major role.