

Dealing with 400
calls every day!

The signs which indicate your body corporate committee may be dysfunctional

Client Care Update

At Stewart Silver King and Burns we have continued to strive to create innovative ways to assist owners with new and improved services. To this end SSKB has established a Client Care Centre to handle your everyday queries which relate to your lot and your body corporate.

A team of consultants are on hand to take your call on 07 5504 2000.

The client care team are able to respond to all of the following issues:

- changes to your address
- transfer of ownership
- certificates necessary for the sale of your property
- body corporate levies
- payment methods
- dates for your next body corporate meeting
- applying for permission to keep a pet
- applying for the lost discount on unpaid body corporate contributions
- obtaining a proxy form
- supplying you with a copy of the body corporate by-laws
- logging on to the Stratamax website

In an effort to effectively handle your enquiry when you call Stewart Silver King and Burns, we ask a few questions to help us guide you to the person best able to assist you. In many cases someone in the client care team may be the person that can help you with your call and if not we will see that your call ends up with the right person. In all cases it is useful if you have your building name and lot number handy.

Anne Clements



SAVE YOUR TIME - LOG ON TO
www.stratamax.com.au
to get your info online



When a body corporate committee meeting works like it should, then it is truly a beautiful thing.

In a good body corporate committee meeting you will find the atmosphere is welcoming, positive and friendly. During the course of the meeting issues are explored, views are exchanged, consensus is reached, and resolutions are passed. The affairs of the body corporate are managed for the benefit of all of the lot owners by people working together and developing strong relationships. The good news is that all of this can be done in less than 2 hours every 3 months – providing all members of the committee do the appropriate preparation prior to the meeting starting.

It is unfortunate not all the body corporate committee meetings that I go to could be described as “a beautiful thing”. I think it is a real shame if your meetings are tense, if communication is not open, effective and concise, or if the meeting does not focus on adding value to the community. Finally, meetings should not take too much of your committee members’ valuable time.

There are 3 common categories of sins of committees which prevent committee meetings from achieving better functionality:

1. Committees where the members fail to prepare adequately for the meeting;
2. Committees where some of the members have a misunderstanding of the role of the committee;
3. Committees where committee members have sat back and let one or maybe two other committee people do all the work.

Over coming editions of the SSKB Community Link we will be investigating the signs of a dysfunctional committee, and most importantly we will be examining strategies from the SSKB Community Carers’ Compass[®] for improving your committee, because at the end of the day, if you are not enjoying participating in your committee and your committee is not making the body corporate a better place to live and improving property value, then you would be better off investing your valuable time in other areas.

The first step toward functionality for a body corporate committee, is for every committee member to accept the reality that they have signed on for some hard work. It is a lost

opportunity to turn up at a committee meeting and fail to contribute because of lack of participation. It is a worse mistake to turn up at a meeting and because of lack of preparation, chose to contribute through meaningless criticism.

Prior to your meeting every committee member must spend some time reviewing the agenda and the meeting material. Proper review will generally raise some questions which will need further explanation. The questions should be sent to SSKB well before the meeting starts so that additional information, if needed, can be collated and presented to the committee to consider. To ask detailed questions at the meeting serves little purpose other than to waste time, extend the length of the meeting, and produce a list of issues to be resolved outside of the meeting.

It is the treasurer who has a lot of work to do. In my opinion, the role of the treasurer in the body corporate committee is one of the most vital. It is the responsibility of the treasurer to report to the committee on the financial health of the community. This report can be short and sweet when the treasurer has been doing the job throughout the quarter. The treasurer must work with SSKB regularly each month, reviewing financials, providing instructions, and providing feedback.

SSKB has invested substantially in our client financials department over the last 2 years, and we are confident that this investment provides the most responsive group of financial professionals in the body corporate industry - Australia wide.

To make the role of the treasurer easier SSKB has committed to uploading substantial amounts of information onto the internet through the StrataMax program. We have been told by StrataMax that SSKB is the leader in the industry with its systematic approach to putting all the body corporate records into cyberspace. All owners lose if the treasurer does not use the information each month to keep up to date with the financial performance of your body corporate.

Remember – its your body corporate – its your information to make your own decisions!

For your own copy of the committee member preparation checklist and a copy of the Community Carers’ Compass, please email lmontgomery@sskb.com.au, and request a copy.

Tim Sheehan



Who needs a copy of the by-laws?

At some point in time every lot owner will come up with a question that requires access to the by-laws for an informed answer.

Examples of by-law related questions include:

- Can I keep a pet?
- Can I install a split system air-conditioner on my balcony?
- How late can my party go?
- Can I install new window furnishings?

Where do you look for a copy of the by-laws, or who do you ask to get a copy?

You should have received a copy from your legal representative in the purchase of your property.

The chairman of your Body Corporate can also arrange to get you a copy of the by-laws and can possibly answer the question for you.

The by-laws may be loaded on the stratamax website - www.stratamax.com.au.

SSKB can supply you with a copy of the by-laws.

Finally, the by-laws can be obtained from the Department of Natural Resources, by searching for your body corporate's CMS (community management statement).



Judy Carter

At SSKB we are very good with numbers...

20,398 is the number of lots managed by Stewart Silver King and Burns

9,200 is approximately the number of body corporate meetings we have convened and attended since 1995

2,100 is the approximate number of body corporate expenditure budgets that we have implemented and monitored for our bodies corporate since 1995

2003 is the year we won the Urban Development Institute Award for excellence in consulting to the development industry

1995 was the year Stewart Silver King and Burns was established

1,627 is the approximate number of occasions our bodies corporate have renewed our management agreement

714 is the number of lots in the largest body corporate managed by SSKB – It happens to be the biggest body corporate in the State of Qld

Payment Policy

As part of the quality service that Stewart Silver King and Burns delivers to your body corporate, we review our internal accounting practices from time to time to ensure that we maintain professional accounting standards. The purposes of our reviews are to ensure we are:

- Constantly improving the quality of the financial information we produce for your body corporate
- Complying with ever changing statutory requirements, and
- Protecting the security of the funds that we hold on your behalf.

Whilst reviewing our process we noted that a large number of invoices requiring payment by bodies corporate are incorrectly addressed and non compliant to the taxation laws of the land. We have generated a procedure to ensure that we deliver full compliance with regard to accounting standards, taxation and other statutory requirements, as well as ensuring the accuracy of your financial records.

We also believe that this procedure will tighten the approval process for disbursing funds from the body corporate accounts. In essence the procedure calls for all suppliers to the body corporate, to forward their invoices to the Resident Unit Manager / Caretaker / on site manager, who will then:-

1. Check that the invoice is made out to "The Body Corporate for CTS"
2. Check that the invoice value is within quoted/approved value
3. Stamp it with a stamp that shows the body corporate name, whether it is an asset or not, to which general ledger code it is to be allocated and to indicate if it subject to an insurance claim
4. Sign it, indicating that all issues above are correct
5. Forward it to the Chairperson/Secretary/ Treasurer/Other committee member (depending on the way the committee wants the expenditure approved) for second signature.
6. Once approved, it is returned to the Resident Unit Manager / Caretaker / On site manager, who will then forward this to Stewart Silver King and Burns for

payment on behalf of the body corporate

We look forward to your support in ensuring that all invoices that Stewart Silver King and Burns receive on behalf of your body corporate are within this procedure. To this end we have given your suppliers a grace period to the end of June 2007 to become fully compliant with these procedures. From that point onwards, we at Stewart Silver King and Burns will be actively engaged in rectification where necessary on your behalf.

We take this opportunity to stress that this is in the interest of the committee of the body corporate so as to avoid unpleasant consequences in the event of an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) audit or overpayment of suppliers, or even payment of suppliers that have not performed work on behalf of the body corporate.

A copy of this procedure is available on the SSKB website www.sskb.com.au.

Mark Benson

Bodies Corporate Receive Cash:

SSKB's initiative to provide bodies corporate with a community banking service pays dividends. The specialist banking centre of Bendigo Bank Bundall Branch is set to provide in excess of \$48,000 (February 2007) cash distribution to associated bodies corporate. All this by providing banking fees and charges at rates lower or the same as previously provided, and increasing the interest rate paid on cheque account trading funds. By simply banking with the Bendigo Bundall Branch bodies corporate receive a dividend distribution based on investments and transactional banking. This dividend also expands to personal loans and accounts. All funds are included in the calculation and the payment is made to the body corporate and it decides on the most appropriate way to spend the funds.

For example for each \$1m in facilities held the Bendigo Bank will provide an additional \$1,500 to the community.

On Friday 13th April, Bendigo Bank Bundall presented the first community dividend of \$2,179.39 to La Porte D'or body corporate representing the period from the time they started banking with Bendigo Bundall on 28th February 2006. In addition to recognize their long standing support of the Branch and the community dividend initiative we were also pleased to provide their



Asbestos and Residential Bodies Corporate

Owners of property used as a workplace, built or approved to be built before 1 January 1990, should be aware of changes to the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997 ("Regulation"). The Regulation enacts the Asbestos Management Code ("Code") which creates obligations in regards to asbestos management in structures, or parts of structures, that operate as a workplace.

Workplace has been given a wider meaning than under the former legislation. A 'workplace' is any place where work is performed by a worker, or a person conducting a business or commercial undertaking. Previous provisions did not apply to common property areas in a community titles scheme or residential structures where work was undertaken. The replacement regulations do not specifically exclude these areas, and under the extended meaning of 'workplace', it appears the provisions may be applicable to:

- common property areas maintained by the body corporate;
- a premises used for a letting business within a community titles scheme; and

- residential premises operated as a workplace.

Any area within a structure used as a workplace, built or approved to be built before 1 January 1990 must comply with the Code before 1 January 2008. Further, any structure that falls within the Code which is to be offered for sale or lease, structurally altered, dismantled, or demolished (a "Relevant Event" under the Regulation) before 1 January 2008 must comply with the Code before that event takes place.

The Code requires owners of workplaces to:

- Implement and maintain an asbestos management plan;
- Identify and keep a register of Asbestos Containing Material ("ACM");
- Have appropriate labels and warning signs for all ACM;
- Develop measures to remove and dispose of ACM by a competent person; and
- Obtain clearance for reoccupation of the workplace after removal of ACM.

There are penalties of up to \$150,000 for non-compliance.



By David Bowers

MinterEllison
LAWYERS

Thanks to David and Minter Ellison for contributing this great article!

Using the SSKB Compass will ensure your body corporate never loses direction

Communication



Regulation

- C - Communication
- A - Accuracy
- R - Regulation
- E - Education

Any Feedback regarding the Community Link Newsletter?

Contact: Lucy Montgomery
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Email: lmontgomery@sskb.com.au

community with a bonus \$500 bringing the total return to \$2,679.39.

At SSKB we view your body corporate as a community. It is much more than just issuing levies. It is the social environment in which people live. It is our role to guide committees to make decisions that promote harmony and maximize the value of lot owners' assets. This blends with the Bendigo Bank's sense of community to form a great partnership to benefit lot owners.

In addition to the great rates and cash dividends

provided to bodies corporate, lot owners are entitled to further member privileges such as no application fee, valuation fee or loan documentation fee on Bendigo home loans. Please contact the Branch Manager, Peter Shannon on 07 5570 2558.



We look forward to

providing more cash dividends to bodies corporate in the future.

Is your community taking advantage of this relationship?

Support the bank that supports your community.



Picture: Howard Stewart - SSKB & Peter Shannon - Bendigo, presenting the first dividend cheque to Michael Goode & Graham Hillcoat from La Porte D'or.

SSKB - the body corporate manager doing more for your community

Lead On Lands on the Sunshine Coast

Lead On, a Community based non-profit program which is the brain-child of the Bendigo Bank, formally arrived on the Sunshine Coast with a launch of the Lead On Maroochy Prospectus at a Meeting of the Maroochy Chamber of Commerce on 14 March.

A Steering Committee, comprising leading business figures and State Government and Local Council representatives has been meeting regularly to set the project in motion. The Mayor of Maroochy is the 'Community' Patron and Kristy Munro, the current Australian Champion Iron-woman is the 'Young' Patron.

The aim of Lead On is to establish an environment within which businesses and the local community can work with young people to enable them to:

- gain exposure to learning and personal development opportunities;
- build self confidence and higher self esteem;
- build leadership skills among those who will be the next generation of business/community leaders;
- identify potential career opportunities and participate in 'real life' projects/ activities that prepare them for the transition to working/business and community life;
- build networks of local community and business leaders;
- expand their knowledge of employers' expectations; and
- establish lines of communication with potential mentors within the community.

There are currently 18 Lead On programs throughout the country which, with the help of local corporate sponsorship, government (all levels) and community partnerships, have developed a diverse range of specific projects which involve young people in achieving positive outcomes for themselves and the broader community.

Stewart Silver King & Burns has been involved with the Maroochy program since its inception through the participation on the Steering Committee of its Sunshine Coast Office Manager, John Atkinson, and the company is extremely excited about the opportunity and framework that exists in the area.

The stage has now been reached where local businesses and interested individuals are being invited to become sponsors so that a part-time co-ordinator with suitable qualifications can be engaged to commence work in the office which

has generously been made available by the Reed Property Group. Once appointed, the co-ordinator, the Steering Committee and local school principals will be looking to the young people in the Maroochy Shire to identify projects which will be of benefit to both the young participants and the community at large.

Anyone interested in participating in any capacity at all can obtain a copy of the Prospectus or discuss the program with John Atkinson at our Buderim Office.

Email: John.on.jatkinson@sskb.com.au



Staff Profiles: John Atkinson



John Atkinson discovered Body Corporate Management at the age of 59.

He believes that, after three years in the trade, the one thing he has learned above all others is how much he has still to learn. 'And that is the real attraction', he says. 'Every day brings new experiences and new challenges, essentially because of the complexity of human nature'.

After graduating in Arts from Sydney University, John spent twenty four years in the Federal Public Service and then ten years managing his own small business – a pet shop. 'I came across a fair number of galahs in both ventures' he says - but declined to comment on his current environment.

'I spent fifteen years in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, four of them in the Cabinet Office. That Department was the central policy coordinating agency so I racked up many hours attending and chairing meetings and drafting correspondence, briefs and submissions.

In the Cabinet Office I was, at various times, responsible for programming Cabinet and Cabinet Committee Meetings, monitoring the standard of documentation being presented to Cabinet, ensuring that the proper level of consultation had occurred and taking notes of Committee Meetings and then drafting the decisions.

'The observant among you will see some synergies with Body Corporate Management he says.

During my Public Service career I was Secretary of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests. This, too, had relevance to what I am doing now'.

'The Royal Commission inquired into activities that happened thirty years before in circumstances where the level of communication at every level - between the British Government and the Australian

Government, between the Australian Government and the people directly involved, the servicemen and the aboriginal people, and between the Australian Government and the Australian public – was absolutely abysmal'. The real value of the Royal Commission was always going to be the provision of an opportunity for those who had been wronged to be heard. This alone was always going to transcend whatever compensation might be awarded.

Similarly, Body Corporate Management is a vehicle for ensuring that every owner in a strata titled community has the opportunity for his or her views to be taken into account. Many of us may regard some of the issues that confront us day by day as trivial – a barking dog, an inconsiderate vehicle parking, loud music late at night - but each owner is entitled to the 'peaceful enjoyment' of his or her lot and the common property. Sometimes this is extremely difficult to achieve. Thankfully, however, our role in this is made easier by the fact that most of our Committee members recognise that it is their duty – and privilege - to represent the interests of all owners.

Finally, John says he regards it as a privilege – as much as it is a challenge – to work for a company that unashamedly aspires to be the best. 'It is implicit in this that we cannot be the cheapest but the goal is to ensure that our clients are satisfied that they are getting the highest level of service available.

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