

Silver Community Link

The Newsletter of Community Manager Stewart Silver King and Burns

SEPTEMBER 2007

EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER DAY AT SCHOOL

by Tim Sheehan
Managing Director



Community management is not an exact science – there is no magic formula which ensures managers and bodies corporate always reach a perfect harmony in their quest for hassle free community living. But that should not stop either party from trying to reach this utopian goal.

As specialist community managers and market leaders employing some of the best qualified and experienced people in the sector, SSKB has stayed ahead and added value for its lot owners by its keenness to always look at new ways of working. It is the culture of our company to be more open, to question and not to simply be content with the existing way of doing things.

This positive restlessness was evident in our recent Seminar Series for committee members and interested lot owners held in Brisbane and on the Gold and Sunshine coasts. They were forums which provided both participants and presenters with an opportunity to learn more about the community titles sector.

Importantly they provided an avenue to affirm one of the cornerstone principles of body corporate management – EDUCATION. It forms a key philosophy of the SSKB Community Carers' Compass®. All parties involved in community living can often get so caught up with regulations and other pertinent matters such as financial and other immediate considerations, they can forget about the need to stay abreast of the latest developments.

In this edition of Silver Community Link you will find information about further upcoming seminars being run by SSKB. I encourage you to consider attending these events as a way of upgrading your skills and knowledge and staying in touch with innovations which have a direct impact on your significant investment.

In our fast moving contemporary society we are always prone to new experiences. As the saying goes – Every day is another day at school!

Several new initiatives have recently been announced by governments which will have an impact on the property industry. In late July the Queensland Government announced its new Housing Affordability Strategy and in so doing put an explicit onus on the development community to take up the challenge of the new initiatives it contained to pass on savings to homebuyers and property investors.

The strategy has a focus on fast-tracking land in Queensland, particularly the south-east corner, in addition to speeding-up the approval process for planning and development applications and standardising infrastructure charges across the state.

Most participants in the development and property community would welcome these changes primarily for the greater degree of certainty they will hopefully bring to our industry. They are common sense changes and should go a long way towards not just promoting greater affordability for housing in our region, but also towards accommodating the additional 1 million people who will call this part of Queensland home over the next two decades.

Due to family and lifestyle changes and the controls on land development, it goes without saying that many of the estimated 575,000 new dwellings which will be required to be built to accommodate this increased population

in south-east Queensland, will need to be community titles.

The *Body Corporate and Community Management Act* provides for a number of ways to improve housing affordability covering everything from street design to increased density measures and community management of local infrastructure. As market leaders, SSKB will continue to be at the forefront of working with all parties to ensure our bodies corporate have access to all the latest information when making decisions about their future.

CLIENT CARE UPDATE

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

SSKB have worked hard to develop the most responsive and informative Client Care Centre of any body corporate management company. It is our endeavour to handle your enquiries about your body corporate and your lot in a timely and comprehensive manner.

We believe it is our service to you, which is so central to our company mission, that sets us apart from our competitors.

Our dedicated team of consultants are available to take your call on (07) 5504 2000. Remember to please have your **building name** and **lot number** at hand before making contact.

You may like to save time and log on to www.stratamax.com.au to get updated information on your lot.

One of the highest volume of contacts we are experiencing at the moment is from solicitors seeking levy updates prior to a property settlement. Again, updates on this matter can be obtained from www.stratamax.com.au.



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WATER – It Is Still Big News

Despite some better than expected winter rainfall in parts of south-east Queensland much of the region still remains drought affected and Level 5 water restrictions are being enforced by the Queensland Water Commission.

The Commission is expected to enforce Level 6 restrictions if there is no significant rain before the onset of summer. There is speculation that under Level 6 a total ban on outdoor watering is still a possibility. But while the lingering drought will remain big news, a recent announcement by the Queensland Government about individual water metering in new strata titled properties has widespread significance for bodies corporate, including existing schemes.

From 2008 individual water meters will be mandatory for all new units. There will also be standardised billing across the state by 2012, starting with south-east Queensland from July 1, 2009. All tenants in metered properties, houses and units, will be provided with details of their water use by their water provider.

Metering of residential community titles will mean tenants will be directly billed for water in the same way as they are for electricity and in a similar fashion to how tenants are treated in some other states. These changes will also mean tenants will pay for water in units where there is a meter, regardless if they are new developments or not.

At this stage there is no plan to force existing buildings without individual meters to have them installed.

This announcement represents a marked change in the current arrangements. In most cases, a complex's water charges are shared between all strata titled properties based on lot entitlement. Only if the lot has its own meter is the lot owner billed based on the lot's readings and in a small number of cases the water charge may be billed direct to the body corporate.

The changes are part of wider reforms in the south-east Queensland water network announced earlier this month. In a major move, the Queensland Government will take control of the region's major dams and water sources creating a new water storage authority. A further change will witness all

water and sewerage pipes to be moved into a single regional entity to be wholly owned by the post-amalgamation SEQ councils.

These councils will be responsible for distributing and selling water to individual consumers through this regional distribution body, though

it is anticipated some will combine their water retailing operations to further streamline arrangements.

Contact Silver Energy on (07) 3010 5560 to discuss the water and metering issues in your community.



Dispute Resolution Update

Following our article in the July edition of *Silver Community Link* about the recent changes to Queensland's *Body Corporate and Community Management Act*, SSKB have received numerous requests from lot owners and committees for more information on the new conciliation process designed to reduce body corporate disputes.

Conciliation is now the first step in most dispute resolution applications. This involves an application by the applicant; the holding of a "conciliation conference" between the applicant and the respondent with a department conciliator; and the drawing up of an agreement where the parties have been able to resolve the matter.

Importantly an applicant must demonstrate that there has been an attempt at "self-resolution" by the parties, or at least by the applicant. Under the Act self-resolution includes:

- the parties communicating with each other;
- writing to the body corporate committee;
- presenting a motion to a general meeting of the body corporate

If the parties fail to reach agreement at conciliation, despite making a reasonable attempt to resolve the matter, the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community

Management will issue the applicant with a certificate permitting them to make an application for adjudication of the dispute.

"Complex disputes" will need to be remedied either by an order of a special adjudicator or an order of the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal (CCT). Complex disputes include:

- an application to change lot entitlements;
- disputes about:
 - remuneration under an engagement of a service contractor,
 - review of the terms of service contracts,
 - forced transfer of management rights,
 - contractual matters – eg, caretaking service contractor, letting agent or body corporate manager,
 - exclusive use by-laws

SSKB's Seminar Series will continue to cover aspects of the recent legislative changes. *Silver Community Link* will also continue to highlight matters, including the effective operation of these changes, in future editions. Please also contact your Community Manager or telephone the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management on **1800 060 119**.

Spotlight on Seminars



Empowering people to make a difference in their communities is the motivation behind the recently launched *SSKB Seminar Series*. The seminars are part of SSKB's mission to be the best community management company by making a positive difference to its clients.

With such a strident goal, the seminars have a strong education focus and initial indications are they are hitting the mark with building managers, committee members and lot owners.

As the saying goes, "knowledge is power" and the *SSKB Seminar Series* will keep you in sync with the times and ahead of movements in market trends. They are a great means of updating your knowledge with new ideas and

the latest strategies.

Already specific seminars have been held on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast for building managers and committee representatives and Brisbane recently hosted a session on how owners and committees can improve the property values of their communities.

A strong and informative line-up of future seminars are planned and will cover topics ranging from:

- healthy body corporate financials;
- the importance of planning; and
- successful communication



Have your say in what you pay

Here is how you can make a difference to how much you pay on your contribution notice.

Understand where your payment goes

Your contribution is pooled with other owners' payments to maintain your community and common areas. This includes – electricity; onsite manager (if applicable); insurance; gardens and pool; general maintenance and repairs; sinking fund for capital replacement and administration (SSKB typically receives 5% or less).

Appreciate the amount of your contribution is determined by your body corporate

Every year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) your body corporate decides how much money it will collect to maintain your community.

SSKB is **not** a voting member of the committee,

so we do not determine your contribution amount. It is a decision by owners, for owners.

Recognise the role of your body corporate manager

Your committee appoints a body corporate manager to help manage your community's administration, including collecting the contributions. All monies are deposited in an account controlled by your committee.

Have your say

You can have a say by becoming a committee member or contributing to discussions at your AGM. You can discover where your community's money is allocated and help plan new improvement projects. Importantly, you can have your say in what you pay!

SSKB's Seminar Series

What's Coming Up

You and your friends and colleagues are invited to attend any of the upcoming events on the SSKB Seminar Series calendar. If you have a suggestion for a future topic you would like canvassed, please get in contact with our Business Services Manager, Tom Cranitch on 0437 045 799 or tcranitch@sskb.com.au.

3 October 2007 5pm (Brisbane)

'Keeping Your Body Corporate Financially Healthy'

The Greek Club, 29-31 Edmonstone St, South Brisbane

10 October 2007 5pm (Gold Coast)

'How A Plan Can Improve Property Values'

The Gold Coast Arts Centre, Bundall Road, Bundall.



1 November 2007 5pm (Brisbane)

'Communication: The Key To Successful Bodies Corporate'

The Greek Club, 29-31 Edmonstone St, South Brisbane

20 November 2007 2pm (Sunshine Coast)

'How A Plan Can Improve Property Values'

Lake Kawana Community Centre, Sportsmans Parade, Bokarina.

For more information on our seminar series please refer to the SSKB Events section of our website

www.sskb.com.au

Silver Community Link

The Backpage Blurb

STAFF PROFILE: JUDY CARTER



Having made the perfect soufflé and put together a child's swing set on Christmas Eve without assistance even whilst a little under the weather, Judy Carter is a person who clearly thrives on a challenge. But the General Manager of SSKB's Gold Coast office and experienced community manager is not one to rest on her laurels.

She is committed to being a "legendary" community manager and with her exceptional communication and organising skills, she is well on the way to achieving that goal. Another ambition to have a wardrobe full of "no ironing" required clothing may prove the most difficult.

Raised and educated in Lismore and at the University of New England, Armidale, Judy was whisked out of tertiary studies after marrying a wheat-grower and moving to the slopes and plains of north-western New South Wales for two decades. She later returned to Lismore to run a retail business and then moved to the Gold Coast and began a 10 year association with Bartercard Australia culminating in the role of National Business Development Manager.

In addition to her core responsibilities, her time at Bartercard provided her with an opportunity to re-focus her skills. She undertook courses in workplace assessment, business management, IT and team management. After leaving the organisation, she furthered her experience working with small business on the Gold Coast after taking on a business banking role with the ANZ where she enjoyed working with some innovative business operators.

Judy's strong leadership strengths have come to the fore at SSKB and she is responsible for providing direction to a growing team of community managers and office staff. She is a voracious reader, which stands her in good stead for her attention to detail in the myriad of paperwork which comes past her eyes each day. She would like to follow through on her creative writing and perhaps put together the missing link in our nation's literature – the great Australian novel.

Judy is a benchmark member of the SSKB team – people aspire to her energy, enthusiasm and commitment. She is a very good advertisement for how commitment to re-skilling and passion for one's job can produce excellent results for her clients.

COMMUNITY IN FOCUS

Couran Cove is a rare find. A tourist destination offering a surf side location within a natural rainforest setting it was opened in 1998 on South Stradbroke Island and incorporates many state-of-the-art environmental and sustainability features.

Its facilities include 354 accommodation units in addition to an 84-berth marina, first-class dining facilities, an ocean-front surf club and full resort infrastructure, including its own power station.

It is accessed via a 40 minute ferry ride from a purpose-built transit terminal located on Hope Island. The award-winning accommodation



Couran Cove

styles include waterfront hotel-style rooms and suites in addition to three and four bedroom villas.

Couran Cove has positioned itself as an environmentally sensitive community and hosts its own Environmental Centre. Its rainforest boardwalk is a significant community asset coupled

by an array of wildlife and a taste of nature at every door. SSKB is proud to be associated with Couran Cove. We believe it sets an environmental benchmark for other communities to aspire to, making it a highly sought after holiday and conference venue.

Online News

SSKB will soon be launching an email news bulletin to keep our clients updated on a regular basis with the latest news and information concerning community management.

If you would like to receive our special electronic communication, just email your name; address details; contact number and building name to our Business Services Manager, Tom Cranitch at tcranitch@sskb.com.au. In the subject heading of the email put "Online News".

How to contact your local SSKB office:

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13a Barclay Drive
CASUARINA BEACH NSW 2487

Brisbane

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The Precinct
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Sunshine Coast

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