

Media Release

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Better Incentive to Downsizing is Strata Reform, Says Peak Body

Peak property body Strata Community Association (Qld) ("SCA (Qld)") has today said that positive reform to community living is the best path to encouraging pensioners to downsize, not financial incentives. SCA (Qld) General Manager Laura Bos said no amount of money would push people toward downsizing to apartment living if they do not feel their lifestyle could be preserved.

"The Federal Government's bill announced today may provide a little financial relief for some older Australians, but it won't solve the many problems they may face when wanting to downsize, said Ms Bos."

"Life isn't just about dollars and cents, particularly for today's older generation who are still incredibly active and involved in their community. They want to be able to enjoy their next phase of life with ease and confidence."

"Making the decision to downsize, particularly to apartment living, is a challenging one as it involves relinquishing some of the control you have enjoyed owning your own block and becoming part of a body corporate."

"And once you have accepted that, the issues are really around the actual development you are buying into and your confidence in that. Does it have hidden defects and is it easy to get them rectified? Are the building materials safe? How does the body corporate scheme work and how do I have a say in it? What are the undisclosed management contracts?"

"It is important these questions can be answered with surety and confidence to encourage people to downsize.

Ms Bos said Government at all levels needs to have a suite of deliberate policies to make strata living more desirable for all. "We want the community to be confident about moving into apartment living and be able to live their life without unexpected difficulties, blow outs in their cost of living or building defects making their home unsafe."

"Issues like combustible cladding in Queensland need to be dealt with as soon as possible to restore confidence in high rise building safety."

"Further, the epidemic of building defects must be resolved so people feel safe to purchase off the plan knowing construction quality is assured," said Ms Bos.

"Last week's viral TikTok tradie video of a whole bunch of building defects is unfortunately not a case of one bad apple - this problem effects our whole sector on a grand scale."

"And it is a travesty for the truly great developers out there who do the right thing. It impacts on buying confidence."

Ms Bos believes an important part of any downsizing strategy will be continuing to empower lot owners.

"At present, and all too often, lot owners are at the mercy of contracts which have been entered into on their behalf by developers, which have a real and significant impact on the cost of living for residents and their ability to have input and control of their own living environment," said Ms Bos.

“Part of any overarching downsizing strategy must be to strengthen the property rights of lot owners to ensure they have the same control of their destiny they do in detached housing.”

Ms Bos also believes reforms to how communities managed the challenges of shared living are needed, so that like-minded residents can band together and create the kinds of buildings they want to live in through community consensus.

“The ability of communities to regulate issues like pets, parking and parties need to be enhanced,” said Ms Bos.

“When disputes arise around these issues, the balance needs to be tipped in favour of communities defining themselves, and where disputes arise, the mechanism to resolve them needs to be cost effective and efficient.”

“We believe the State Government is committed to making reform in this area, however, the sooner this occurs, the more likely we will see baby boomers flooding into apartment living in communities they enjoy, and with like-minded residents.”

Ends.

Media inquiries:

Contact SCA Queensland Policy Officer, Kristian Marlow on 0437 176 366 or advocacy.qld@strata.community

About Strata Community Association (Qld)

SCA (Qld) is the peak association supporting the state's strata sector, with more than 1,200 individual and corporate members who help oversee, advise, and manage hundreds of thousands of lots across Queensland. The association brings together people who manage strata schemes, own units or live in strata communities, and those who provide products and services for schemes. We also provide education, advice, and advocacy to enable better understanding of the regulations, obligations and owner's rights.