

MEDIA RELEASE

SCA (QLD) CALLS ON QUEENSLAND'S POLITICAL PARTIES TO 'STEP UP' AHEAD OF 2020 ELECTION

Thursday 16 July, 2020: SCA (Qld) is challenging Queensland's political parties to find a permanent solution to the North Queensland insurance crisis, provide greater protections from building defects and enable more choice for how individual strata complexes govern themselves in the lead up to the Queensland election.

Releasing its [2020 Election Priorities](#), Queensland's peak body for strata title property management outlined seven key areas for reform and called on all political parties to 'step up and act' to protect and enhance consumer rights.

One in four Queenslanders live in strata titled properties and the proportion of people living in strata schemes is increasing year-on-year as more people choose to live in apartments, townhouses and similar properties.

"The 2020 election presents an opportunity for each of Queensland's political parties to listen to the issues and act to bring about positive, long overdue changes," said SCA (Qld) President James Nickless.

"The rapid growth of strata titled properties in Queensland has far outstripped reform and has left much of the legislation and laws governing strata living outdated and inadequate to protect many consumers.

"In consultation with our members, we have identified seven key areas for reform that if enacted will deliver greater choice, improved protections, better regulation and higher management standards within strata communities in Queensland," he said.

Mr Nickless said the North Queensland insurance crisis and protections from defects needed urgent attention, new legislation and innovative thinking.

"In North Queensland strata owners are now not only competing against premiums that have more than tripled in some cases, many are struggling to find insurance at all," said Mr Nickless.

"When taken in combination with the financial hardship the coronavirus crisis has brought for so many Queenslanders, the government must provide financial support, legislative relief and improved access to affordable insurance.

"A pilot study published in late 2019 showed that 40 to 50 per cent of defects arise in the construction phase and that even more concerningly, most defects involve water ingress into buildings," said Mr Nickless.

The Deakin Report [Examining Building Defects in Residential Multi-owned Properties](#) explores these issues in depth.

SCA (Qld)'s [2020 Election Priorities](#) call for a change in attitude towards consumer issues and extending protections to those owning and residing in strata lots:

- **Fix the North Queensland Insurance Crisis:** The government must provide financial support to NQ strata communities and investigate a reinsurance pool.
- **Protect consumers from defects** by broadening the Statutory Warranty Scheme to include high-rises.
- **Enable strata schemes to self-govern** by allowing them to make by-laws regarding pets and smoking that bind them all equally.
- **Increase consumer protections** including an expanded dispute resolution framework to include original owners as a party to a dispute in the Commissioner's Office.
- **Create a more balanced approach to management rights.**
- **Provide an easier and less costly process to enforce adjudication orders.**
- **Provide protections against bullying and harassment:** Strata sector professionals must be better protected against bullying and harassment from volunteers.
- **Set government requirements for strata accreditation and education within the strata sector.**

Mr Nickless said SCA (Qld) has worked tirelessly at the state and national level and with industry stakeholders to create the accreditation pathway for strata managers, in a state where neither licensing nor regulation is in place.

"SCA (Qld) has set the bar high in owner, supplier and body corporate manager education but we must call for more action at a legislative level to protect strata communities and the integrity of professional body corporate managers," he said.

"Our aim is to work collaboratively with government and our fellow stakeholders in the strata industry to enhance professionalism and faithfully represent the interests of all stakeholders in the strata sector, in particular consumers who lack a collective voice.

"Our education program includes body corporate manager Continuing Professional Development (CPD), strata supplier training and lot owner education.

"Thanks to member guidance and working groups, we have designed an advocacy agenda and education program that increases body corporate rights, protections and understanding of the unique lifestyle and nature of strata schemes," he said.

Read the full [2020 Election Priorities](#) paper here.

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 a collective sinking fund balance of \$165 million.

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.