

ELEVATION

Welcome

Ernst Body Corporate Management (Ernst) is active within the national and state strata industry bodies to give our clients a voice and ensure their best interests are protected and promoted.

The National Community Titles Institute has had a name change to Strata Community Australia (SCA). The new brand brings together its members - Community Titles Institute Queensland, Institute of Strata Title Management (NSW), Owners Corporation Victoria, Strata Titles Institute South Australia and Strata Titles Institute Western Australia - under the one name with a new constitution and governance structure.

The peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Australia, SCA is endeavouring to lift the profile of the industry by law reform, education and training. SCA is coming together exactly half a century after the first legal expression of strata title, in the Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act 1961 of NSW. Then, it was an innovative way of realising the Australian dream of home ownership for more people in Sydney's most popular suburbs.

Fifty years on, medium and high density living is no longer a compromise but the lifestyle of choice for a large and growing proportion of households across the Australian continent. There are now 270,000 strata and community title schemes covering two million lots Australia-wide. Bodies corporate, owners' corporations, strata companies or community associations are becoming an ever-more important part of the economic and social fabric.

Ernst has a strong representation in the industry with a commitment to setting standards in strata. Ernst Director, Alan Buckle continues his integral work at SCA (QLD) as the industry body's Vice President and all Body Corporate Managers are members of SCA (QLD).

Kind regards,

Patrik Bruhlmann
Chief Executive Officer



ERNST

**BODY CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT**

Setting the Standards in Strata



**strata
community
australia**
(QLD)

Sustainability Declaration

A sustainability declaration is a compulsory checklist that must be completed by the seller (vendor) when selling a house, townhouse or unit. There is no need to engage a building professional to complete the form.

The sustainability declaration identifies the property's environmental and social sustainability features in the areas of energy, water, access and safety. Sustainability features can lower operating costs. Properties with sustainability features use less energy for heating and cooling, generate fewer greenhouse gas emissions, use less water - and best of all, are more comfortable to live in.

Access and safety features contribute to sustainability by making the property suitable for owners during their various life stages and will reduce the need for costly future upgrades.

For those homeowners who have already taken steps to improve the sustainability of their property, this means that the environmental, social and financial benefits of those features can be recognised when the property is on the market.

The sustainability declaration has been required under the Building Act 1975 since January 2010. For more information go to www.dlqp.qld.gov.au

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Question

I have heard that I have responsibilities to my tenants to ensure my investment property is digital-ready when analog TV is switched off. I live in the Sunshine Coast. When is this happening and what do I need to do?



Answer

On December 6 this year, parts of regional Queensland will join regional Victoria and other areas across the country which have already had analog TV signals switched off. This means that households and properties in these areas will need to watch TV through either a set-top box for connecting to an analog TV, or through a digital TV if they are to continue receiving free-to-air TV.

The areas of Queensland that will be switching are Capricornia, Darling Downs, Far North Queensland, North Queensland, Queensland Central Coast and Whitsundays and Wide Bay. Residents living on the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Noosa will be switching to digital-only TV, along with Brisbane, on 30 June 2013.

If your tenants already have digital TV or a set-top box and are unable to receive the free-to-air digital TV channels available, your property's antenna system may need to be upgraded or a new external antenna installed.

Apartment blocks or groups of townhouses may have shared antenna systems, also known as Master Antenna TV (MATV) systems. While many shared antenna systems are adequate for both analog and digital TV reception, in some cases, a shared antenna system may need to be installed.

In a residential building, the Body Corporate is responsible for maintaining and repairing common property, including a shared antenna system. Upgrades to shared antenna systems can be complex, and getting approval from unit owners may take time. Start the process early to get your building digital-ready well before analog is switched off.

To find out more about the switch to digital TV and the resources that can help you prepare your property, visit www.digitalready.gov.au or call the Digital Ready Information Line on **1800 20 10 13**.

Renovation Rules

Before you start ripping up the carpets in your new apartment, it pays to consult your strata by-laws, and consider the neighbours.

What is yours to change is everything inside your unit that won't impact upon the neighbours. You may change the appearance of your internal walls, but changing the structure, or anything that might impact upon insulation, requires that you talk with your building manager or Executive Committee.

Your front door, balcony doors, windows and balconies are all probably common property. Unauthorised work on these areas can add up to heartache and prohibitive costs if owners have to reinstate their property back to its original condition.

Consulting with your Body Corporate and your Body Corporate Manager on matters where common property is involved can help you reach a compromise and also learn the rules on permitted hours of work and access by tradespeople. Not only will this save you money and heartache, but it will help make you more amenable to your neighbours.



* Ernst Body Corporate Management offers the Elevation Newsletter to clients to assist in updating them on company and industry news. The content within this newsletter is of a generic nature and may not be applicable to all owners corporations. Ernst Body Corporate Management attempts to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information for its clients, however we strongly recommend that Individuals and Committees seek further advice before acting on any information in this newsletter.