

**Media Release | INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE**

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**Attention New South Wales Media**

**STRATA LEADERS ADVISE UNIT & APARTMENT RESIDENTS AGAINST DANGEROUS “DO IT YOURSELF” DURING COVID19 CONFINEMENT**

**BUILDING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONSIDERED ‘ESSENTIAL’ SERVICE**

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The peak body representing an estimated two million strata dwellers in New South Wales is warning unit, apartment and townhouse residents against trying to attempt dangerous renovations themselves while staying at home.

They run the risk of death, injury or voiding warranty protection by attempting dangerous DIY tasks because they think tradies can't get building access.

Strata Community Association (NSW) says home isolation, due to COVID-19, is sparking a home renovation boom, and some strata residents are undertaking risky DIY electrical, plumbing and high rise repair projects that are best performed by a professional.

SCA (NSW) President Chris Duggan says, fortunately, tradies can still operate in strata apartments buildings as they are considered an essential service and he is encouraging strata residents to employ skilled, qualified tradespeople for maintenance and repair works.

Mr Duggan says some strata residents are attempting maintenance and repair works themselves as they're concerned about the risks of allowing tradespeople into their homes during COVID-19.

“In some strata communities, we're also seeing essential repairs and maintenance works being cancelled, which is counterproductive as they'll likely cost more in future and, in some instances, may even threaten lives.

“As more people are staying home, there is a greater strain on building infrastructure and facilities. It's vital that essential works that needs to be done are done, so the building remains safe and in good condition.

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“Resident safety is our highest priority. With a few precautions, on-site building managers and strata residents can significantly minimise the risks to both themselves and any tradespeople entering the property.

“We’re advocating a safety-first approach to repairs and maintenance in strata buildings and individual lots during COVID-19,” Mr Duggan says.

## **SCA (NSW) COVID-19 Safety Guidelines**

### **1. Don’t cancel necessary repairs and maintenance work**

While we don’t wish to downplay the risk of COVID-19 in the community, delaying essential repairs and maintenance may pose a risk to the health and safety of building residents.

### **2. Don’t attempt these repairs and maintenance work yourself**

Any repairs and maintenance work that poses risk to health and safety, including works involving plumbing, electric and gas, as well as works performed at height, require a skilled and qualified tradesperson.

### **3. Be mindful of your scheme’s shared facilities**

With more people staying home, shared facilities, will be under increased strain. These may include garbage disposal and collection, plumbing and cleaning. Be courteous of your neighbours and follow all health and safety rules.

### **4. Be mindful of your neighbours and accept that many people are working from home**

With more people working from home, be considerate about the amount of noise any work you contract or undertake is emitting. Be understanding about the level of noise that may occur while you’re working from home. Being part of a scheme where everyone is in close proximity, it’s best to be courteous, patient and understanding of your neighbours and community. Call your building/strata manager if you have any concerns regarding noise.

### **5. Practice physical distancing**

If you’re expecting a tradie in your home, maintain a minimum physical distance of 1.5m at all times. Avoid shaking hands and disinfect surfaces others may have touched.

If someone in your household is unwell, call your tradie 1-2 business days in advance. You may also ask your tradie if anyone in their team is unwell or showing symptoms.

## **6. Practice hand hygiene**

Provide your tradie with the option to wash their hands before and after completing the job. Tradies should carry soap or alcohol-based hand sanitiser with them and offer cashless payment options.

Everyone in the household should also practice good hand hygiene, including washing their hands regularly and coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue, then disposing it.

## **7. Ask for your tradie's policies and procedures**

Tradies need to employ strict policies and procedures for their staff to follow during this time. These guidelines should provide detail on how they're implementing health and safety precautions.

As a homeowner or resident, you can ask to see a copy of your tradie's policies and procedures to ensure you're satisfied.

Mr Duggan says, "We believe the strata industry needs to continue operating as effectively as possible to support the two million residents who reside in strata titled properties in New South Wales.

"There are approximately 80,664 strata schemes across the state. Any reduction in operation now will have an impact on owners and residents alike and start to threaten the safety of others within the community.

"There is real concern that when the coronavirus lockdown is over, there'll be a flood of pent-up demand for urgent work to be done, but many of the businesses that service strata won't have survived.

"We're asking all strata managers to take a leading role to make sure residents and committees are fully informed on what can and should be repaired and maintained throughout their schemes during lockdown."

ENDS

## **About Strata Community Association**

Strata Community Association Limited (SCA) is the peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Australia & New Zealand. Membership includes body corporate managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

SCA has in excess of 3,300 members who help oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$1.2 trillion. Website: <https://nsw.strata.community>

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