

Opinion Piece | **INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE**

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Attention New South Wales Media

THE GREAT STRATA CHALLENGE

Opinion piece by – Chris Duggan, President, Strata Community Association (NSW)

As the realisation sinks in that firmer lockdowns and isolation rules are already here, we must now quickly turn our minds to how our high-density ecosystem will support, sustain and survive such intense demands. Over 2 million people in Australia live in strata communities that were originally designed for lifestyle, amenity and convenience.

We are now forced to shelter in our apartments and home, and the need for adaptive solutions to work with our strata communities has never been more critical. The economy is being placed into hibernation, but strata cannot hibernate. We are facing an unprecedented challenge and must have a coordinated effort to get through this.

We must prepare our communities and infrastructure to establish networks and rely on each other. At the centre of these massive challenges is the professional strata community, led by strata managers, building managers and service providers. They are being forced to adapt, innovate and problem solve on the run, with a huge responsibility and obligation to provide hope, support, and service to millions of residents searching for answers and navigating a myriad of competing priorities.

The uncertainties facing strata managers are infinite and become magnified when exposed to the higher density challenges that we face. Buildings and communities were not designed for isolation or long-term habitation. This additional time inside puts intense pressure on sanitation and waste, not to mention social cohesion and behaviour to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. Strata management is not an essential service, it is a critical service - not just now, but as our economy and communities rebuild after the crisis.

Strata are communities of people. There will be cashflow challenges, compliance issues and behavioural problems. Most of these will have no precedent, legislative solution or rule book. We cannot forget that strata is still inflicted by past problems of defects, flammable cladding, behavioural challenges, and complex compliance obligations. These have not gone away- they are ever present reminders of the minefield that await strata communities juggling isolation and adaption to today's problems and tomorrow's unknowns.

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The strata industry is responding like it never has. We are under revenue pressure like all businesses in today's economy, with services and resident demand under intense strain for innovation, solutions and support. We're up for challenge and will need communities to support these endeavours. Strata Community Association (NSW) as the peak representative body in strata is collaborating with State, Federal and international counterparts to implement virus control strategies to educate and support our members. We are lobbying Government, creating resources, streaming webinars and advocating solutions- at a business level the same resourcefulness is being applied to craft solutions for clients.

There has never been a time for more kindness, acceptance, flexibility and support for each other. Whilst isolating is our personal responsibility, surviving and thriving through the long night in strata will require a village response.

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About Strata Community Association (NSW)

Strata Community Association (NSW) is the peak industry body for Strata and Community Title Management in New South Wales. Membership includes strata managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA (NSW) has in excess of 3,000 members who help oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$400 Billion. SCA (NSW) proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

Website: <https://nsw.strata.community/>

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