

STRATA COMMUNITY LIVING

The hub for strata information



Spring 2023

Drastically Reduce Energy Costs by up to 77% with Energy Efficient Windows

Windows are more than just interesting elements of a building. Not only do they filter light into a building and offer views, but they can also significantly help with the energy efficiency of a building.

Windows can be a major source of unwanted heat gain in summer and significant heat loss in Winter.

“An average building has 87% heat gain and 49% heat loss through its window.”

You can prevent up to 77% heat transfer and drastically reduce your footprint and energy costs with the right energy-efficient windows.

How do energy-efficient windows work?

In almost any home or business building, glass type and treatment are the most crucial elements of energy efficiency. Your glass can also improve sound control, and relative greenhouse gas emissions.

There are many different types of glass and frames to choose from. Selecting the right one is critical to improving energy efficiency, controlling noise, maintenance, and security of a building.

Under the Building Code of Australia (BCA), manufacturers are required to supply windows that meet mandatory minimum specifications for structural adequacy and water penetration resistance under Australian Standard AS2047: Windows in buildings, selection, and installation.

Unfortunately, non-conforming, inferior, and shoddy building glass products have been flooding into the Australian market. Dangerous, 'spontaneous breakage' has recently been a large concern for



building glass suppliers. An unsuspecting building manager may think they are getting a good deal, when in fact, the window can cost more in the long term through decreased efficiency.

Confirm that your glazier or building glass supplier is an AGWA accredited member. The Australian Glass and Window Association is the peak body representing state association members and individual companies covering glass manufacturers, processors, merchants, glaziers, and suppliers of supporting machinery, services, and materials.

At Express Glass, our expert team can assist in finding the right glazing solution, while improving the comfort of your interior environment for your home or business. That's how we ensure that we take the right steps to prevent up to 77 percent heat transfer whilst conserving energy.



Benefits of installing a fall arrest roof safety system

Installing a fall arrest roof safety system can provide numerous benefits, particularly for those who work at heights or frequently access rooftops for maintenance, construction, or other tasks.

Here are some key advantages of having a fall arrest roof safety system in place:

PREVENTING FATALITIES AND INJURIES:

The primary benefit of a fall arrest system is its ability to prevent serious injuries and fatalities resulting from falls. By arresting a fall mid-air or reducing the impact forces, the system helps protect workers from life-threatening accidents.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS:

Most States have strict regulations and standards regarding workplace safety, especially when it comes to working at heights. Installing a fall arrest roof safety system ensures compliance with these regulations, reducing the risk of legal liabilities and penalties.

IMPROVED WORKER CONFIDENCE AND PRODUCTIVITY:

When workers feel safer on the job, their confidence and productivity tend to increase. Knowing that there's a reliable fall protection system in place can help employees focus on their tasks without constant worry about potential falls.

REDUCED DOWNTIME AND COSTS:

Reduced Downtime and Costs: In case of an accident, there can be significant downtime for both the injured worker and the investigation process. Installing a fall arrest system helps minimize the likelihood of accidents, leading to reduced downtime and related costs.

VERSATILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY:

Fall arrest roof safety systems are designed to be versatile and can be adapted to various types of roofs and structures. They are available in different configurations, making them suitable for different industries and applications.

EASE OF USE:

Modern fall arrest systems are user-friendly and straightforward to use. Proper training ensures that workers can easily utilise the equipment, reducing the chance of misuse or errors.

LONG-TERM INVESTMENT:

While the initial investment may seem significant, a fall arrest roof safety system is a long-term investment in worker safety. The system can provide years of reliable service, making it a cost-effective safety measure in the long run.

PROTECTION FOR CONTRACTORS AND VISITORS:

If your facility or building has contractors or visitors accessing the roof, having a fall arrest system in place ensures their safety as well. It demonstrates a commitment to their well-being while on-site.

POSITIVE REPUTATION:

Prioritizing the safety of your employees and contractors can enhance your company's reputation. Clients, partners, and employees are more likely to view your organization positively if safety is a top priority.

FLEXIBILITY IN WORK PROCEDURES:

With a fall arrest roof safety system, workers have more flexibility in how they carry out their tasks. They can move more freely on the roof while remaining secure, potentially increasing efficiency and reducing project timelines.

A fall arrest roof safety system is a crucial investment to protect workers, ensure compliance with safety regulations, and foster a positive and productive work environment. By reducing the risk of accidents and injuries, it contributes to the overall success and well-being of your organization.



Sustainable Development in Strata: Embracing Positive Change for a Better Future

The Built Environment, encompassing the construction, maintenance, and everyday usage of buildings, stands as a significant contributor to carbon emissions. As the world grapples with the consequences of climate change, the need for sustainable development in the strata industry has never been more urgent.

The good news is that the responsibility of sustainability has become a shared focus. Governments are regulating some of the change, consumers are demanding the change and businesses are leading the charge through innovation, policy and procedural change to integrate sustainability into their operations, not only to cater to evolving customer demands but also to enhance their long-term competitiveness and contribute positively to the world.

What does Sustainable Development mean in the strata industry?

Sustainable development in the strata industry means creating and managing shared properties and communities with a focus on long-term balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects. One of SCA's members and Australia's leading strata insurance provider, CHU, recognises their crucial role in shaping a sustainable future and have joined forces with SCA as a signatory of SCA's Declaration of Commitment to Sustainable Development.

As an example of putting this commitment into practice, CHU have recently launched their sustainability charter which outlines their strategies centred around four key sustainability principles:

1. **Planet:** Embracing eco-friendly practices like energy efficiency and waste reduction to minimise their environmental footprint.
2. **People:** Prioritising well-being, diversity and inclusion, not only across CHU as an organisation but also across the entire strata community.
3. **Prosperity:** Ensuring that investment is made that considers long term sustainability, as well as giving back to vulnerable members of the community.
4. **Partnership:** CHU is committed to working with like-minded businesses with the common goals of a more sustainable future.

How can strata communities embrace sustainable development?

CHU's sustainability charter is an example of how strata businesses can lead the way and take positive steps towards a greener and brighter future for the whole community. As a lot owner, putting sustainability on the committee agenda is the best way to ensure it is on the radar for all residents.

There are many ways strata residents can live more sustainably, some ideas include;

- Introducing recycling, composting, and reducing landfill.
- Looking into electric vehicle charging stations to encourage residents to switch to electric.
- Investigating opportunities within the complex to introduce green energy options such as solar panels.

It is important to note that every change will count, and a collective effort will make it easier for the whole community to embrace sustainable development. Every positive action we take today, will benefit future generations.

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CHU WEB LINKS

chu.com.au/contact-us/
chu.com.au/chu-services/

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BEWARE – CHANGES TO UNFAIR CONTRACT TERMS

Unfair contract terms (UCT) refer to provisions in a contract that create a significant imbalance between the rights and obligations of the parties, to the detriment of one party. These terms are often found in standard form contracts where one party, usually the larger or more powerful one, dictates the terms without allowing the other party to negotiate or make changes.

In Australia, UCTs are governed by the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), which is a part of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The ACL applies to businesses that supply goods or services to consumers.

Under the current UCT regime, if a contract is deemed to contain unfair terms, those terms will be considered void and unenforceable by the court. The rest of the contract, however, will continue to bind the parties if it is capable of operating without the unfair terms.

To determine if a contract term is unfair, the following factors are considered:

- The term causes a significant imbalance between the parties' rights and obligations.
- The term is not reasonably necessary to protect the legitimate interests of the party advantaged by the term.
- The term would cause detriment (financial or otherwise) to a party if it were applied or relied upon.

However, changes to the UCT regime will come into effect nationally from 10 November 2023. These changes are significant, and this date looms large for businesses who must be prepared and aware of the large penalties.

The key changes include:

- **UCTs are illegal and attract penalties.** Proposing, applying, and relying upon UCTs may attract significant monetary penalties imposed by the courts. Each UCT in a contract is an individual contravention. Previously, UCTs were merely void and unenforceable.
- **Further detail on 'standard form contracts'.** In addition to the existing factors courts may take into consideration when determining if a contract is a 'standard form contract', courts must also consider whether the party that prepared the contract has used the same or similar contracts before.
- **Expanded definition of 'small business'.** The UCT regime applies to 'standard form contracts' with 'small businesses'. A 'small business' now means a business with 100 employees or less (this has been increased from 20 employees), or a business with an annual turnover of less than \$10 million in the previous income year. The expansion of the definition means that more businesses will be protected by the UCT regime.

Grace Lawyers was established to service the needs of the strata, community, company and bodies corporate title industry. Grace Lawyers is now recognised as the largest law firm in Australia dealing with strata, bodies corporate and community and company titles management, disputes and litigation as its core practice areas.

Time for an upgrade? Maximise the value

Look more closely at the remedial building work proposed for your strata scheme. Will the work increase the market value of the remediated properties?

An 'upgrade' looks beyond the immediate repair to consider a tangible return on investment.

In leading Paynter Dixon's Remedial Division, Tim Kurniadi, believes every remedial project has scope to increase the principal equity for lot owners. It's a matter of eyeing the opportunity.

Smart decisions on a budget

"Low scale work such as painting or replacing floor finishes can reap the value of an upgrade through simple yet smart decisions," says Tim.

"There are multiple scenarios, such as the use of colour, or selecting particular tiles which markedly enhance the visual appeal for a minimal cost difference."

"However, expertise in this area goes beyond the selection of materials to consider what can be achieved within the parameters of compliance, including council requirements. For example, remedial work undertaken as exempt development has constraints for tiling, including the size of the tile."

Early design input

Design expertise can make all the difference in the early stages of a project. As a multi-disciplined company, Paynter Dixon's inhouse design team is regularly engaged to assess the upgrade opportunities.

"A lot of money can be spent in pursuit of a solution. However, our design expertise can gauge the feasibility of a specific approach before the client makes a financial commitment."

Prior to commencing a major façade upgrade to a multi-storey strata residential address in Mosman, Paynter Dixon arranged a property valuation by an independent real estate agent, factoring in the proposed scope of work. The projected return on investment was calculated well in advance.

Working closely with the client, Paynter Dixon optimised sunlight and expansive views of Sydney Harbour, while also enhancing safety and comfort.

Experience in adaptation

"It's important to assemble a delivery team with specific knowledge and experience of that regulated building type," says Tim. Of course, Class 2 is synonymous with multi-storey residential buildings.

"As Principal Contractor, we take great care in appointing consultants who are experienced with the adaptation of Class 2 buildings because the benchmark of compliance under the Design and Building Practitioners Act is much higher. This experience is best placed in engineering solutions which sensibly meet the standard."

Paynter Dixon's seamless 'back of house' coordination spans design and documentation, compliance, cost planning and contractor engagement.

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Navigating the unknowns and complexities of strata projects: Committees, competing priorities and an increasingly challenging environment.

Strata Committees and Strata Managers need to make decisions about critical factors such as defect remediation and rectification works, the 10-year plan for capital expenditure, and the most cost-efficient funding option for owners at any given time... all while considering and calculating the current sinking fund balance, sinking fund levies, future deposit and borrowing rates, tax rates, and inflation.

So how are Strata Committees and Strata Managers empowered to make informed decisions when they are also managing the demands of members of the Owners Corporation and their competing passions and interests?

[From 2018-2023 there was a 45% surge in the number of people applying for strata scheme mediation as owners clashed with Owners Corporations – primarily over building defects and repairs](#)¹.

In this same period, there has also been a rise in defects and remediation works alongside a sharp rise in building and construction costs globally. According to a KPMG report, there has been a 29% surge in residential construction costs in Sydney over the last two years.²

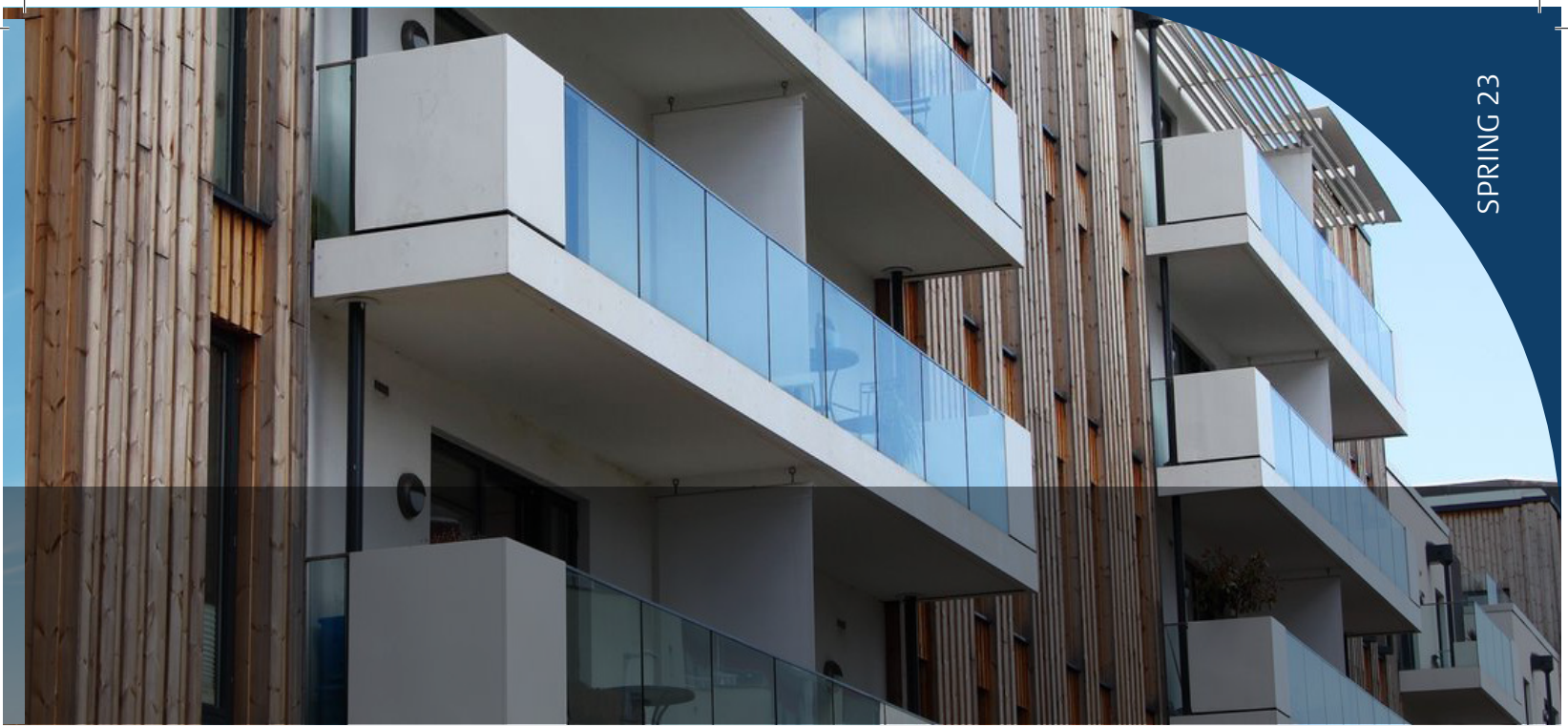
Today, there are +10,800 Electric Vehicles already sold in NSW³, the NSW Government has invested \$633 million to make NSW the easiest place to buy

and use an EV in Australia⁴, and 78% of strata residents surveyed were in favour of installing charging stations now⁵. At the same time, Owners Corporations are also navigating a 40% increase in insurance premiums for buildings with known defects (+15% for buildings with no identified defects)⁶.



So how do owners get advice to make informed decisions about factors such as defect remediation and rectification works, the 10-year plan for capital expenditure, the current sinking fund balance, sinking fund levies, future deposit and borrowing rates, tax rates, inflation, and much more?

How do the Strata Committee treasurer (usually as a volunteer) get advice to make an informed decision about the most cost-efficient funding option for owners at any given time? Or how do they calculate the actual after-tax cost of



funds for the composition of owners in the owner corporation (e.g., residential owner occupier, investor, etc.)?



As previously highlighted by Lannock Strata Finance and CEO Paul Morton, quality tax and financial advice in this space can be very hard to come by, adding to the complexities faced by Owners Corporations today. This is despite the fact it is estimated that +50% of people living in greater Sydney will live in strata schemes by 2040.

The average length of ownership of a strata-managed property in Australia is 9.6 years⁷, with Owners Corporations making decisions about levies at least annually. And in doing so, make decisions that may impact the annual tax benefits or liabilities of owners or the cost of insurance premiums and coverage.

Strata projects, like life, are often full of

unknowns of Strata Projects. Make sure you're aware of your risk, you are not tied down with unnecessary complexities, and you know the true cost of how you're funding your strata project.

Footnotes

1. [The Sydney Morning Herald – The ‘extra obstacle’ for owners clashing with body corporates over building defects](#)
2. [KPMG – New builds Shelved as construction costs surge](#)
3. [The Driven – NSW leads EV uptake by the numbers, but ACT tops in market share](#)
4. [NSW Climate and Energy Action – NSW electric vehicle strategy](#)
5. [Strata Community Association NSW – Electric vehicles in strata](#)
6. [The Sydney Morning Herald – Apartment owners face strata fee increases of 20% as costs soar](#)
7. [Homes.com.au - Length of home ownership in Australia reaches 10-year peak](#)



Strata Window & Door Projects under the DBPA Fast Fact Sheet: Seamless Compliance

We have had many conversations within the strata community to address some of the misconceptions around the impacts of the Design and Building Practitioners Act on window and door replacement projects. Below is the first in a series of FAQs that Windowline will share with our network. If you have any questions around changes to remedial projects and the steps to ensure project compliance, get in touch with our team.

FAST FACT 1

Does window replacement need DBPA regulated design? No.

Generally, under the State Environmental Planning Policy, window replacements are categorised as exempt development as they are non-structural. Consequently, they typically fall outside the bounds of the Design and Building Practitioners Act therefore do not require regulated design.

FAST FACT 2

Does balcony door replacement need DBPA regulated design? No.

Similar to window replacement, balcony door replacements are typically considered exempt development under the State Environmental Planning Policy so also do not require regulated design.

****However, this status is contingent upon the condition of the substrate beneath the balcony door. Should the substrate necessitate structural or waterproofing work, the replacement may fall under the Design and Building Practitioners Act, thereby necessitating a regulated design.**

FAST FACT 3

Who prepares a regulated design? Architects and engineers.

A regulated design must be prepared by a registered design practitioner. While various professionals can take on this role, it is essential to note that engineers, particularly those with expertise in structural and waterproofing aspects, are often best suited for preparing regulated designs under the Design and Building Practitioners Act. Engaging an engineer ensures that technical aspects are thoroughly assessed and that the design complies with the relevant building standards and regulations.

FAST FACT 4

Who undertakes to work of the compliant regulated design? A building practitioner.

To comply with the Design and Building Practitioners Act, any works that fall under the scope of the Act must be undertaken by a registered building practitioner. As such, it is imperative that a registered building practitioner is engaged to complete these works. Engaging a registered practitioner ensures adherence to the requisite standards and regulations, safeguarding the quality and compliance

Windowline is not only a registered building practitioner with strong connections to accredited design practitioners but is also fully capable of undertaking the works required under the Design and Building Practitioners Act. By choosing Windowline, you gain access to expert advice, and you can rely on us to efficiently manage and execute your project, ensuring professionalism and compliance every step of the way.

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Benefits of Having a Maintenance Plan for Your Strata Building

A well-maintained strata building is crucial for the overall functionality and value of any strata property. To ensure the longevity and efficiency of the building, it is essential to have a maintenance plan in place especially when it comes to the building's overall aesthetics. Below we will discuss the importance and benefits of having a general maintenance plan for your strata building including the aesthetic upkeep of communal areas including the entry foyer, car parking area, garbage room, communal laundries as well as service doors and frames.

1. Preventive Maintenance:

A maintenance plan allows for regular inspections and necessary repairs to be carried out in a timely manner. By identifying and addressing potential issues early on, preventive maintenance helps to avoid premature wear and tear for the building aesthetically. This proactive approach minimises costly repairs and ensures the satisfaction of all residents.

2. Increased Property Value:

A well-maintained strata building attracts potential buyers or tenants and enhances the property's value. Regular upkeep of communal spaces and the building's exterior help to preserve the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the building. This, in turn, increases the market value and rental income potential.

3. Cost Savings:

Implementing a maintenance plan can help to minimise expenses such as unexpected repairs and premature remodelling. By conducting routine inspections and addressing minor issues promptly, the need for extensive repairs or premature exterior repainting can be avoided.

4. Safety of Residents:

Safety should be a top priority in any strata building. A maintenance plan ensures that all areas of the building are regularly inspected and maintained. This helps to minimise the risk of accidents or emergency repairs and creates a secure living environment for residents.

5. Improved Tenant Satisfaction:

A well-maintained strata building provides a pleasant and comfortable living experience for all residents. Regular maintenance reduces the regularity of large scale remodelling which can inconvenience tenants. This, in turn, leads to increased tenant satisfaction and improves tenant retention rates.

6. Compliance with Regulations:

Maintaining a strata building in accordance with local regulations and building codes is essential. A maintenance plan ensures that all necessary inspections and repairs are carried out to meet these legal requirements. Compliance with regulations mitigates the risk of penalties or legal issues that may arise due to neglecting maintenance responsibilities.

Having a maintenance plan for your strata building is of utmost importance. From cost savings to increased property value and tenant satisfaction, a well-executed maintenance plan is essential for the overall success and well-being of your strata building.

When it comes to painting your strata building, by cleaning and touching up your surface coatings every two years, you can prolong their life expectancy by over 50%.

At Premier Painting, we propose that all common areas be inspected annually to ensure that the applied coatings are performing as per expectations. Learn more about our strata building painting and maintenance services on www.premierpainting.com.au



Add years to the lifespan of your Security System through Maintenance Plans and Remote Access.

Advances in new technology offer numerous benefits to strata-building residents. It's simplified building access with fobs, mobile credentials, fingerprint scanners, and even facial recognition. At the same time, it enhances security with high-resolution CCTV cameras, streaming terabytes of data, and smart search functions, allowing for quick event retrieval.

And whilst many buildings enjoy the ease of access provided by these technologies, most buildings have no idea whether the systems are working well or are about to fail. Fortunately, remote access is available to address these issues.

WHAT IS REMOTE ACCESS:

Remote Access is a game-changer for security systems. By connecting your security systems to the internet, Remote Access enables your Security Company, Building Manager, or active Committee members to log into the systems from their mobile phone or computer. This gives them round-the-clock access to address any issues or detect potential problems within the system.

“Remote access allows you to monitor the systems and react to alerts and alarms as they happen, not when a resident calls to say they can't get into a building.”

Remote Access also offers the convenience of being able to program or delete Fobs without having to be physically present. Additionally, CCTV images can be easily retrieved from your phone, allowing for quick and efficient monitoring - by regularly checking your cameras, you can reduce your service and maintenance costs while improving reaction times.

HOW REMOTE ACCESS ENHANCES YOUR CCTV SYSTEM:

- CCTV footage retrieval.

- Ensuring that cameras are recording and that the hard drive is storing events.
- System alerts: alerts sent to your Security Company or Owners Corporation to advise when cameras are offline or a major system error has occurred.
- Firmware updates.
- System alarm checking.

HOW REMOTE ACCESS ENHANCES YOUR ACCESS CONTROL:

- Fob administration, including deactivating or deleting fobs.
- Email alerts to advise of system errors before they affect access.
- Configuration changes and firmware updates
- Remote unlocking of doors.
- System alarm checking.
- Reduction in onsite service time.

Remote Access coupled with a smart Maintenance Plan will increase your Security system's lifespan and enhance the system's value and reliability.


Don't leave your security to chance, call Quatrix Security to explore how we can update your security system today.



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