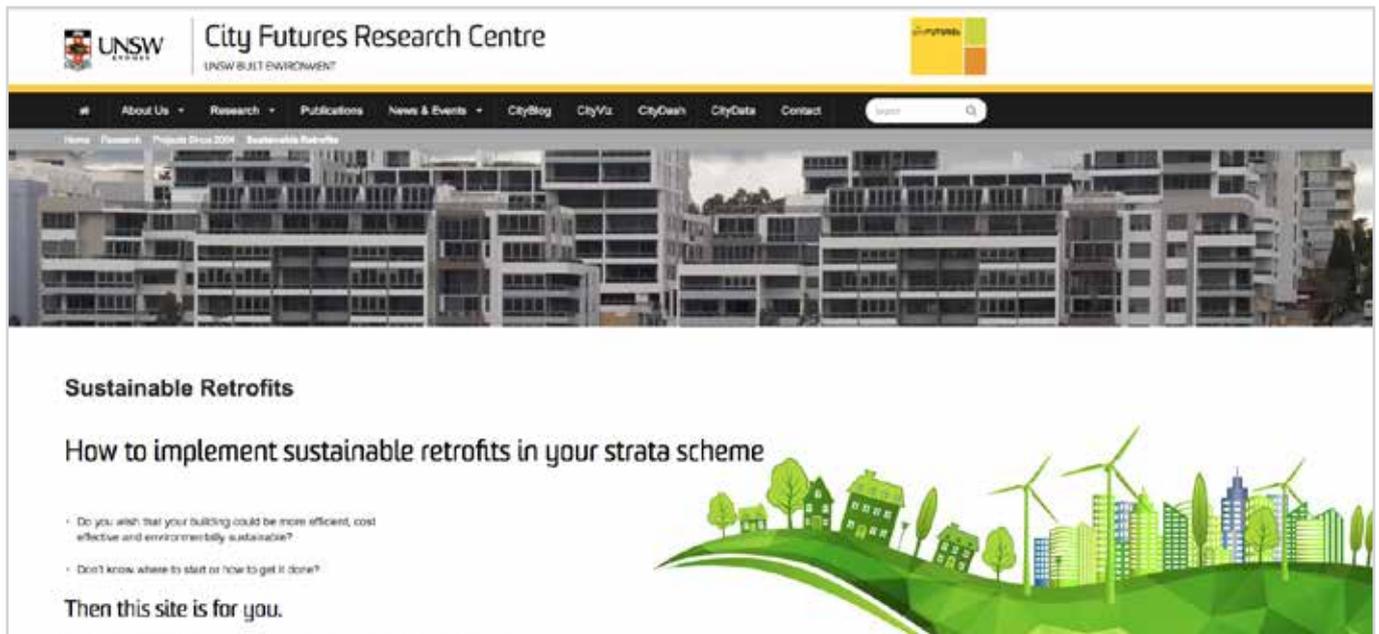


STRATA & COMMUNITY LIVING

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SUMMER 2017



First how to guide for strata owners launched

Those clever people at the University of NSW City Futures Research Centre have developed a very useful guide for strata committees wanting to undertake sustainable retrofits in strata schemes. And the best part is, it's free and easy to use.

The guide is available online (the web address is listed at the end of the story) and provides step by step instructions and information to help strata owners explore opportunities for more efficient energy, water and facilities and services in their strata schemes.

Associate Professor Hazel Easthope is the brains behind this and said the guide is just one output of a bigger project called the 'Your Strata Experience' study.

Hazel has been researching strata schemes and what makes them tick for quite a few years.

"A lot of my earlier research was focused on understanding what can go wrong in strata schemes, and trying to provide suggestions on what could be done to make them better," she explained.

"For this project I wanted to take a different approach and find strata schemes that were already doing something. That is, schemes that were actively dealing with a particular issue to see how they went about it, what worked well and what roadblocks they faced and how they might be overcome."

During the course of the research Hazel realised that many strata schemes were trying to take action on various issues, but often were, in effect, re-inventing the wheel. They found it difficult to find information they needed about what to do and what others have done before them in similar situations.

"I decided that it would be a good idea to record what people have tried to achieve in their schemes, including what worked and what didn't in different situations."

She chose four issues based on things she knew were important from previous research. They were: undertaking sustainable retrofits; dealing

with defects; introducing strategies to improve social relations; and dealing with short-term letting.

"I put out a call for members of strata committees that were actively working on these issues, and then I followed their progress over time, interviewing committee members, managers and residents, attending meetings and reviewing documents," Hazel said.

"I followed strata schemes across Greater Sydney. Some were high-rise towers, some townhouse developments and many mid-rise apartment buildings."

She then set about writing up short case-study reports. Seven of these are already on the project website and there are more to come. This means strata owners interested in doing the same thing in their scheme can read about what other schemes had tried, and how it went for them.

"I also realised that there was a real need for 'how to' guides so that people who live or own in strata schemes (who may or may not be on their committee) who are interested to take action on one of these issues, could have some guidance and information on how they might approach the task," Hazel explained.

"I started with sustainable retrofits because this was the topic I had the most information from case studies in the start, and because it has the most information already available online, which I could draw on."

Hazel is now working on a second how to guide for strategies to improve social relations, and she hopes to start on one for defects rectification in 2018.

"We will continue to publish case studies on the website, as well as notifications of other publications arising from the research."

Access the sustainability guide and case studies at <https://cityfutures.be.unsw.edu.au/research/projects/city-living-urban-consolidation-and-the-social-sustainability-of-cities/>

2017 wrapped up



Cool apartment stuff

For Strata Community Australia (NSW) 2017 was most certainly the year of change. SCA (NSW) General Manager, Rachel Lynn takes us through what's been happening as the new strata laws, which had been years in the planning, took effect from late 2016. Most of the year was spent on training and education but with some fun on the side for SCA (NSW) members – strata managers, services and owners alike.

“When I look back 2017 is in my mind one of those years where we went from one thing to the next delivering education, events, advocacy and information to our members,” Rachel Lynn, General Manager said.

“It was crazy busy but just enough crazy for us. The team rolled up its sleeves and we got on with it.”

Training and education sessions focussing on the new strata laws were essential at the beginning of the year. From mid-2016, SCA (NSW) worked with NSW Fair Trading on developing and undertaking road shows up and down the NSW coast and within the Sydney metropolitan area, educating strata managers and strata owners on the new laws and their effects.

“This was a successful collaboration and we are pleased with the relationship we have developed with NSW Fair Trading.

“In fact, the Acting Commissioner for Fair Trading, Andrew Gavrielatos in his opening address at the Annual Convention in October singled out SCA (NSW) as an example of a member association delivering benchmark member services, education and accreditation, collaborative government engagement and considered to be a professional partner organisation.”



Alongside the changes were some new innovations, something that SCA (NSW) continues to pursue.

“Our Strata Owners Day in March was a huge success. Clearly the decision to hold a separate event and devote it entirely to strata owners and their needs was the right one. Next year we are moving it to the Swissotel in the city, close to Town Hall station to make it easier for owners to attend,” Rachel explained.

“Please save the date, 24 March, and look on our website for more details. SCA (NSW) members will receive alerts. If you're not a member, then why not consider joining?”

“Membership is open to all strata owners and details of how to join are on our website. We would like to welcome new members for 2018 and there are many benefits available including education, social opportunities and the chance to enter our annual awards.

“WHEN I LOOK BACK 2017 IS IN MY MIND ONE OF THOSE YEARS WHERE WE WENT FROM ONE THING TO THE NEXT DELIVERING EDUCATION, EVENTS, ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION TO OUR MEMBERS”

SCA (NSW) also looked at new and evolving technologies and how they might provide SCA (NSW) with new marketing opportunities. The NSW Business Chamber assisted us with developing a digital marketing strategy, including a redesign of the website homepage, which has a translator function and is mobile device friendly.

“None of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the SCA (NSW) Secretariat team. We're now looking forward to a little break for the holiday season before we get back into the swing of things for 2018.”

Rachel Lynn
General Manager
SCA (NSW)

‘I love my apartment lifestyle’ can be heard being said by many of you who live the strata life, be it in a townhouse, flat or up in a high-rise. Yet beyond all the up-sides and joys of living in one of these, there are some common challenges many of us face – space, heating/cooling, decor. So, we thought we would do some research and see what cool solutions were out in the market place that are suitable for apartment living.

Prams and Strollers

If your toddler-vehicle clogs up your apartment, DreamBaby has the perfect solution - the StrollAway®. The rack mounts easily over the top of flat, room or cupboard doors taking strollers, prams and pushers (up to 22.5kg) to new heights and out of the way of everyday living. Available at www.dreambaby.com.au at just \$39.95.



DreamBaby

Hot Summer

Limited ventilation and the lack of air-conditioning means many of you will have fans in just about every corner, but there is a better way to battle the heat. Cosy Comfort, a portable air-conditioner is not only transferable from room to room, but at just 300 watt consumption keeps operational costs low. The small 17kg unit simply plugs in (no hoses required) and can quickly create cooler temperatures in your apartment. Best yet, you can move it from the living to the bedroom at leisure. No banging holes in walls or dealing with the strata committee. Ideal, if you are renting. RRP from \$649 from www.closecomfort.com.au



Close Comfort

Ambience

Thanks to the folks at Fat Shack Vintage the stark lighting issue without the need for an electrician has been solved. The DIY Batten Pendant has a simple connector that plugs straight into a standard light bulb fitting giving you an immediate drapery for your choice of low-glow or lighting shade adding both character and ambience usually not obtained from a central ceiling light. Different models available, starting from just \$40 available from www.fatshackvintage.com.au

Space and Outlook

We all could do with a little more space, yet we simply can't move walls or add a stunning view when it simply is not there. Well, almost. Mr Wallpaper has come up with permanent and semi-permanent solutions for apartments that can bring stunning views to viewless living rooms and add perceived space to even the smallest of rooms or tight hallway.

Custom printed wallpaper – be it of the city view you wish you had, a nature outlook, unique designs or abstract art can be custom printed for you and installed or come as a DIY kit. These can give the appearance of opulent space and expansiveness to even the smallest of rooms -bathroom, hallway or tiny bedroom. Best of all, they are also easily removed making this the ideal solution for tenants.

And, with some clever designs and the use of mirrors, it is an effective way to give the feeling of space and add that stunning view that was simply missing. www.mrwallpaper.com.au



Mr Wallpaper

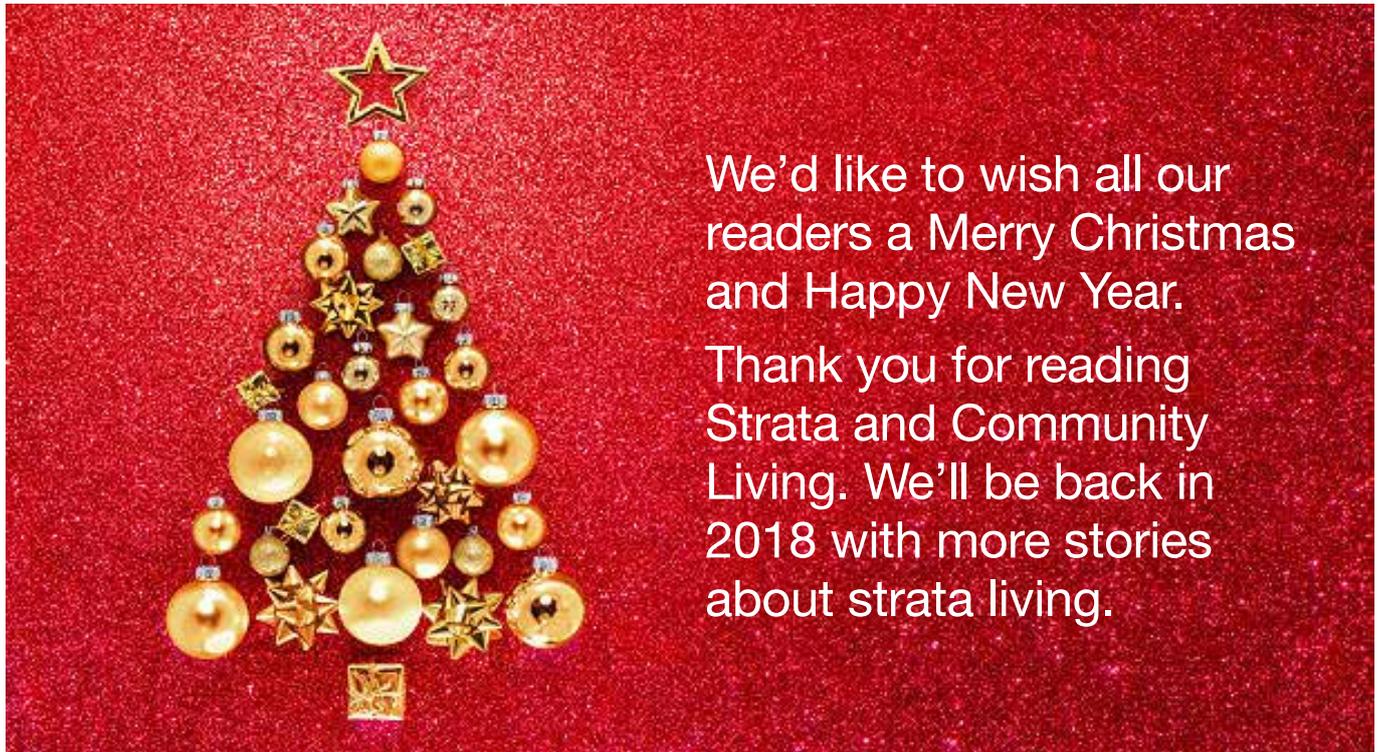
The products featured in this article are in no way associated with, or endorsed by, Strata Community Australia (NSW). They are featured merely as items which are innovative and may be of interest to people living in apartments.

Strata snip-its



Save the date

**2018 SCA (NSW)
Strata Owners Day**



We'd like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Thank you for reading Strata and Community Living. We'll be back in 2018 with more stories about strata living.

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Strata & Community Living is a joint initiative brought to you by SCA (NSW); the peak industry body representing strata managing agents and others committed to the continual improvement in standards of strata management practice in NSW and your strata managing agent.



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