

STRATA LIFE WINTER 2010

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

What is an owners corporation?

PAGE 2

Platinum & gold sponsors

Looking for a new career?

About Owners Corporations Victoria

PAGE 3

Silver sponsors

Cold weather brings more than just the shivers

Timely roof maintenance: tradesman's tips

PAGE 4

Bronze sponsors

Strata cooking

Welcome to the first edition of OCV's Strata Life — a celebration of community living.

Each quarter you'll receive a seasonal edition featuring informative articles, advice and answers to common questions. We welcome the input of Owners Corporations Victoria members, lot-owners, residents, tenants, stakeholders and suppliers. In this edition we highlight winter woes and give you the heads up about how to avoid costly repairs, routine maintenance which may save you thousands of dollars and tips on rectification of problems.

We also have a strata recipe to enjoy featuring seasonal produce — bring out the Masterchef in you and share it with your neighbours!

For more information about Owners Corporations Victoria, its members, standards, educational and employment opportunities visit www.ocv.org.au or phone 9416 4688.



Rob Beck,
GENERAL
MANAGER

WHAT IS AN OWNERS CORPORATION?

Formerly known as bodies corporate, owners corporations are strata title or subdivided properties in which 'lots' can be separately owned and sold.

Residential flats, apartments and units ranging from two-lot subdivisions in a suburban street to many hundreds of units in an inner city apartment building are all owners corporations.

Commercial, industrial, retail, lifestyle resorts, retirement villages, car parks, storage facilities, and increasingly, mixed developments with more than one of the above are also subject to owners corporations legislative and regulatory requirements.

With 65,000 owners corporations and 500,000 lots in Victoria, about 1,000,000 Victorians or 1 in 4 people are living in or affected by owners corporations. Owners corporations manage property worth \$48 billion. More than \$1 billion per year is collected and spent.

What is an owners corporations manager?

Owners corporation managers are professionals responsible for facilitating the administration and implementing decisions of owners corporations, reducing the burden on lot owners to maintain buildings and common areas within a multi dwelling block. Managers are specialists in their field, possessing the knowledge and skill to administer the owners corporation in accordance with the complex requirements of the Victorian legislation. **CONTINUED PAGE 2**



PLATINUM SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



FROM PAGE 1 They help to achieve consensus in decision making and to assist owners to comply with their obligations.

Owners corporation managers are involved in coordinating the affairs of unit owners including conducting meetings, collecting and banking levies, arranging property maintenance, advising on asset management, placing insurance and keeping financial accounts.

What's the difference between a property manager and an owners corporation manager?

A real estate property manager works for and leases individual lots on behalf of landlords. They collect the rent and arrange internal maintenance and repairs for a single unit.

Professional owners corporations managers are appointed collectively by lot owners of strata title properties to manage the common property. They generally:

- prepare and distribute notices, agendas and minutes
- attend to correspondence
- arrange quotations for repairs and maintenance
- take out and maintain required insurance
- pay all invoices



- prepare and distribute financial statements and budgets
- provide owners corporation certificates
- keep and maintain the owners corporation register
- keep and maintain records
- arrange audits and reports required by law
- implement a grievance procedure, and
- ensure compliance with the Owners Corporations Act 2006, the Owners Corporations Regulations 2007 and rules.

LOOKING FOR A NEW CAREER?

If you enjoy the opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life – owners, tenants, tradespeople, insurers – and finding solutions to challenges, this is the role for you. People with transferrable skills and experience in property management, real estate, building, insurance, customer service, call centres, bookkeeping and administration will find positions in abundance.

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Commencing this semester, RMIT University offers a strata specific qualification, a Certificate IV Property Services [Operations] which is being delivered in a mix of face-to-face & online. The price is \$4,750 for full fee paying positions. The first intake was oversubscribed and booked out in a very short time. In a massive response, OCV had 61 students express interest, for the maximum 30 positions on offer.



Owners Corporations Victoria is the pre-eminent professional association for the owners corporation industry and was formed in 1990. Its members currently manage around 250,000 lots.

Only professional owners corporation managers who meet the strict requirements laid down by OCV are eligible for membership. Central to the prerequisites of membership is acceptance and adherence of OCV's Code of Professional Conduct. This sets a high standard for good practice and ethical conduct, over and above the requirements of legislation.

OCV is a strong advocate for consumers — lot owners — and it also represents industry suppliers, making it the voice of the owners corporation sector.

Members benefit from representation, promotion, establishment of professional practice guidelines and ethical standards, and continuous professional development through OCV education seminars, conferences and regularly published bulletins on matters of professional interest.

Look out for this logo to ensure your owners corporation manager is an OCV manager.



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TIMELY ROOF MAINTENANCE: TRADESMAN'S TIPS

Whilst recent heavy rains experienced in cities across Australia have brought relief to drought-suffering gardens, they have also awakened many roofing problems. Hail, wind and debris can damage a roof, but rain alone cannot, so problems that arise from leaking roofs are quite often maintenance concerns.

Here are a few tips for looking after your roofs and gutters.

Metal roofs

If older roof cladding is suffering from overlapping joints which collect water and rust, advanced slip sheets may be the answer. These are short lengths of corrugated metal which are slipped under loosened cladding at the damaged positions. They will need priming before painting with the main roof colour. Simply painting over rusted areas without preparation is futile. There are proven converters which change the oxidised metal to an inert substance and seal the surface ready for the decorative coat. Newer metal roofs are superior because the sheet is cut to the full length of the roof, so there are no joints where rust can start.

Tiled roofs

Tile roofs suffer from foot damage, fungal growth and colour fading. Fungal growth can be treated by painting with copper sulphate, available from hardware and nursery retailers and mixed with water at the rate of 500g to 11 litres. This must not reach metal gutters unless they are protected with bitumen. A water pressure gun makes short work of **CONTINUED PAGE 4**



COLD WEATHER BRINGS MORE THAN JUST THE SHIVERS

The culprit — condensation.

Mould and mildew are not only unsightly; they pose a serious risk to people's health, especially those with compromised respiratory systems and asthma.

When it's cold outside and warm inside, moist air meets cold surfaces.

Condensation is caused by use of gas heating, water leaks, clothes dryers and steam from baths, showers and cooking.

How do you avoid mould and mildew forming?

Use a cloth to wipe off moisture caused by condensation on walls and windows. This not only minimises the formation of mould and mildew but also protects the timber and paintwork.

Install exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchens and laundries and USE THEM, especially on cool and cold days. It is important to clean the vents regularly to ensure adequate airflow.

Some clothes driers can be vented outside but you may need the permission of the owners corporation for this. Tenants should always seek permission from the real estate property manager before installation.

Open windows as often as possible.

How do you remove mould and mildew?

NEVER brush or rub mould with a dry implement — the spores are dangerous if inhaled!

Use bleach according to product directions — wear gloves, make sure the area is well ventilated with fresh air or use the exhaust fan, and protect your clothing to avoid bleach marks!

It is important to clean exhaust fan vents regularly to ensure adequate airflow.

BRONZE SPONSORS



PELHAM Lawyers
Strata, Commercial & Construction Lawyers

FROM PAGE 3 the lichen, moss and mould growth but should not be used on asbestos.

There are coatings which can be applied over the fungal growth which will soak through and take grip on the cladding, sealing the surface to prevent further growth.

Flat roofs

Often flat roofs are coated with a bituminous compound called 'malthoid'. This was a popular treatment for timber roofing in the 30s and 40s and for concrete roofing in more recent times. Unless maintained, malthoid coatings only have a lifespan of around 10 years, at which point rain will find its way into the building either 'surreptitiously' through cracks in the concrete/timber roofing, or dramatically when the whole roof collapses in the upper storey units.

Pebble crete was also sometimes incorporated on top of the malthoid to give it extra durability, but this creates problems when the malthoid needs to be recoated. Malthoid can be maintained with regular recoating, or replaced with a metal deck or a fibre-glass membrane for example. Unfortunately all of the above options are expensive and must be done by professionals. We suggest that if this type of roofing is a feature of your building, you make ample provision in your maintenance funds for regular maintenance and/or replacement.

Gutters

Gutters can be treated in the same fashion as other rusted areas, and new steel gutters can be coated internally before installation with a bituminous material. Existing guttering can also be treated with bituminous sealant by tying a stick to the brush handle to save the knuckles from being cut by the edge of roofing material.

Timely action

Timely maintenance and repairs to roofs and gutters can be planned for and completed before damage or injury occurs, or before the situation requires emergency repairs which often are more drastic and costly for the owners corporation members.

STRATA COOKING

Strata dishes are layered and baked in the oven dish, containing eggs, bread, cheese, and often sausage, vegetables, and herbs. Leftovers can be used and any seasonal ingredient.

Winter Broccoli and Cheddar Strata Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups of broccoli cut into smallish bite sized florets and blanched until tender in boiling salted water, about 5 minutes.
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 7 cups of bread, cut into 1 inch cubes. Any white bread will do here, but more rustic hearth style breads are probably better than sandwich loaf style bread
- 2 cups of aged cheddar, grated
- ½ cup of freshly grated parmesan cheese
- 2 cups of milk
- ½ cup of thick cream
- 8 eggs
- 2 Tbls of butter
- 1 tsp of salt
- ½ tsp of freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 Tbls of Dijon mustard

METHOD

- Start the night before you'll serve this by heating a skillet over medium — add in the butter and sauté the chopped onion until softened, about 5 or 6 minutes.
- Turn the heat off and toss your cooked broccoli florets into the onions.
- Meanwhile, take out a large shallow casserole dish and fill the bottom with about 1/3 of your bread cubes. On top of this bread add half the broccoli and onion and 1/3 of the cheddar.
- Make another layer with another 1/3 of the bread cubes topped with the remaining broccoli and onions and another 1/3 of the cheddar.
- Make a final layer with the remaining bread and on this spread the remaining cheddar and the grated parmesan cheese.
- In a mixing bowl, whisk the eggs with the milk and cream, adding in the mustard, salt and pepper as well, and then pour this egg mixture evenly over the bread in the casserole (squish the bread down a bit to make sure it all gets saturated with the custard mixture)
- Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- In the morning, preheat the oven to 375° and once hot, uncover the strata and bake it until it has puffed up slightly and is a very appetizing bubbly golden brown, about 45 minutes.



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Questions? Comments? Articles?

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