



ACACIA GARDENS NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by your Strata Committee

October / November 2020

Dear Owners and Residents,

Welcome to the November edition of the Acacia Gardens strata committee newsletter. We have lots of information to share with you. We have added the ability to see this information by scanning a QR code which will be put up in the lifts so that both owners and residents can keep up to date on what is happening in the building.

LATEST NEWS

Your committee has continued to hold regular informal committee video calls to discuss strategy, address any upcoming issues, and talk about the agenda for the next formal strata committee meeting. These calls have been held every 2 weeks and some great steps forward have been made with regard to the proposed building works, negotiations around loan interest rates and service levels expected from our building managers among many other topics that are discussed.

A lot of work is being done to establish much better benchmarks for the level of service we are receiving from our building managers. We know that over the past few years there have been some shortcomings and we are in the process of reviewing the building manager contracts to ensure that both CSR and Meriton are complying with all their contractual obligations. We are also looking at ways to enhance the level of service provided by both CSR and Meriton within the scope of their contracts.

The Committee has also written to both CSR and Meriton about areas that require improvement and a Breach Notice has been issued to CSR pursuant to the motions passed at the AGM.

Electronic communications

Currently, every time we mail out a meeting notice, agenda or minutes, it costs the owners corporation approximately \$1000. We would like to reduce the cost to all owners by emailing notices. Almost all owners receive information by mail and the cost of these mailouts is unnecessary.

Please assist us with reducing this cost by downloading [THIS FORM](#) and registering your email with our strata manager, BCS. You can complete the form in PDF and sign it electronically. Please return it by email to BCS at: stratamanger@acaciagardens.com.au.

Please note - If you have received this newsletter by email, you still need to fill in the form and send it to BCS. Our mailing list for this newsletter is separate to the details held on the strata roll by BCS.

Stage 1 Intercom

After nearly 7 years of the Stage 1 intercom system not working properly, we are now taking steps to move forward and commence replacement of the Stage 1 intercom system. The quotes received have been reviewed and we have agreed on a contractor to replace the intercom. We are starting work next week with the contractor to plan for the replacement of the intercom system. There may be some disruption during the replacement, but we hope to keep this to a minimum. We hope that this improvement will make life a little easier for all our Stage 1 owners and residents.

RECENT STRATA COMMITTEE MEETING

A Strata Committee meeting was held on the 5th November 2020. The committee attended in person at the BCS offices and a number of owners joined the meeting virtually.

The minutes will have more information, but the important outcomes of the meeting are:

- Core Consulting are going to provide a revised report outlining which parts of the rectification works are a priority with the aim to commence high priority works as soon as possible.
- The lifts have been assessed and the committee have approved necessary maintenance work to commence. There are no life safety issues with the lifts, but maintenance is required, and the contractor will be held to a higher regular maintenance standard going forward.
- A clearer renovation application process will be implemented in the next few weeks that will make the process for owners wanting to renovate much easier to navigate.
- Stage 1 intercom replacement has been approved and a contractor confirmed. Work will commence as soon as the testing of the wiring has been conducted.
- Building management are going to review the visitor parking system and make a recommendation on a better system for our visitor parking spaces.
- Building management are going to assess all access gates and doors to the building to repair or install soft-closing mechanisms to stop them slamming.
- The committee agreed to proceed with the Smart Green Apartment recommendations and will start with upgrading the lighting in the carpark and the fire stairs to LED lights and motion sensors. The council has agreed to meet the cost of a project manager for these works and we are eligible for a rebate from the council for some of the cost of the upgrade work. This will result in significant energy savings, reducing our power bill. The payback period for this work is less than a year once we include the council rebate. We are looking at a cumulative 10 years savings of around \$770,000.
- The committee will be looking at upgrading our security system and cameras throughout the building.

UPDATES & ONGOING ISSUES

Courtyard drainage

Following the significant flooding in the courtyard as a result of the recent heavy rain, we arranged for a plumber to attend and unblock all the common area drains for the first time in many years. This should make walking in the courtyard with dry feet possible this summer!

Legal Proceedings commenced by SunAust Properties (Central Sydney Realty)

Several months ago, CSR issued a dispute notice against the Owners Corporation for non-payment of invoices. The disputed invoices have not been paid because the Owners Corporation has received legal advice that CSR may have been overcharging owners for many years. Last month, on the 9th October, your Owners Corporation Lawyer (JS Mueller & Co Lawyers) and representatives of your strata committee attended mediation with CSR but unfortunately the dispute was not resolved. We will keep you updated as to any future progress.

Building Works

In 2019, Core Engineering provided a report to the Owners Corporation detailing building works that need to be undertaken to the four towers of Stage 1. Since the report was prepared by Core in 2019, a number of other high priority building works have been identified including urgent waterproofing works to individual apartments. Given the length of time that has passed since the Core report was received, the committee has requested that Core Engineering provide an updated report that contains all urgent and priority works. The committee will then tender for the required works. We expect to receive this new report from Core Engineering in the next month.

Elevators – Stage 1 and Stage 2

A full review of the elevators has been undertaken, the report has been presented and the committee is now reviewing this, actioning some maintenance issues identified and assessing what other works need to be done to ensure that the lifts are safe and reliable. As part of this review, an assessment of the service provided by the maintenance contractor was completed and the committee is reviewing this and will be addressing this with the contractor.

Insurance

We are working with BCS to obtain a new valuation for the building with a plan to review all our insurances to ensure we have the best possible deal and value for money.

BUILDING REMINDERS

As we are rapidly approaching summer with our stunning Sydney weather and the holiday season, we want to remind all residents that there is a by-law (Special by-law 6) that requires you and any guests not smoke anywhere on common property or on your own property if the smoke affects any other residents – Please don't smoke in any open spaces in the building or near the entrances. Similarly, we adhere to Sydney city noise restrictions that mean you must not create unreasonable noise after 10:00pm so let's all make this summer enjoyable by respecting our neighbours and working within the restrictions.

Please also note that short term letting of your apartment (AirBnB, Stayz etc) is only permitted in Sydney if you have an approved Development Application (DA) to use a residential property as a commercial one. If an apartment is being used for short term rental without the appropriate approved application, council regulations are being breached and if notified, the council can take action against the lot owner. The Strata Committee intends to add a by-law in accordance with the Fair Trading Act amendment, prohibiting short term rentals in our building. The special resolution by-law will be voted on at the next general meeting.

TOPIC OF THE TIMES

We have recently had questions about the roles of the Building Manager and the Strata Manager, so we have put together a summary that sets out the roles and responsibilities of each.

The STRATA MANAGER is engaged by the Owners Corporation and is accountable to all owners as a group. The strata manager is engaged to assist with making sure that the Owners Corporation is fulfilling all its legislated obligations and assists the Strata Committee and Owners Corporation in meeting all its administrative needs.

The strata manager does not make decisions for the Owners Corporation instead the strata manger provides advice and guidance to the strata committee and the Owners Corporation.

The strata manager, with the Strata Committee and the Treasurer specifically, is responsible for managing the financial affairs of the Owners Corporation including payments and collection of levies.

The BUILDING MANAGER/CARETAKER is engaged by the Owners Corporation to be an on-site resource for common property matters. The building manager/caretaker generally has specialist skills in the day to day management of a large residential complex for owners and tenants.

The building manager is the first point of contact for many owners and residents about most issues including water, electrical, fire safety, access (swipe cards), neighbor disturbances, security, general repairs and maintenance, common property issues and advice about contractors.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

SOCIAL & RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee had really hoped that we would be able to hold the first Acacia Gardens Christmas party this year but as there are still restrictions in place about the number of people who can gather, we are not able to. As soon as the restrictions are lifted, we hope to be able to get owners and residents together for a celebration. Hopefully, that can happen soon in to the new year.

The Morin Café on the corner of William Henry Street and Jones Street is open weekdays from early to late afternoon and has an excellent range of food with lunch specials and great burgers! Next time you are stuck for what to have for lunch, go see the team at Morin Café.

COOK UP A STORM

In this edition, we are bringing you Philippe's famous specialty – Almond meal & Coconut cake! It is absolutely delicious and pretty easy to make. Remember, if you have a family specialty you want to share, please send it to the committee email below and we will include it as soon as we can.



What you'll need:

- 200g of butter
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp of vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp of salt
- 250g of almond meal
- 250g of sugar
- 70g of desiccated coconut
- 30g of flaked almonds (optional)
- Icing sugar to decorate

How to do it:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius (fan-forced).
2. Grease and line a 20cm round springform cake tin with baking paper and set aside.
3. Place the butter into a large microwave-safe bowl. Melt on 50% power for 2-3 minutes (in 30 second bursts) or until melted. Allow to cool.
4. Add the eggs and vanilla extract and beat with hand-held beaters or a stand mixer until combined.
5. Add the almond meal, coconut, salt and caster sugar and stir to combine.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake tin.
7. Sprinkle the flaked almonds over the top and bake for 45 minutes or until cake springs back when pressed. Allow to cool in the pan.
8. Dust with icing sugar before serving (optional).
9. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

RENOVATIONS INFORMATION

Understanding your Renovation By-laws.

The committee and strata manager have spent some time this month to improve and streamline the requirements and application process for renovations in our building. There are 2 types of renovation – Minor Renovations & Major renovations according to Special by-laws 7 & 8.

In brief:

- **a minor renovation** does not include any changes that require waterproofing or structural changes. This work can be applied for through your building manager and approved by the strata committee;
- **a major renovation** is anything that does require waterproofing works or structural changes. This work requires a by-law to be written and must go to a general meeting for approval.

Some works do not need approval at all. Please check with your building manager if you are not clear.

The MINOR Renovation application form can be found on the website or [CLICK HERE](#).

The MAJOR Renovation application form can be found on the website or [CLICK HERE](#).

Please feel free to get in touch with your building manager if you need further clarification on Minor/Major renovations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The following are the best ways to contact the people you need:

Stage 1 Building manager (CSR) Email: buildingmanager1@acaciagardens.com.au

Stage 2 Building manager (Meriton) Mobile: 0409 095 297 Email: buildingmanager2@acaciagardens.com.au

Security (Stage 1 & 2) – Mobile: 0410 408 873

BCS – Kara Seymour (Strata Manager) Phone: 02 8216 0398 Email: stratamanager@acaciagardens.com.au

Strata Committee (all members) Email: stratacommittee@acaciagardens.com.au

Strata Committee Chairperson (Luming) Email: chair@acaciagardens.com.au

Strata Committee Secretary (Nick) Email: secretary@acaciagardens.com.au

Strata Committee Treasurer (Matthew) Email: treasurer@acaciagardens.com.au

Any other enquiries, Email: newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au

If you haven't done so already, download the [Building Management App for Stage 2](#) – MYBOS. Once you are registered as a user it is a great way to make maintenance requests, report issues, and it has other great resources. If you have any issues joining or using the App, please check in with Ali on level 6 at 71 Jones Street.

If you want to join the Acacia Gardens Owners groups on either WhatsApp or WeChat, or both, please email us with your phone number to be added. Email: newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au

You can find the Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/261530967880147>

The Acacia Gardens website is now up and running and has a lot of useful resources. Check it out at: www.acaciagardens.com.au

QUESTIONS, FEEDBACK & SUGGESTIONS

If you would not like to receive the newsletter in the future, please email us on the same email address and we will remove you from the distribution list.

If you have any questions, feedback, requests or would like to make any suggestions, please get in touch!

Thanks for reading!

Acacia Gardens Strata Committee