



Community Brief

Summer 2023/2024 Edition

Welcome to the Summer 2023/2024 edition of LJ Hooker Strata's Community Brief. In this edition of the brief we'll cover important maintenance matters, ACT Government Solar Funding for Apartments initiative, share handy hints and resources, discuss security measures for the festive season, provide a Christmas break notice, and, of course, welcome your valuable feedback.

El Niño Weather Phase

El Niño conditions generally result in below average rainfall over much of eastern Australia. Living in apartment or townhouse complexes during an El Niño event in Australia can bring about various challenges. Residents may face water restrictions due to drought conditions, impacting daily activities and necessitating conservation efforts. The higher temperatures associated with El Niño can lead to increased energy usage for cooling, potentially affecting electricity bills. Concerns about bushfires may prompt a need for heightened fire safety precautions and community awareness. Landscaping and communal green spaces within the complexes may be affected by drought, requiring adaptive maintenance practices. Overall, staying aware of local conditions, following guidelines, and implementing water and energy-saving practices are essential for residents in apartment or townhouse complexes during El Niño.

Solar Funding For Apartments

Owners corporations in the ACT now have the opportunity to participate in the Solar for Apartments Program, which offers up to \$100,000 in grant funds and a zero-interest loan to install rooftop solar in eligible apartment complexes.

To access funding, eligible owners corporations must apply to the program. The financial support is split equally between a grant and a zero-interest loan, with the aim of promoting affordable and cleaner energy for Canberrans and supporting the transition to a low-emissions future.

The Solar for Apartments Program is co-funded up to \$3.6 million under the Solar Banks Initiative of the Australian Government and the ACT Government's Sustainable Household Scheme. The benefits of the solar installations will primarily benefit residents, including many renters in multi-unit developments. This initiative aligns with the ACT Government's commitment to climate action, allowing apartment households to share in the advantages of solar energy.

The program is expected to benefit over 2,100 households, potentially leading to a 35% reduction in electricity bills for apartment dwellers in Canberra. The announcement coincides with the Sustainable Household Scheme reaching a milestone of 20,000 applications, reflecting the community's interest in addressing cost of living pressures and reducing carbon footprints. Brighte, the exclusive finance and administration provider of the ACT Government's Sustainable Household Scheme, expressed pride in supporting these initiatives and making sustainability more inclusive, affordable, and accessible to everyone.

To qualify for the Solar for Apartments Program, the average unimproved value of a unit in the premise must not exceed \$300,000 in any year from 2022. The premise must be an apartment complex with a Class A unit plan under the Unit Titles Act 2001, be a completed development during the application, and not already have rooftop solar. Additionally, all residents must benefit from the solar installation. The owners corporation is required to meet the loan provider's (Brighte) conditions, ensuring they can repay the loan component.



Handy Resources

Did you know that the ACT Government has a guide available to unit owners and prospective unit owners called "Unit Titles Management In The ACT: What You Need To Know".

This guide is essential for anyone that currently owns a unit in the ACT, or is considering buying or moving into a unit, offering valuable insights into the unique aspects of unit living. It caters to a diverse audience, including first-time buyers, those looking to upsize or downsize, and individuals seeking the advantages of shared facilities. The guide addresses common questions about rights and responsibilities, distinguishing the differences between unit and house ownership. While it provides assistance, it emphasizes the need for additional information from Strata Managers, real estate agents and solicitors, reminding readers that it does not replace independent legal or financial advice.

To enhance readability, the guide explains common terms, answers frequently asked questions, and highlights key points at the beginning of each chapter. Existing unit owners and renters are encouraged to read as well, with the guide offering valuable information to refresh their understanding of rights and responsibilities. The guide invites note-taking and provides space for this purpose.

The guide is available using the following link:

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1389250/Exhibit-07A-Unit-titles-management-in-the-ACT-What-you-need-to-know.pdf

Summer Reminders

With summer here we would like to use the opportunity to remind residents at strata buildings that they are living in medium to high density arrangements. With the increase in time spent outdoors, including on balconies and common property, we ask residents to remember that noise – including music and talking – travels between units. It is not just noise that travels across balcony walls. Cigarette smoke, cooking smoke, along with noise may cause disturbance to occupants of neighboring units. We ask that you consider others while enjoying time outdoors in the warmer weather.

Security

December and January are regularly the time when there is increased theft from multi-unit complexes. We encourage all residents to be mindful of this. Common security issues that arise include: mail theft, including keys left for visitors in mailboxes; and theft of items from basement garages. Residents are asked to be aware of their surroundings when entering and exiting garages, especially in the early hours of the morning, and ensuring that building access devices and valuables are not left in vehicles, particularly within sight. If individual residents are victims of theft and an access device is stolen, they must immediately contact our office to report the theft. Any damage to vehicles or loss of personal property should be reported to ACT Policing in the first instance.

Christmas Shutdown

In celebration of the festive season, and so our team can enjoy a well earned break with family and friends, please note our office will be closed on the following dates: From 4pm Friday 22nd December 2023 and will reopen on Monday 8th January 2024. Emergency contact information is available via our App, or if a matter is an emergency situation, please call us on 1800 383 333 (After Hours emergency calls will attract a fee to the caller). We will have skeleton staff in the office in the first week of January 2024.

LJ Hooker Strata App

A large amount of information is stored for 24/7 access by owners on the LJ Hooker Strata Resident App. The App is a communication and resident engagement platform within the complex and an effective way to engage with all owners, current occupants and managing agents. The App allows us to distribute information quickly. The App provides a wide range of benefits for residents such as:

- Instant SMS alerts and push notifications
- 24/7 access to your community in the palm of your hand
- View Levy Notices & Levy History
- Automated Levy Reminders
- Direct link to Strata Pay for Digital Levy Payments
- Notifications of preventive maintenance works and contractors working on site
- Move in/out & bookings of common amenities
- Real-time common property maintenance reporting
- Digital Request & Application Forms with Live Updates
- Search & View Important Documents– including strata building insurance information
- Notices and minutes of general meetings
- Minutes of executive committee meetings
- Reminder alerts to owners for general meetings
- After hours emergency procedures and contacts
- Site contact information
- Resident Hub – Community Wall, Clubs, Events & More

The App is available for download through IOS (Apple) and on the Android Play store, either by searching or scanning the below QR Codes. Sign-up for the App is site specific. Please contact our App Administrator at infoact@ljhookerstrata.com.au

Registration Process:

1. Welcome email
2. Activate your account
3. Set a secure password
4. Download the App
5. Login



Do you have suggestions for topics to be covered in future issues of this forum? Please send your suggestions to

infoact@ljhookerstrata.com.au