

Media Release – INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE

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Attention Chiefs of Staff / Editors / Property Editor

FEARS THAT DOZENS OF “PARTY HOUSES” COULD MAKE A RETURN TO GOLD COAST UNDER WATERED DOWN REGULATIONS

LEADER OF \$100 BILLION STRATA SECTOR SAYS IT WILL SEND SHIVERS DOWN THE SPINES OF OWNERS – AHEAD OF SCHOOLIES

Watered down “party house” restrictions could mean big headaches for apartment and unit owners on the Gold Coast, if recent proposals made by Gold Coast City Council are brought to fruition.

Strata industry leaders are warning it will send a shiver down the spines of owners ahead of major school holidays and the Schoolies period.

It's understood that the Gold Coast City Council has considered plans to let apartment and unit owners self-assess whether their lot can be let out for short-term accommodation purposes, blatantly ignoring planning schemes and by-laws put in place by bodies corporate. (Editors – see attached parliament minutes)

The peak body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Queensland, Strata Community Australia (Qld) says a model of this type would see dozens of communities disrupted by “party houses” along the Gold Coast, a region that is set to host hundreds of thousands of partying tourists for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

“Owners who have fought hard to see party behaviour banned from their communities must be at a loss for why this is being watered down,” Strata Community Australia (Qld) President Simon Barnard said today.

“The emergence of short term letting services like Airbnb (among others) have opened a lot of eyes to the opportunities out there for a secondary income stream, but for many owners on the Gold Coast it's brought just as much disruption.”

“There is a reason why there was strong support for party house regulations in the past and it beggars belief why such controls would be watered down in such haste, especially with the busy years ahead for the region.”

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Mr Barnard says the sector was pleased to hear the same sentiments echoed by State Member for Mermaid Beach Ray Stevens in a recent parliamentary sitting.

"It is obvious to my mind that of course owners would find the proposed self regulation suitable for making a quick buck at the cost of local amenity, enjoyment and the comfort of Gold Coast residents," Mr Stevens said in the sitting.

"This would nullify legislation introduced in May 2015 which enabled local councils to enforce restrictions on short-term holiday letting in residential and business areas."

"This would, in effect, roll back the effective protections in place that I and many Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach constituents campaigned long and hard to get."

Mr Barnard says the core deliverables of the regulations introduced in 2015 were to safeguard apartment and unit owners on the Gold Coast from issues like property damage, overcrowding, insurance voiding and related instances of crime.

"Historically, strata communities on the Gold Coast have had a tough time maintaining community harmony through holiday times and that's why the regulations were introduced."

"Since then, Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate has publicly said that temporary local planning regulations had worked very well to stop party houses, and even said incidents were at an all-time low, so it's a non-sensical proposal to see them watered down."

"We understand that the Gold Coast hosts at any given time, a minimum of 52,000 visitors and with major tourism events like the 2018 Commonwealth Games ahead, the last thing we need to see is partying once again disrupting residential communities."

Mr Barnard says SCA (Qld) is ready and available for the Gold Coast City Council to consult them and its members on the benefits available to owners since regulations were brought in last year.

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