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Attention Gold Coast Media

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GOLD COAST APARTMENT AND UNIT OWNERS GROW FRESH SCHOOLIES CONCERNS, AFTER 'ZOMBIE DRUG' REPORTS

STRATA PROPERTY LEADERS URGE POLICE TO “LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED” TO MINIMISE RISK IN STRATA COMMUNITIES

DRUG USE JOINS EMERGING ISSUES LIKE ROOFTOPPING

“Aggressive, non-compliant and dangerous” - three words you probably wouldn't want to hear to describe someone renting your property.

Yet ahead of this year's *Schoolies* celebrations, there are serious concerns from apartment and unit owners on the Gold Coast that their communities will be subject to this kind of behaviour, after major police warnings about a new 'zombie drug'. (Editors – see attached)

The strata title market is worth \$100 billion in replacement value in Queensland, and the peak body advocating for the sector is calling on Queensland Police to leave no stone unturned in the efforts to see this new drug kept out of Gold Coast strata communities.

Strata Community Australia (Qld) says the *Schoolies* period always presents challenges to owners within strata communities, but this year's celebrations look to be on another level, with new drug mayhem aligning with issues like balcony safety, roof topping and unauthorised private drone use being major concerns for the upcoming celebrations.

“Over the years, strata communities have grown accustomed to issues like overcrowding and underage drinking, and put plans in place to see them dealt with, but these emerging behaviours will worry all lot owners on the Gold Coast,” SCA (Qld) President Simon Barnard said today.

“It all boils down to the fact that apartments and units are where these behaviours will predominantly take place, and that poses a massive risk to owners and their properties.”

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Mr Barnard says the major concerns focus around a new drug, uncovered as part of a string of hospitalisations on the Gold Coast recently, where those affected were described as “aggressive, non-compliant and dangerous” by emergency services.

“It’s not enough for people on the sidelines to say “they did this to themselves”, when speaking about drug affected individuals, because in reality, an entire strata community can be at risk when someone engages in this behaviour.”

“Heightened injury risk, increased balcony safety concerns, damage to property these are already established concerns for every schoolies period but dangerous and illegal drug use exacerbates these issues.”

“The majority of School leavers stay in large communities, with many possessing over 20 lots, (sometimes up to and in excess of 100) and the owners of these properties surrounding yours all have a stake in your behaviour.”

In addition to recent reports about dangerous drugs on the Coast, Mr Barnard says communities should also be making special efforts to communicate strict policies about roof access and drone use, to address recent trends.

“A big part of the Schoolies experience in the modern age involves getting the best photo, and that presents a couple of unique challenges for communities.”

“Rooftopping is still very popular, and similar to calls made last year to address the matter, special efforts should again be made to secure the roof from guests accessing it.”

“Alongside the thrill of taking photos on a building's roof, drones continue to surge in popularity and we also have some concerns about their unauthorised use at this year’s festivities.”

“During June/July school holidays on the Gold Coast this year, a Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter nearly collided with a drone, and with over 20,000 teens about to descend on the Coast, we expect some will be planning to take their drones with them.”

“The prospect of drones being launched from balconies, zipping in between buildings is one fraught with danger and we encourage all communities with

Schoolies bookings to communicate with guests on what they can and can't bring for their stay."

Acknowledging schoolies celebrations as a "great Gold Coast tradition" Mr Barnard says the message to school leavers is to have fun but be safe and respectful of other's property.

"A week of fun doesn't need to involve weeks of repairs or lasting impacts for strata property owners so we hope guests in strata communities stay safe, and maintain a good level of respect for their neighbours."

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