

Media Release

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Attention Chief of Staff / Property Editor

GIVE UNIT OWNERS RIGHTS TO SELF REGULATE BALCONY SMOKING

MORE TIME NEEDED TO CONSIDER SMOKING ISSUE FOR STRATA PROPERTIES

The peak body representing the strata and community title sector in Queensland has expressed concerns towards the State Government and the Opposition against any knee jerk reactions to calls over the last 24 hours for a ban on smoking on apartment balconies.

Strata Community Australia (Qld) President, Simon Barnard, said today the issue should be divorced from the current State election campaign and more time should be given to consider the issue.

Mr Barnard said support for a regulated ban on smoking on apartment balconies requires more consideration because of the complexity of the issue.

"We don't see how unit owners should be treated any differently to stand alone house owners who are bound by council regulations," Mr Barnard said.

"This is a complex and very emotive issue and is not one for simplistic solutions that sound good at the time.

"People owning and living in strata properties should be treated fairly. They should be empowered to restrict smoking on balconies and in common areas if they so wish through their body corporate structures.

"It is critical that the current law review undertaken by the Attorney-General gives them the powers to make their own decisions whether that be concerning smoking or keeping pets.

“Standalone home owners can smoke in their homes or outside of their homes and keep a pet if they wish.

“In strata schemes, it’s about just that – having the right to decide what you want for where you live, of course by way of a democratic process. This principle balances the rights of owners as well as addressing responsible public health policy. Discriminating against the rights of owners is hardly going to be a long term solution.”

Mr Barnard repeated the organisation’s recent call for the January 30 deadline on submissions to proposed legislative changes to body corporate laws to be extended, because of the early State election date.

“The last thing we want to see is any knee jerk reaction from either the State Government or the Opposition on this issue.

“It is a complex issue that requires a lot of thought.

“I hope the politicians resist the temptation to make any policy decisions on the run during this election campaign.”

ENDS