

Media Release

Attention Chief of Staff/Editors

Monday June 29th, 2015

PET LOVERS NOT ENTITLED TO AN “OPEN SLATHER” IN STRATA MAJORITY DECISIONS MUST BE A PART OF STRATA LEGISLATION MOVING FORWARD

A report in last weekend's Sunday Mail calling on pet-loving strata property owners to ignore animal restrictions in their communities has been labeled as “irresponsible” by the State's leading body for the strata sector.

They say the blatant ignorance of strata community by-laws is not the way to handle concerns over the keeping of pets.

“The suggested approach put forward in this weekend's article is hugely off the mark. There is a certain way of dealing with issues in community living and we don't accept that breaking strata community by-laws is the best way to go about it,” Strata Community Australia (Qld) President Simon Barnard said today.

“Bodies corporate and their committees represent the needs and living preferences of entire strata communities, so we urge pet-loving strata owners to comply with the requirements of the by-laws before bringing an animal into their lot.”

Mr Barnard says that whilst some recent rulings from the Body Corporate Commissioner may suggest that precedent exists for the overturning of animal by-laws, it doesn't excuse illegal behavior.

“They don't have open slather to just bring pets in, especially when the existing policy specifically bans pets. The Commissioner will determine each case on its merits, so flagrantly disregarding the by-laws will always carry a significant risk for a recalcitrant resident.”

“The article we observed on the weekend basically infers an owner can do what they like, which is factually incorrect and not a message that should be out there.”

Strata Community Australia (Qld) says that the keeping of pets continues to be an issue of priority for the strata sector in its push for legislative reform in the state property law review.

"In our submission to the Attorney-General's office, we raised a number of issues and stressed the need for bodies corporate to be free to apply self-governing by-laws to their communities moving forward," Mr Barnard said.

"To our way of thinking, if, by a majority decision, owners choose to be a pet-free or pet-friendly scheme then it should be their choice."

"Every strata community is different, so the keeping of pets should be decided by the body corporate of the scheme to allow owners to self-determine what they want their 'neighbourhood' to be like. "

"We hope that strata in Queensland will soon reach a point where bodies corporate are able to apply their own by-laws on issues like pets, relative to the needs and preferences of their stakeholders. In the meantime, owners and residents are encouraged to abide by the existing by-laws rather than recklessly taking the law into their own hands."

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