

## **SCA (WA) 2017 SYMPOSIUM**

Once again, I was invited by my Strata Manager to the Annual 2017 SCA (WA) Symposium, the premier event that brings together over 200 industry professionals and active owners involved in the future of their strata asset. The event was held at the picturesque Joondalup Resort, located in the suburb of Connolly, a distance of 23 kilometres from Perth.

After registration and coffee, Matt Church from **Thought Leaders Global** welcomed all participants and then enthusiastically introduced the local MP, Mr John Carey who was representing the planning and transport minister, Ms Rita Saffioti. John spoke briefly about the concerns the government has about urban sprawl. Within the context of this concern, he addressed the state government's recognition of the strata industry as being essential for the future of WA. High density housing is seen as the city's answer for future population growth. Strata companies will therefore, have a very important role to play in managing the needs of residents in small and large complexes. Detailed reforms are currently being drafted by the state government to address the role of strata.

After the formalities were completed, Scott Bellerby, the SCA (WA) President invited all participants to make their way to their respective venues for the day's symposium.

### **SPEAKER 1 Robyn Williams, Pinakarri Community**

As a resident of the Pinakarri Community, Robyn's purpose was to inform us on how her community uses a variety of creative practices for members to make decisions agreeable to all residents. Mostly, these revolve around 'majority rules' and/or 'consensus' to make decisions.

Briefly, the Pinakarri Community consists of 2 dozen residents, individual dwellings for community members, a common house, a barbecue area and a café. Owners and renters use these areas for formal and informal meetings where many of the decisions are made. Business agendas are also addressed through the concept of 'non-violent' communication. This is a process whereby participants use the type of language where all views are respected during conversations and discussions.

### **SPEAKER 2 Andrew Watt, Creating Communities**

Andrew's presentation was essentially based on Connected Communities and Attractive Tenancies. When working in harmony, mutual benefits are created for property owners and lessees.

Andrew commenced his talk by highlighting the trend towards strata living; people are trading their large backyards for apartments that are close to such amenities as transport, shopping centres, swimming pools and home care. With migration, there is an increased number of people arriving from China and India. They are attracted to the benefits of living in Perth and the shared accommodation that is on offer. In order for new residents who buy into a complex, they need to be made aware of the importance of by-laws which are brought to their attention through the processes of induction and transaction. Induction is a method of informing new residents about their rights and responsibility in an informal way. This method of communication leads to greater harmony of residents within a complex. Transaction is a more formal method of induction whereby new arrivals are just presented with documents related to by-laws and the expectation to 'just' follow the rules.

Andrew highlighted the importance of the input, neighbours have to promote harmony amongst the residents within a strata complex. Very often, one person can act as the catalyst bringing people

together through creating authentic relationships and highlighting the shared values within high density living. Lower vacancy rates are good for investors, this occurs when shared values are fostered mostly, when they come from the owner and not so much from the real estate agents. Investors who spend money on their property, tend to get greater value from their investments because the dwellings tend to have a higher level of occupation.

Andrew also highlighted to the participants, that sound connections tend to make a complex safe because tenants who get to know and talk to each other also look out for each other.

### **SPEAKER 3 Chiara Pacifici (Green Gurus) Why Green Buildings make Good Business Sense?**

Unfortunately, Chiara was unable to make the presentation, her business colleague, Eugenie spoke to the audience on achieving cost savings and improve the efficiency of buildings through the latest technologies and sustainable living options.

Eugenie, commenced her talk by introducing the WHY, HOW and WHAT model.

*Why do we want buildings to be more sustainable?* The simple answer is, sustainability sells because people are prepared to pay more for their dwelling to be comfortable and where the cost of energy is kept to a minimum. In addition to the use of solar panels, battery storage and roof top gardens are becoming more popular for their sustainability features in green buildings.

*How to 'Green Buildings'?*

The first thing residents need to be aware of, is the consumption rate of the building. This includes, lighting, gas and water. This can be observed from one's utility bills. Once audited, residents can work towards making savings and eventually sustainable measures.

Residents can retrofit their buildings to make them greener, however, currently there is no legislation to accomplish these goals. From strata reform, this issue can be addressed through the formal structure of voting e.g. 'majority rules'.

*What?*

With the implementation of new legislation, residents can make the most of changes for improving sustainability. Some of these changes can use the new technology including use of battery storage, led lights, timers for the use of exhaust fans, use of solar panels and appropriate alarms.

### **SPEAKER 4 Sean MacFarlane from Landgate.**

Sean MacFarlane, a property lawyer is currently working on reforming and updating the Strata Act which has been in its current state for 21 years. A draft copy is in front of cabinet for discussion and once completed, will be enacted into law. This is a very complex area, interested parties can find out further information from the Landgate website.

### **ASK THE EXPERTS**

Mark Atkinson from Atkinson Legal, John Park from Park Legal Solutions and Scott Bellerby SCA (WA) President facilitated a panel session providing owners an opportunity to ask questions and learn from others' experiences.

Finally, Scott Bellerby closed the symposium and all participants adjourned to the Exhibition Hall for lunch.