

Media Release

For immediate release

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OWNERS CORPORATION NETWORK WELCOMES PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BUILDING STANDARDS, BUILDING QUALITY AND BUILDING DISPUTES

Jane Hearn, Chair of the Owners Corporation Network, the peak body representing apartment owners in NSW, today welcomed the release of the Report of the Shoebridge Inquiry.

“OCN has been campaigning for years for better consumer protection and improvements in the quality of new apartment buildings in NSW. The rights of consumers have been whittled away in the name of “cutting red tape””, she said.

“In addition to the evidence OCN gave to the Inquiry on behalf of its members, a great many of whom have suffered with defective apartment buildings including flammable cladding, the Inquiry heard first hand from many people whose lives have been financially and emotionally devastated as a result of buying a home in a building plagued with defects.”, Ms Hearn said.

“This has been compounded by the lack of information, assistance or support from Government, including to new strata committees. OCN has called for Strata Commissioner to provide a knowledgeable voice within Government, and provide information and support. We are pleased the Committee saw fit to support this type of initiative.”, Ms Hearn said.

“Flammable cladding takes safety risks to a new level. The Report makes clear there is an urgent need for financial assistance to people saddled with major building defects and, in particular, those in buildings with flammable cladding.

OCN is calling on the NSW Government to bring forward the Design & Building Practitioners Bill 2019 and the Bill giving the Building Commissioner additional powers (including powers to carry out “boots on the ground” audits of building sites).

“Thousands of apartment owners need the statutory duty care. The Building Commissioner must have the power to stop an occupation certificate if work is unsatisfactory”, Ms Hearn said.

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About OCN

The Owners Corporation Network of Australia Limited (OCN) is the peak consumer body representing residential strata and community title owners and residents. Strata is the fastest growing form of residential property ownership in Australia, and the growth of this sector raises increasingly important questions over property ownership and governance.

