**MEDIA RELEASE**

**OCN CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO STRATA COMMUNITIES**

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Twenty years ago, The Owners Corporation Network (OCN) was formed by a group of apartment-owners from all across Sydney who discovered they were individually fighting the same problems: defects in their new buildings; unscrupulous developers refusing to fix them; and corrupt building and strata managers working against them. Back then, there was no one they could call on for help.

So they decided to get together to form the Owners Corporation Network, and help themselves instead.

“They realised they had common ground, a wealth of shared experience and a voice,” said author and journalist Sue Williams, one of the two founders of the landmark organisation. “As a result, OCN appeared at government hearings, gave evidence of wrongdoing in the industry, forced through new legislation and made others much more accountable for their actions. It’s been 20 years of blood, sweat and many, many tears, but the apartment world is now a much healthier, more equitable place to live.”

OCN has gone from strength to strength ever since, and works to help strata owners navigate the complexities of strata living, from social and organisational challenges to financial and legal issues.

Our people have first-hand experience of living in strata and the upsides and downsides of this fast-growing residential sector. We strive to inform, educate, support and advocate for strata owners and residents.

This year marks 20 years of service and support by OCN to those living in strata communities, advocating for a better future through policy and legislative changes.

Some of our major achievements include:

* The appointment of a Building Commissioner to oversee systemic building defects;
* The NSW government legislating a retrospective statutory duty of care owed to NSW Strata owners by design and building practitioners;
* Driving the creation of a NSW Strata Portal, a first for Australia, which will allow government agencies to communicate directly with Owners Corporations and identify and analyse strata trends to better support owners;
* Helping develop the NSW Design and Building Practitioners Act through active participation in stakeholder roundtables and providing advice to the government on improving protection for strata buyers and apartment owners;
* Facilitating the requirement for a defect bond for buildings over three storeys and prohibiting developers from voting on defects in the crucial first years of a scheme’s life;
* Helping identifying and rectifying flammable cladding through initiatives such as a social media campaign, support for affected members and obtaining legal advice.

OCN Board Member Gerry Chia said, “My 16 year involvement in OCN has seen OCN achieve many wins for strata owners in making developers, builders, and strata service providers more accountable to strata owners, and the appointment of a Building Commissioner. OCN has regularly engaged with government departments and state parliamentarians to represent the interests of strata owners. Our Executive Director, Karen Stiles, deserves the highest commendations for her efforts and tremendous achievements.”

OCN continues its unwavering work in support of strata communities to make strata living more viable into the future. OCN Chair Fred Tuckwell said, “In the last four years we have grown from an advocacy-focused organisation to include value-adding services like fact sheets and EV charging guidelines. We will continue to grow into important areas like education, sustainability and resilience.”

OCN will mark its 20th anniversary with a celebratory event in Sydney in October.

Media Comment:
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