



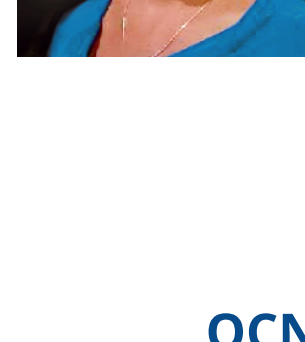
AUGUST 2022

Dear

What a difference a day (or in this case, month) makes. I'm delighted to welcome back the formidable David Chandler, who has agreed to stay on as NSW Building Commissioner until August 2023, to lift building standards in new apartment buildings. And he will be working with the reinstated NSW Property Services Commissioner, John Minns, to improve the management of existing buildings.

Both Commissioners now sit under the Minister for Customer Service, the Hon Victor Dominello. The Minister has wasted no time clearing the backlog of stalled legislation and setting a cracking pace in the race to roll out reforms prior to his retirement from politics in March 2023. He will be a big loss to the NSW community.

But there's more news below. So don't forget to share this newsletter with your committee and others who may find it useful. You can also download and share the OCN flyer on the benefits of membership [HERE](#).

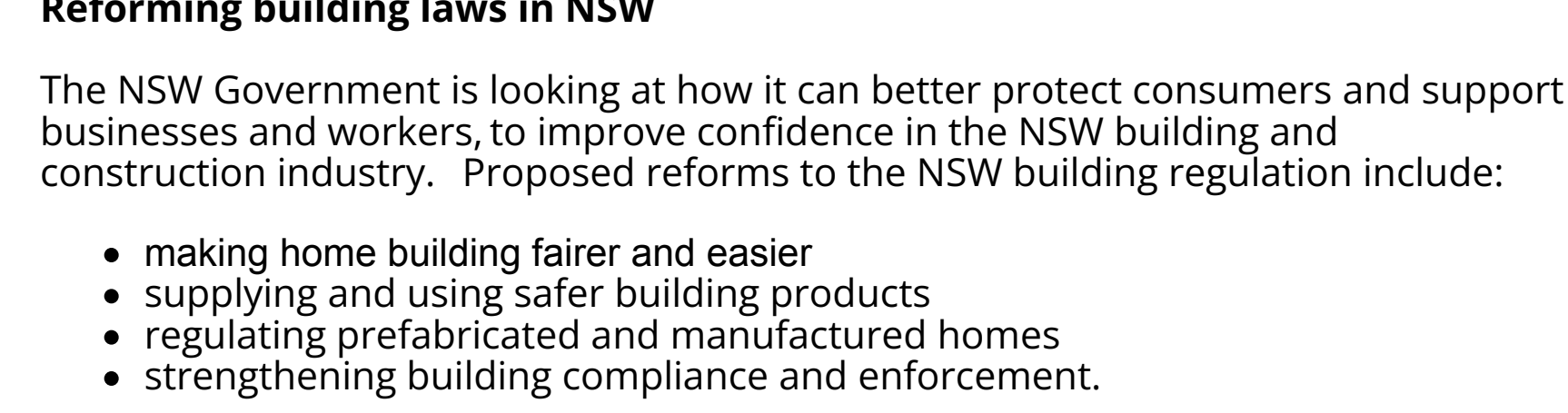


Cheers, Karen Stiles Executive Director

OCN in Action!

OCN In the Media | OCN Submissions | OCN Policy

"I applaud your perseverance in chasing up the things which are so important to all strata people. OCN plays an important part in strata lives so thank you for all your efforts." DEREK, Cape Cobarito



Reforming building laws in NSW The NSW Government is looking at how it can better protect consumers and support businesses and workers to improve confidence in the NSW building and construction industry. Proposed reforms to the NSW building regulation include:

- making home building fairer and easier
• Supplying and using safer building products
• regulating prefabricated and manufactured homes
• strengthening building compliance and enforcement.

Comments close Friday 25 November at www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/reforming-building-laws. You can answer a quick poll, complete a survey or make a submission.

Make Contacting the NSW Government Easier

The NSW Government wants to make it easier for customers to contact them online, to ask questions, make complaints, give compliments and provide suggestions. They want your feedback, so that your experience will:

- be clear and easy
• connect you with the right person or department
• allow us to respond and act on your request.

Take the 5 minute survey:> [HERE](#)



The forum this month canvassed fire safety sign offs for lifts, proactive visits by Fire & Rescue to map facilities in case of emergency, magnesite risks (read this 2019 article) and tackling 7 year levy arrears. And we posted a range of sustainability initiatives across various local Council areas. Make sure your building is benefiting!

If you have a burning question or some advice to give, log in to join the conversation!

"Thanks everyone for your very helpful comments. OCN is a great resource for helping Owners Corporations manage their business." LORRAINE, Newcastle



Wednesday 26 October, 1pm-2pm (Online) Changing Your Strata Manager - Traps & Tricks

What is a reasonable fee? What services should you insist are included? Must you accept what your strata manager offers? Does running a tender empower your OC more than just seeking a proposal? Register:> [HERE](#) (changed from 19/10 to 26/10)

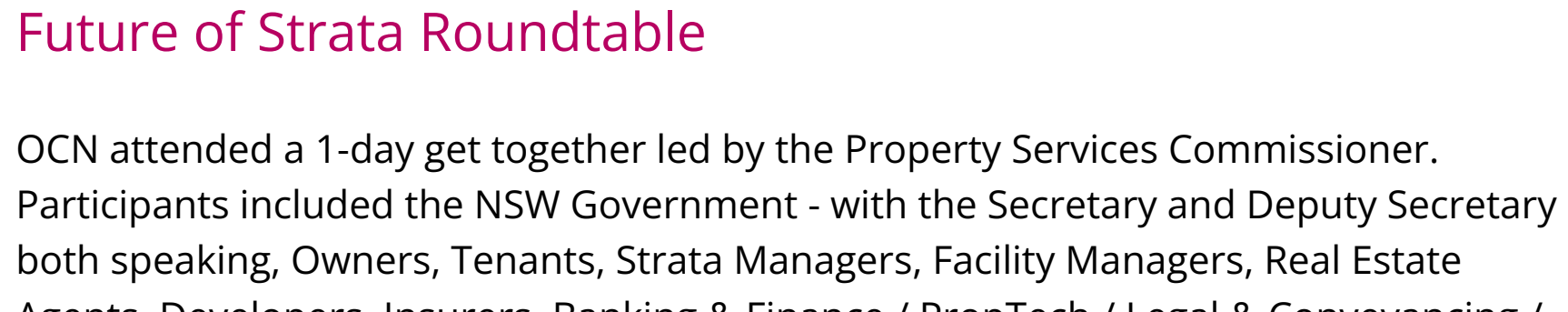
Saturday 5 November, 10am - 12pm OCN Annual General Meeting

Save the date! This will be a live event at our old stomping ground, Jacksons Landing in Pymont. Come along to catch up with colleagues and get an update on OCN's work.

PAST EVENTS

Check out the Member Portal for past event recordings and presentations, such as the legal update by Seniors Rights Service and our popular waterproofing and electric vehicle charging webinars. The importance of maintaining your building was another cracker. You can access recordings:> [HERE](#).

"Congratulations for the magnificent webinar today. Extremely valuable, worthwhile and informative." MICHAEL, Kirrawee



Future of Strata Roundtable

OCN attended a 1-day get together led by the Property Services Commissioner. Participants included the NSW Government - with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary both speaking, Owners, Tenants, Strata Managers, Facility Managers, Real Estate Agents, Developers, Insurers, Banking & Finance / PropTech / Legal & Conveyancing / Academia / Sustainability Consultants, and the Training Industry.

There was enthusiastic brainstorming around futureproofing, regulation, competence building, resilience and sustainability, and insurance. We look forward to continuing this important dialogue and delivering a brighter future for strata owners.

Embedded Networks

OCN gave evidence to the Inquiry into Embedded Networks in NSW of owners finding themselves trapped in long, overpriced contracts for energy, water and internet, leaving residents with no ability to price shop or change providers.

We also met with the Energy & Water Ombudsman and the Australian Energy Retailer to discuss the challenges facing the apartment sector.

Read more, or make a complaint:> <https://www.ewon.com.au/page/customer-resources/living-in-an-embedded-network>

Building Defects

OCN made a submission to the review of the 'last resort' Home Building Compensation scheme, calling on government to focus on company directors who habitually put their companies into administration to avoid responsibility for defects. Thanks once again to our pro bono defects lawyers Banjo Stanton and Paul Jurdeczka for tackling this complex legal challenge for OCN.

Remedial Building Works Impacted

The new Design & Building Practitioners Act is having unfortunate unintended consequences on the remedial building industry.

Applying the 'letter of the law' effectively prohibits simple repair of eg balcony or roof membranes. Architect or engineer's drawings are now required, along with Development Applications, which will cause significant time and cost blowouts of in-progress and future works.

OCN is working with the remedial industry and government to find a practical solution that protects consumers without overburdening industry, local councils and owners.

Telcos Huff & Puff the Doors Down ... or Do They?

Has your building received a telco demand to install infrastructure? Under federal telecommunications law it is very hard to prevent them accessing your property, but I'm pleased to report one building has been successful and there is room for savvy committees to negotiate compensation and indemnification. Contact OCN for help.

"Before closing, I acknowledge the tremendous work of the Owners Corporation Network in getting to this outcome. The team continues to provide me with advice on improving protections for apartment owners and has been integral to improving the regime put forward in the bill." Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, on the Design & Building Practitioners Bill 2019

Welcome to our New Supporter!

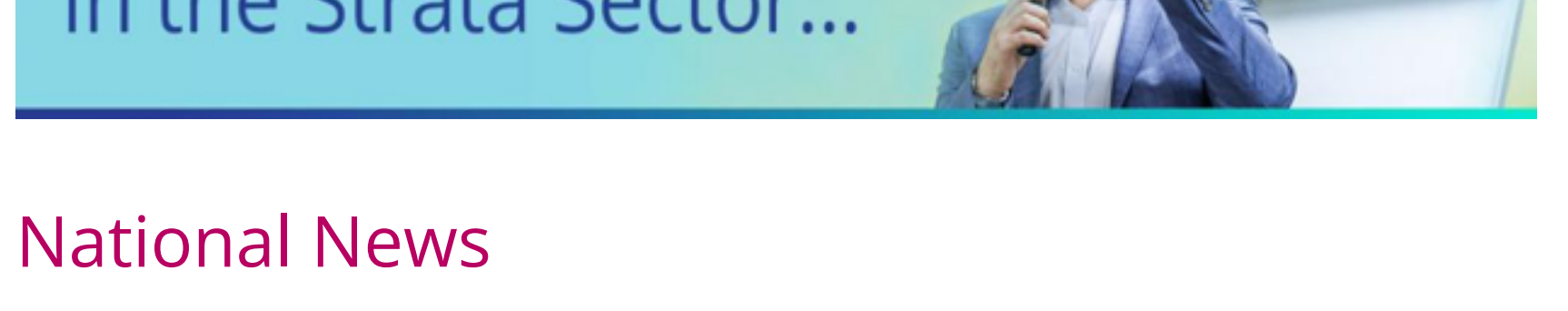
We're delighted to welcome JCA Lift Consultants as a new Supporter of OCN. JCA will be well known to many of you, but for others JCA provide independence and transparency and specialise in assisting strata owners navigate the complexities associated with the ongoing maintenance, upgrading and repair of lifts. A lift consultant can deliver better outcomes along with significant cost savings in large projects. Read more:> [HERE](#).

OCN Members Only

Get all the details of special member-only offers on the OCN website.

Visit our dedicated electric vehicle portal to learn more about EV charging. Members and partners have access to exclusive information, so please be sure to view the EV page in the members portal. Watch the EV ready buildings webinar recording where OCN presented alongside government and industry experts.

And don't forget we have electric vehicle, fire safety, pet, renovation, and short term letting by-laws for sale for \$200+GST - don't pay up to \$3,000! - in the OCN shop - <https://ocn.org.au/member-portal/shop>



National News

National Fire Protection Month

September 2022 is the inaugural National Fire Protection Month, where we celebrate the contribution of the fire protection sector to protect life, property, and the environment.

The purpose of the month is to showcase the role played by the fire protection industry, demonstrating the great strides in fire protection since the Great Fire of London in early September 1666 - 356 years ago.

Fire Protection Association Australia has put together a program of in-person and online events, with at least one event in every state and territory, with topics from electric vehicles to product conformity to fire safety in apartments and even the experience of fire fighters. See the program on their dedicated website - <https://www.nationalfpmonth.com.au>

NSW News

City of Sydney Smart Green Apartments Enrolling Now!

Get free expert advice to reduce your building's water and energy use. Windsor on Kent, a 32-storey apartment building with 192 apartments, reduce common area energy use by 34% in 6 months. Read more:> [HERE](#) and get your application in before 5pm, Monday 19 September - register:> [HERE](#)

NSW Strata Hub Annual Reporting

Individual strata schemes or delegated managing agents must enter their data into the strata portal and pay the \$3 per lot lodgement fee by 31 December 2022.

Learn how to register, set up your profile and complete annual reporting on behalf of your strata scheme:> [HERE](#).

Watch a webinar to guide you through the process:> [HERE](#).

Short-Term Rental Accommodation: Exclusion Register

The NSW Government's mandatory Code of Conduct for the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Industry (the code) first introduced the short-term rental accommodation exclusion register in December 2020.

Hosts and guests with two strikes logged against them in a two-year period for serious breaches of the code will be added to the now public register and cannot book or accept short-term rentals.

From 1 August 2022, hosts, guests, listing registers and booking platforms need to check the exclusion register. Visit the [exclusion register page](#).

Building Standards

The government has responded to the recommendations of the Further Inquiry into Regulation of Building Standards. Whilst it has stopped short of appointing a dedicated senior Building Minister, it has committed to additional controls on phoenixing activity, implementation of the Lambert Review recommendations, and a targeted program of support and education for strata owners and residents. Read the report:> [HERE](#)

Flood Inquiry Report & Resilience NSW

The government has tabled the independent expert report into this year's tragic floods, which has caused the dismantling of the recently established cross departmental Resilience NSW. For anyone interested, the summary and full report are [here](#).

Queensland News

Resilient Homes - Reducing Flood Damage

With talk of La Nina continuing, the Flood Resilient Homes Program, developed by Brisbane City Council and delivered by Brisbane Sustainability Agency, has some great video tips to avoid/reduce flood damage wherever you are. Details:> [HERE](#)

FREE Online Training!

The Office of the Body Corporate Commissioner is offering self-paced online training modules on topics such as role of the committee, committee meetings, general meetings, financial management, and maintenance.

If you require information on how to deal with storms or contact the information setting you may wish to read the BCCM storm damage webpage or contact the Information and Community Education Unit on 1800 060 119.

Victorian News

Embedded Networks Banned

As from January 2023 embedded networks will not be permitted in new apartment buildings, and the government will increase consumer protections for residents of buildings with existing embedded networks. Read more:> [The Guardian](#)