

For immediate release

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Peak Apartment Body Calls For Pre-Election NSW Response To Ongoing Covid Legal Threat

Covid Threat Still Real

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The peak body for the one million plus apartment owners in New South Wales says with new COVID variants emerging, it is concerned tens of thousands of owners corporations in the State are exposed to possible legal challenge if they try and protect apartment precincts from a new COVID outbreak.

It wants to see a comprehensive and updated COVID response and containment plan – including proposed significant legislation changes -- from both major political parties before the March State election.

It says COVID controls were a major issue for apartment owners in 2020 - 2022 and many were left fuming after being ignored in COVID strategies.

The Owners Corporation Network says it is willing to sit down with both parties and work through issues to correct and improve upon the previous lockdown plan put in place during the COVID infection period in 2020 - 2022 and says the planning should be taken away from NSW Health.

“NSW Health is not adequately prepared nor has the expertise to manage another COVID variant outbreak in terms of the specific needs of apartment owners.” OCN executive director, Karen Stiles, said today.

“Owners corporations have a duty of care and must act reasonably to protect the welfare and safety of everyone. This includes keeping common property reasonably safe, preventing dangerous conditions, and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for those working at the property.

“But they need legal authority to act, and this is what has been missing.

“Management statements and by-laws were never intended to protect high density populations during a global public health emergency.

“There are over 80,000 strata and apartment complexes in NSW.

“It is common for larger schemes to have lifts, swimming pools, gyms, spas and saunas.

“In times of a lockdown, owners corporations need clear legal authority enshrined in law to maintain public safety.

“This currently does not exist and that needs to change.”

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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.

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