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Carbon price compensation flawed for apartment dwellers

Any carbon price compensation package will be fundamentally flawed without specific measures to help Australia's 270,000 body corporates adjust to a low carbon future, according to a new body representing the strata and community title sector.

Strata Community Australia Chief Executive Mark Lever, said the strata services industry feared the package would be the latest in a long list of past and present programs which failed to recognise that almost a quarter of Australian households do not live in standard detached housing.

"We have seen governments time and again tailor programs for individuals and businesses and overlook the fact that, for many, basic services are provided through communal structures. Recent examples include disaster relief, renewable energy incentives and the home insulation program," he said.

Up to one-third of energy usage in strata buildings is in common services - lifts, air conditioning, security lighting, pumps, carparks etc. These are beyond the direct control of individuals and any change needs a concerted and collective effort as well as specialist knowledge.

"It's an opportunity for the government to show that it understands how more and more Australians choose to live and work in 2011 and help them take practical steps towards a low carbon economy."

Strata Community Australia is being launched today in Canberra as the new national industry body representing strata management professionals and related specialist service providers. Over the past two months members of six state and territory bodies - the Institute of Strata Title Management (NSW), Owners Corporations Victoria, Community Titles Institute of Queensland, Strata Titles Institute of Western Australia, the Community Titles Institute of South Australia and the Strata Management Institute of the ACT - have voted overwhelmingly to join the new body and adopt a single brand and identity.

Mr Lever said the new organisation reflected the changing face of Australian property ownership.

"Just in the past month we've seen three separate reports confirm what we have known for some time - that for many if not most people the Australian dream of a home of your own no longer involves a back yard and a picket fence," he said.

Strata Community Australia's core objectives are to promote professional standards in the industry, help consumers navigate the complexities of strata and community title and to be an effective advocate for the interests of the sector as a whole.

"We've been encouraged that at least in some areas governments are starting to come to grips with the extra layers of complexity around working with strata and community title," he said, citing the recent report of Treasury's Natural Disaster Insurance Review and the National Broadband Network trial rollout as examples.

"But we have a long way to go to catch up with the realities of today's housing demand."

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About Strata Community Australia

Strata Community Australia was formerly known as the National Community Titles Institute. The new brand and brings together its members - the Institute of Strata Title Management (NSW), Community Titles Institute Queensland, Owners Corporation Victoria, Strata Titles Institute South Australia and Strata Titles Institute Western Australia – under the one name with a new constitution and governance structure.

There are about two million strata and community title lots in 270,000 schemes across Australia. According to the 2006 Census, 22.5 % of Australian households were in medium and high density dwellings. SCA affiliates have approx 2500 member companies and individuals.

Media contact:

Jennifer Ross

1st Avenue Communications

Ph: 0402 996 750

Email: Jennifer@1stavenue.com.au
