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January, 2020

Attention Queensland Media

QUEENSLAND STRATA LEADERS RELEASE BUSHFIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

MANAGERS AND RESIDENTS IN APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES URGED TO STAY VIGILANT AS BUSHFIRES APPROACH CITY FRINGES

With months of Summer heat to go and no rain in sight, strata leaders are urging small, medium, high-rise and other strata communities in Queensland to implement fire safety practices as bushfires continue to threaten built up areas.

Strata Community Association (Qld) is concerned that building managers and residents in built up areas may be unaware of the checklist they need to follow, and the risk of spot fires and fire fronts caused by nearby blazes.

SCA (Qld) President James Nickless says, "It's not only rural properties at risk. Strata properties close to bushland, forest, grassland or coastal scrub should also take precautions during bushfire season.

"We must remember this bushfire season, one of the worst on record, started in suburban areas of the Sunshine Coast.

"Bushfires have the potential to impact any property with the residential density of strata titled properties placing great importance on proper fire safety precautions."

Mr Nickless says, "We've developed a seven-point bushfire safety checklist to help strata communities stay safe this bushfire season. With hot and dry conditions expected to continue, it's critical that managers and residents take action now to prevent loss of life or property."

Strata Community Association (Qld)

Lvl 9, 410 Queen Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

P 07 3839 3011 | **E** admin.qld@strata.community | **W** www.qld.strata.community

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The Strata Community Association (Qld) Bushfire Safety Checklist:

1. **Dispose of dry vegetation and litter:** Embers can travel kilometres ahead of fire fronts, sparking spot fires or additional fire fronts. Dry vegetation and litter should be routinely cleared from rooftops, gutters, balconies and grounds. Grass should be maintained at lengths below 10cm and grass clippings disposed of.
2. **Keep evacuation points, such as stairwells and fire safety doors, clear and unobstructed:** Managers and residents should also be familiar with evacuation points throughout the building. Evacuation instructions should be displayed on every floor. Illuminated exit signs must also be maintained to ensure they're visible at all times.
3. **Develop a bushfire plan:** All residents should have a bushfire plan in place in case of an emergency. A bushfire plan should detail when to leave, where to evacuate to and what you will need to take with you. Do not leave the decision to stay or leave to the last minute.
4. **Decide if you will stay or leave:** This is one of the most crucial decisions to make in advance of an emergency. Building managers and residents should only make the decision to stay and defend the property if they are properly equipped and resourced to do so.
5. **Stay informed:** Everyone should take responsibility for staying informed throughout bushfire season. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) website provides regularly updated Fire Danger Ratings. You can also receive alerts via radio, social media and SMS. Save the following number into your phone for Emergency Alert Australia: 0444 444 444.
6. **Check building safety:** Determining exact areas of building concern can be difficult without training. A professionally registered fire engineer will be able to assess the building and work with management to establish fire safety protocols.
7. **Ensure building insurance is adequate:** If you haven't already, check the building is insured for full replacement and reinstatement value and your personal contents sums insured are adequate. While not mandatory, retrofitting the property is recommended for older buildings to minimise damage and avoid costly repairs.

Mr Nickless says, "Anyone with questions regarding bushfire safety should consult their local fire authority. We hope strata communities throughout Queensland will hear our message and implement our safety checklist."

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About Strata Community Association (QLD)

Strata Community Australia (Qld) Limited (SCA Qld) is the peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Queensland. Membership includes body corporate managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA (Qld) members manage property worth an estimated replacement value of \$80billion.

There are more than 50,000 community titles schemes with 409,000 community titled lots in Queensland. 43.3% of all new dwelling approvals are expected to be lots in a body corporate scheme. SCA (Qld) proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

Website: <http://qld.stratacommunity.org.au/>