

At The Keys

Quarterly Newsletter (WINTER 2024)

www.thekeysapartments.com.au



IN THIS EDITION:

- Welcome
- Living In Community
- New Body Corporate Legislation commenced 1 May 2024
- A Unified Watch: Security
- Work, Health & Safety
- Who To Contact
- Charging E Bikes & E Scooters
- Handy Hints
- Enhancing Your Apartment: A Guide to Sharing Upgrade Plans
- Noise & Apartments: A Hot Topic

Welcome

Welcome to the first (Winter) edition of 'At The Keys', a publication designed to keep all residents and non-resident owners of the Keys informed on what is happening in and around the place and latest information on general strata living news. We are working to produce a quarterly newsletter to coincide with the change in seasons.

We welcome contributions to our newsletter from all you budding journalists who live amongst us. This newsletter aims to bridge the gap between residents and your Body Corporate Committee. It is a way of circulating important information in relation to the the Keys but most importantly, it is also a platform to share good news stories, community updates and all the happenings at the Keys.

Get to Know Us...

By way of introduction, the Body Corporate Committee (BCC) comprises seven members who all come with a wealth of varied experiences and knowledge encompassing business, human resource management, financial services, real estate and both the military and public service.

Want to know more?

Checkout www.thekeysapartments.com.au/committee-cvs/

The BCC's primary purpose is to work together to deliver the best outcomes for The Keys so that it becomes a preferred place for individuals and families to live harmoniously so that we can create a real sense of community. The BCC is charged with looking after all day-to-day aspects of managing The Keys on behalf of all owners.

The BCC is always seeking engagement from all residents. Community and inclusion are integral and it ensures that everyone has a voice and is across all necessary information and updates.

We encourage engagement and constructive feedback from all our residents through emailing info@thekeysapartments.com.au or through our resident caretaker/manager.

Living In Community

The Keys can truly be described as a tropical oasis. A unique collection of spacious and liveable apartments sit peacefully in the tropical gardens. Surrounded on one side by World Heritage Listed Rainforest with the backdrop of the magnificent Macalister Ranges.

The mature garden with its resort style pool, spa, gazebos, BBQ and lounge areas gives a relaxing resort style feel to the place whilst the apartments are large and comfortable.

Introduction:

Living in a strata-titled property has become increasingly common in urban environments, providing a sense of community along with shared responsibilities. However, the utopian vision of harmonious communal living is often disrupted by disputes that can arise amongst strata residents. These disputes, ranging from seemingly trivial matters to complex legal battles, are rooted in a variety of factors that reflect the challenges of shared living spaces.

Differing Perspectives and Expectations:

One of the primary reasons for disputes within strata communities is the diverse range of perspectives and expectations among residents. Everyone brings a unique background, lifestyle, and set of values into the shared space, leading to conflicting opinions on matters ranging from noise levels to the use of common areas. Misaligned expectations often result in tension and disagreement.

Communication Breakdown:

Effective communication is the backbone of any successful community living, but it is also a common trigger for disputes. Misunderstandings arise when residents fail to communicate openly and transparently. Issues left unaddressed can fester, escalating into more significant conflicts. Inadequate or ineffective communication can lead to disputes over shared expenses, maintenance concerns, or changes in community rules. The modern reliance on emails for communication can exacerbate disputes. Emails tend to be misinterpreted. It is very hard to convey tone in an email.

Use of Common Areas:

Strata living involves shared spaces, and conflicts often arise regarding the use and maintenance of these areas. Disputes over parking spaces, communal gardens, or recreational facilities can become heated when residents have conflicting expectations about access, cleanliness, or rules governing these shared spaces.

Maintenance and Repairs:

Maintenance issues are a common flashpoint for disputes in strata communities. Disagreements may arise over the responsibility for repairs, the timing of maintenance work, or the quality of the services provided. Differing opinions on whether certain repairs are necessary or if they justify a special levy can lead to disputes that may require legal intervention.

By-Law/Rule Violations:

Strata living involves adherence to community By-laws and regulations. Violations of these rules, whether intentional or inadvertent, can lead to disputes. Issues such as noise complaints, misuse of visitor parking spaces, pet regulations/policy and alterations to individual units without proper approval can create friction among residents. Just by way of a gentle reminder, loud music is one of the major complaints experienced in strata living. Always try to put yourself in the situation of having to listen to an operatic aria at full volume when operatic music may not be of your liking. The same goes for the reverse with other forms of loud music.

The By-Laws are currently in review noting recent changes to the Body Corporate legislation, however, remain extant pending any changes approved by Lot owners at a future General Meeting

Tidiness in the basement and carparks

Please keep your car space(s) and the area in front of your cage clear of clutter! These spaces are designed for vehicles/cycles only. Thanks for keeping the area clean! Items are not to be stored on the common property (common property is those spaces outside of your Lot entitlement and storage cage).

Lack of Mediation and Conflict Resolution:

In some cases, disputes escalate simply because there is no effective mechanism for mediation and conflict resolution in place. Strata communities that lack a structured process for resolving conflicts may find that minor issues snowball into more significant problems that require legal intervention. Please reach out to the Body Corporate Committee (BCC) should the need arise.

Email: info@thekeysapartments.com.au

Conclusion:

Living in a strata-titled property offers numerous advantages, but it also presents challenges that require a delicate balance of cooperation, communication, and compromise. The diverse backgrounds and expectations of residents, combined with financial and lifestyle differences, can contribute to disputes. To mitigate these issues, communication is the key. By fostering a culture of respect and understanding, The Keys can transform potential disputes into opportunities for growth and communal harmony.

New Body Corporate Legislation commenced 1 May 2024

There were big changes in Queensland on 1 May 2024 with major structural reforms to body corporate legislation.

The update represents some of the most significant changes to Queensland's body corporate legislation in decades. Of course, we are talking about prohibiting smoking in outdoor areas such as balconies and the ability to tow.

Smoking and Towing of Vehicles

The Body Corporate and Community Management Act (BCCM Act) has been amended. Two areas of amendment as far as it affects everyday living in strata is around smoking and smoke drift affecting other residents and the ability of Body Corporates to have a vehicle parked on Common Property (ie in visitor parking spaces where the vehicle does not belong to a genuine visitor) or where they obstruct access or egress within the site to be towed from site. Previously, the body corporate had to seek an adjudicator's order to be allowed to tow an owner or occupier's vehicle from the common property.

The amendments clarify and enhance the ability for bodies corporate to tow vehicles. The body corporate is no longer required to follow the usual dispute resolution process under the body corporate legislation to tow a vehicle.

Smoking and Smoke Drift

To any smokers in The Keys, there are new laws around smoking in strata communities. 'Smoke', the definition of which is linked to the definition in the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998. Here's that definition: smoke means —

1. for a smoking product other than a personal vaporiser or a hookah—smoke, hold or otherwise have control over an ignited smoking product; or
2. for a personal vaporiser—inhalation through the vaporiser; or
3. for a hookah—inhalation through the hookah.

So, vaping is covered by the new strata legislation. There are a few other instances of the new strata legislation not covering what we might consider as 'smoke': pointing it out, smoke from barbecues, wood-smokers or open fires are not covered by the new strata legislation.

Smoking on balconies where smoke drift can affect other residents can be prohibited under the changes outlined in the amended legislation. Smokers should now familiarise themselves with these new changes to the Queensland legislation and take the necessary preventative measures to ensure their smoking activities and smoke drift which may result have no secondary impact on other residents in The Keys.

A Unified Watch: Security

Security isn't just a matter of locked doors and surveillance cameras; it's a collective endeavour that defines the safety of our living spaces. This is a crucial reminder of the role we all play in keeping our community secure.

Be alert for those who tailgate a car through the gate; like those on foot or in unfamiliar vehicles. Such events are a clarion call for community awareness and proactive involvement.

The security of The Keys is a duty that every resident shares. As we drive through the gates, a quick glance in the rear-view mirror might reveal unexpected situations – a chance to intervene if necessary.

Even as we drive in or out, a watchful eye can detect unusual activities. If something seems out of place, it's worth a closer look and politely inquiring about unfamiliar individuals or activities can prevent misunderstandings and deter potential trespassers.

Sharing observations with neighbours through community channels fosters awareness. If behaviour appears suspicious or threatening, alerting the authorities promptly can prevent potential security breaches.

As residents, staying vigilant, being engaged with our surroundings, and communicating openly are the keys to maintaining the haven we call home. Let's remember – security isn't just about technology; it's about the power of a community's caring eyes and cautious steps.



Who to contact?

If you have a query or concern in regards to the operation of The Keys or any suggestions to enhance our home, please contact our Manager / Caretaker.



manager@thekeysapartments.com.au



0409 054 918

Maintenance & New Works Update

- Replacement waterproof membrane on all roofs
- Upgrade and expansion of CCTV System
- Replacement of 31 canvas awnings
- Investigation for E-bike/E-scooter charging shed

Work, Health & Safety

Did you know that the Work Health & Safety Act 2011 places an obligation on all of us to ensure that whatever we do whilst in and around the common property of The KEYS we collectively must have safety at the forefront of all we do. Too often, safety is dismissed as being the responsibility of others 'It's the Caretakers job or the Body Corporate Committee's job'. The latter is not the case. It belongs to each and every one of us who call The KEYS home.

Strata living offers a unique blend of community and convenience. However, ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone within a strata scheme is paramount. This includes prioritising work health and safety (WHS) for residents and contractors who visit The Keys.

Understanding the importance of WHS in Strata schemes have a legal duty to maintain a safe environment for all. This encompasses common areas like car parks, hallways, pools, and gardens.

Neglecting WHS can lead to:

- Injuries and health issues: Slips, falls, or exposure to hazardous materials can cause serious harm.
- Legal ramifications: Breaches of WHS regulations can result in hefty fines and even prosecution.
- Increased insurance costs: A history of accidents can lead to higher insurance premiums for the strata scheme.

Building a Culture of Safety

The responsibility for a safe KEYS environment is shared:

Body Corporate:

- Conduct regular inspections to identify and address hazards.
- Ensure proper training is provided for care-taking staff.
- Engage WHS compliant contractors for repairs and renovations.

Residents and Owners:

- Familiarise themselves with WHS guidelines.
- Report any safety hazards to the body corporate promptly by emailing manager@thekeysapartments.com.au
- Participate in WHS initiatives and any training programs, including but not limited to Fire Safety.
- Practice safe behaviours within common areas by not creating hazards for others. The WHS Act can make the creator of a safety hazard liable.

Contractors:

- Demonstrate WHS compliance through proper licensing, work method statements and insurance.
- Follow all safety protocols outlined by The Keys Manager / Caretaker

Working Together for a Safe KEYS Community

By prioritising WHS, The KEYS can create a safer and more enjoyable living environment for everyone. Open communication, collaboration, and a commitment to safety from all parties are essential.

All occupiers have a responsibility to report hazards when they become aware of a safety hazard or unsafe practice. No one can be part of the admiration society, that is to say admire the safety hazard and think it is the responsibility of someone else. Report safety hazards and unsafe practices by emailing manager@thekeysapartments.com.au

Handy Hints

Adjusting your front door can minimise the noise caused by slamming apartment doors. Check out the link below for how to adjust your door

[Door Adjustment](#)



Charging E-Bikes & E-Scooters

With the growth in ownership of e-bikes and e-scooters and the use of Lithium Ion in battery manufacture presents real challenges in the residential environment. Lithium batteries as used in e-bikes and e-scooters and many more applications, can represent a serious fire-danger. Apparently, it is not a matter of “if” it goes wrong, but “when”. There has already been a fire in a residential apartment building in January 2024 in Bondi in Sydney. The cause of the fire was an e-bike battery being charged, overheating and catching on fire. The link below from NSW Fire and Rescue shows the extent of the fire damage in the apartment.

[Fire Damage](#)

The old saying ‘one picture paints a thousand words’.

Most commonly, overcharging of lithium ion causes overheating which can lead to fire, vapour cloud explosion and toxic emissions. There are many real-life examples of the aftermath associated with e-bike and e-scooter charging practice – it can be an unmitigated disaster as the film clip from NSW Fire and Rescue above clearly demonstrates. Having good contents insurance is one of the lessons to be gleaned out of this fire.

Keep our homes and community safe:

- **DO NOT** leave lithium batteries/devices charging unsupervised overnight (or longer) in the car park,
- Remove/disconnect batteries from chargers once fully charged,
- Use original, Australian Standards compliant chargers & accessories; (refrain from using cheap chargers which do not meet Australian compliance standards. The Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM) is a trademark owned by the electrical regulator [Regulatory Authorities (RAs)] and Australian Communications Media Authority (ACMA)



- Store spare batteries in cool, dry places, away from extreme temperatures.

Charging e-bike or e-scooter batteries in your apartment will also require a keen eye to be kept on them and unplugged when charged. Other options exist for managing the charging regime and these options should be independently investigated by e-bike and e-scooter owners.





Enhancing Your Apartment: A Guide to Sharing Upgrade Plans

The intent is to make lot owners aware that there are By-Laws which are in play in relation to alterations to a lot where they involve the common property. By-laws 6 and 12 are relevant to the latter.

A link to the by-laws is below.

<https://www.thekeysapartments.com.au/about-us/>

Should the by-laws require you to obtain the approval of the Body Corporate, then you will need to apply for the committee to consider and approve. Applications for improvement in the form required can be located at our Body Corporate Manager's link below. Failure to gain prior approval where such approval is required can be a very costly mistake and can lead to potential litigation.

<https://abcm.com.au/forms/>

The Keys is a building format plan (BFP), also known as a building units plan (BUP) and is a form of subdivision which usually applies to multi-story unit complexes. This means that common services like intercoms, water, sewerage and electrical services are distributed within common areas throughout the building.

Owners need to be mindful of where these services enter their respective lot to ensure that they are not damaged. Our Manager/Caretaker is a great point of contact to discuss these matters. Please reach out when planning a major renovation. Top floor ceilings in apartments are fireproof ceilings and have other fire regulatory compliance issues to consider should plans include the penetration of these fireproof ceilings for any reason.

Once again, our Manager/Caretaker is a source of valuable information and advice so please reach out prior to commencing any works in this area.

Other considerations are, will the renovations be of such a substantial nature (i.e. removing floor and wall tiles/total makeover of kitchens and bathrooms) which will impact the quiet enjoyment and amenity of other residents and can potentially impact on others through noise etc?

Does the lot owner who initiates the major renovation which may involve the disruption of a waterproof membrane in wet areas know that such activity can directly impact on other apartments and any failure of the membrane is their future liability? Will contractors be properly inducted onsite? Does the Contractor have public liability insurance?

Does the contractor know about parking onsite and access and egress for others? A simple changeout of an air conditioning unit for many apartments requires access to the roof area which has risks attached and requires our Manager/Caretaker to be engaged to ensure safety protocols are clearly understood and no damage is sustained to our own waterproof membrane on the roof plant area. It really is about communicating to avoid conflict and simply making our Manager/Caretaker and in so doing, enable other residents to be made aware of potential impacts.

We are not talking about painting out or re-carpeting or the like of an apartment. In essence, it is about the impact renovations may have on the common property and or impact on other residents. Communication is the key.

Noise and Apartments. A hot topic

If you're finding the transition from a spacious house a bit noisy, you're not alone. Let's dive into the real deal about apartment living and how to navigate the sounds that come with it. Welcome to the Keys Apartments, where life hums with its own rhythm!

Apartment living comes with a mixtape of sounds – footsteps, laughter, a distant TV, a birthday celebration, kids making noise or maybe someone loading a dishwasher or kitchen clatter and bathroom / laundry noises. It's not noise pollution, but rather the soundtrack of a vibrant community. In this compact space, everyone plays a part in this symphony of daily life.

If our complex would have been situated in the middle of a city, lots of sounds would have been drowned out by the ever existing city hum and sounds. On top of that, we don't have many young families or youngsters living amongst us. And yes, if you're on level 2 literally "sandwiched" between floors you can have sounds coming from all directions!

But being in very quiet surroundings doesn't help; sounds and noises are even amplified by the silence!

Feeling tempted to fire off a complaint to the body corporate about every creak and murmur? Hold that thought! Apartment living isn't about perfect silence; it's about shared existence. Night owls and early birds cohabit here. Learning to tolerate the tune of your neighbours is part of the gig and sounds are inevitable.

Imagine a dance floor where everyone dances to their own beat without stepping on toes. That's apartment life. It's the art of compromise. Just like you, your neighbours have their own rhythms and habits.

Moving from a house to an apartment requires adjusting your volume expectations. Welcome the new normal – the laughter, the chatter, footsteps, flushing sounds and yes, the occasional clatter or party.

