



# ACACIA GARDENS NEWSLETTER



Brought to you by your Strata Committee  
December 2021

Dear Owners and Residents,

Happy Holiday season to everyone!

A lot has happened since our last newsletter so please read on for all the latest updates from your strata committee.

## LATEST NEWS

Your committee continue to hold regular informal meetings to keep things moving along. A lot of progress has been made towards the improvement of our homes.

### Building Management

John Munro, the new building manager for Stage 2, has settled into the role. There were a few (expected) transitional issues following Meriton's immediate departure, but we understand that John has found his rhythm with the building and is enjoying the role.

If you own or live in Stage 2, and have not met John, please drop by the reception desk at 71 Jones Street and say hello.

John is onsite between 7.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday and on Saturdays between 9.30am and 1pm.

Please feel free to approach John at any time to seek assistance, or with feedback, concerns, complaints or compliments about Stage 2. John is here to help and will ensure that all requests/concerns are actioned and responded to as soon as possible.

John can be contacted on 0431 084 001.



### Cleaning

Both Stage 1 and Stage 2 have had a change in cleaning contractors in the past months which led to some changes to cleaning schedules across the building.

Johnny, who previously cleaned Stage 2, is now working with the Stage 1 Building Manager to keep the Stage 1 common areas clean (including pool, gym and garbage rooms).

Kristal has commenced as the cleaning contractor for Stage 2 common areas.

Over the past 2 months, the strata committee received some feedback from residents that were not happy with the changes to the cleaning schedule. We engaged with the cleaning contractor to provide resident's feedback and to set expectations about what the building requires. The cleaners should be checking (and cleaning) every building (including lobbies in the car park) every day.

Your feedback is important to us so if you have any concerns about cleaning in:  
Stage 1 – please contact Susan at the reception area of 288 Wattle Street; or  
Stage 2 – please contact John Munro at the reception area of 71 Jones Street.

Susan and John will be able to action any cleaning related issues immediately.

## **Building Works**

The façade repairs and painting for stage 1 is virtually complete. The rain in November has caused some delays but 99% of the project is now completed.

There will be some small clean-up and possible touch ups early in the new year, but this should be minimal.

The team of contractors at EasyTrades have done a tremendous job. They have discovered a number of small issues during the projects which were outside the scope of the original project, and we managed to rectify all of them.

For example, the ventilation ducts on the roofs were also painted. This not only make them look a lot better than before but will also protect them from corrosion for many years to come.

Some concrete structures that were not painted originally have now been painted to blend in with the rest of the building.

All the façade defects (mainly cracked render) have been rectified.

All windows that are not protected by an awning have had sealant applied or replaced to avoid any future water ingress. A number of waterproofing issues were resolved as a result of these repairs.

We are still looking at stage 2 washing and repairs for next year. This should bring the entire building back to the standard it deserves.



## **Cladding**

The flammable cladding has been totally removed from the building. The replacement has also been delayed by the weather in November.

This project is almost complete, however, there will be some minor work continuing in the new year.

Unfortunately, the scaffolding on the blades on 71 Jones street and Wattle street won't be removed until the new year. We do apologise for the inconvenience but unfortunately, the minor delays meant that time has ran out for the scaffolding contractor to remove them before Christmas.

If anyone has any questions about this project, please contact us at: [stratacommittee@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:stratacommittee@acaciagardens.com.au)

## **Waterproofing**

Unfortunately, our building's water ingress issues had been left unactioned by previous committees. As a result, the current committee inherited a number of issues related to water ingress that impacted both private lots and common property. Over the past 12 months, the committee has worked hard to action, and remedy, almost 90% of these water ingress issues. There are two projects outstanding that, we hope, will be completed by the end of January 2022.

One of the many benefits of the Stage 1 façade works (currently underway) has been that builders and painters have had an opportunity to review, and fix, all cracks and rendering issues in Stage 1 which will protect the building, and individual private lots, from water ingress. The committee is currently tendering for the Stage 2 façade to be washed and all cracks/render remedied so that we can avoid future water ingress issues in Stage 2.

With La Nina event underway in the Pacific, we are likely to get more rain over the summer, which might trigger other waterproofing issues. If you experience any water ingress in your unit, please contact your building manager immediately.

This has been a big 12 months for building works, but it has been worth it and the building is in much better condition, almost all of the waterproofing issues have been rectified and the cladding has been removed.

## Gym/Swimming pool

The pool and gym reopened on 7 December 2021.

In line with government health advice, this is for fully vaccinated residents only.



To ensure the safety of all residents, the building managers have implemented the following procedure:

1. Any resident who wishes to use the recreation centre must be fully vaccinated (2 vaccination shots)
2. To access the recreation centre, you must show the building manager your proof of vaccination status and then your swipe card will be enabled to provide access – you do not have to do this every time.
3. Prior to entering the area you must check-in with the QR code displayed on the door (there will be spot checks by building managers and security).
4. Please check the number of people in the recreation centre does not exceed the maximum allowed before entering
5. Please sanitise your hands before using any equipment
6. Please sanitise the equipment with the wipes provided before and after using the equipment
7. If you have any symptoms, please do not use the recreation centre.

Please respect the safety of all residents and wear a mask when going to and from the recreation centre.

We thank you for your patience and hope that you can now enjoy the recreation centre. If you have any questions, please contact your Building Manager.

Unfortunately, we recently discovered some issues with the pool filtration and chemical systems that had been neglected. This resulted in a brief shutdown prior to Christmas but these have been rectified and the pool is open again for the holiday season. The health and safety of our residents is the priority and we needed to ensure the highest possible quality of the pool water.

## Review of all service contractors

During the past 8 months, the committee, with the assistance of BCS and the Stage 2 Building manager, has gone out to market on all service contracts (electricity, plumbing, security, boilers, fire services, handyman, locksmiths, pest control, cleaning, etc). By going out to market, we have reduced our annual spend significantly. For example, by tendering for security services, we increased the hours that security is onsite (so that between BM and security, we now have someone onsite 24/7) **but pay less** than we were paying previously.

The committee also had concerns at the number of call outs for plumbers and electricians (up to 22 call outs per month for plumbers and up to 10 per month for electricians). As a result, the committee tendered for these services and appointed new contractors with really positive results. For example:

- spending on Electricians has reduced **from 18 attendances** between December 2020 and June 2021 **to 7 attendances** between July and December 2021; and
- spending on Plumbers has reduced **from 82 attendances** between December 2020 and June 2021 **to 14 attendances** between July and December 2021.



## Gardening

The focus of the gardens this year has been to put in place the foundations for their future. This includes the removal of overgrown plants, repairs to the existing irrigation system and installation of an efficient water saving irrigation system and the completion of a tender process for the ongoing maintenance of gardens. The contract has been awarded to The Gardenmakers.

The coming year will see increased landscaping work to plant more trees, different types of plants and some flower sections! This will make for a more pleasant environment in our gardens for residents, current and future owners.

We would also like to thank the volunteers who have given their time and dedication to the garden this year. Without them the progress we are making would not be possible. If you come across them in the gardens, please don't hesitate to say hello or join in!

## Elevators – Stage 1 and Stage 2



We have been looking at the reliability and condition of the elevators in the complex. The Stage 1 elevators are in an acceptable condition but not for much longer, however the stage 2 elevators are unfortunately coming to the end of their life span. We are actively working with a consultant to plan for some short-term remedial works to improve reliability and then for a longer-term replacement plan.

We have ongoing meetings with the consultant and expect that early in the new year we will be able to formulate a plan for future of the lifts. Any planning will be designed to minimise costs as well as minimise interruption to the lift service. We will ensure that as each lift is addressed we engage with residents so that everyone has plenty of notice for any outages.

The performance of Otis (who maintain our elevators) is being monitored and assessed regularly to minimise any down time in the lifts.



### New Expenditure Process

Shortly after forming the committee, we became concerned at the amount of expenditure by building managers that was submitted without explanation and without any consideration of the market rate for the service. As an easy example, in 2017, Central Sydney Realty submitted invoices to BCS for payment that were dated up to 6 years prior; this made it impossible for the OC to verify that the work had been completed or approved. Unfortunately, the invoices were approved by the treasurer at the time. The current committee believed that the OC required a more robust invoice approval process.

In January and February 2021, the committee put in place a new expenditure process for the building managers to follow which, in short, requires the building managers to obtain multiple quotes for all proposed works, and, before commencing the work, to obtain approval from the committee to proceed.

For many months, the BMs, either could not or would not follow the process. As a result, BCS notified both BMs that it would no longer pay any invoices that did not have been approved pursuant to the new expenditure process. Since August 2021, the process seems to have been adopted by both BMs with significant savings to the OC.

### LED Lighting upgrade LED

The savings from the LED lighting upgrade are already measurable. For example, the electricity usage for Stage 2 has fallen from 36,000 kWh in October 2020 to 19,904 kWh in October 2021. This is a great saving for the building!

The electricians came back in early December to complete the settings of the LED light fittings in the car park to adjust the sensitivity of the motion detectors, the brightness of the lights and the duration of the “on” time. If you have any concerns about the lighting in the carpark, please contact the building manager



### WaterFix Strata Savings

Sydney Water has completed its WaterFix Strata Savings desktop assessment. The results of the assessment indicated that there are some savings that can be made to move our building into the “water efficient” category.

At the moment, our building’s average water usage is 273 Litres/bedroom/day which seems rather high.

The next step is for Sydney Water to conduct a site assessment during which they will access 10% of apartments, (approximately 34 apartments). Sydney Water will aim to get a cross section of apartments across Stage 1 and 2, this would span across different apartment sizes, and the location of the apartments (located on different levels). Sydney Water will also review water usage in the pool area and all common areas including our irrigation system in the gardens.

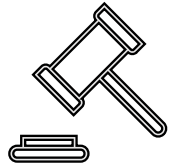
Whilst the desktop assessment was free of charge, this onsite assessment costs \$495. The committee believes that, given the potential savings, the \$495 fee to Sydney Water is money well spent. We will provide a further update in our next newsletter.

## **NCAT Application to terminate SunAust Properties (Central Sydney Realty)'s caretaking agreement**

The NCAT hearing to terminate CSR's caretaking agreement took place on 15, 16, 17 and 19 November 2021. The OC was represented by its barrister, Richard Gratton, and its solicitor, David Edwards. CSR was represented by its barrister, Mr Young and its solicitor.

Our barrister has indicated that NCAT can take up to 8 weeks to publish its decision. We will update you as soon as we receive the decision.

In order to save the legal costs of the NCAT proceedings, and to try to come to a compromise with CSR, the committee made an offer to settle the NCAT proceedings weeks before the hearing. CSR did not respond to the OC's settlement offer.



## **Legal Proceedings commenced by SunAust Properties (Central Sydney Realty) in the NSW Supreme Court against the OC**

These are the proceedings in which CSR is suing the OC for unpaid invoices. In its defence, the OC claims that CSR has in fact overcharged the OC by in excess of \$1 million (including interest).

The Supreme Court hearing is scheduled to take place in February 2022. All evidence has been filed and the matter is ready to proceed in February.

The committee has done everything that it can do to reduce the OC's legal costs in these proceedings, and to try to come to a compromise with CSR, including making an offer to settle the proceedings. CSR has not responded to the OC's settlement offer.

## **COOK UP A STORM**

### **Teriyaki Salmon Poke Bowl**

Serves 4

#### Ingredients:

- 4 x 130g salmon fillets
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1/3 cup caster sugar
- 1.5 tablespoons finely grated ginger
- 1/3 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 450g cooked brown rice
- 200g frozen shelled edamame
- 6 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 large carrot, julienned or grated
- 4 baby cucumbers, sliced
- 2 small avocados, cut into wedges
- 1/4 cup pickled ginger
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted
- Toasted nori snack strips, to serve



#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 220°. Line an oven tray with baking paper.
2. To make the dressing, place soy, sugar, ginger, vinegar and sesame oil in a small saucepan. Cook, stirring over high heat for 4 minutes or until thickened slightly. Reserve half the dressing.
3. Place the salmon on the lined tray and brush with the remaining dressing. Roast for 8 minutes or until cooked through.
4. Meanwhile, prepare the rice.
5. Boil, steam or microwave the edamame and cool under running water and drain.
6. Divide rice and salmon between bowls and add edamame, radish, carrot, cucumber, avocado and pickled ginger. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve with nori strips and remaining dressing.

## SOCIAL & RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a lot happening in our neighbourhood over the summer holidays. Check out the Darling Harbour website [HERE](#) for all the activities taking place.

The City of Sydney also offer a wide range of activities across the city. Find out how to entertain the family [HERE](#).

With New Year's Eve approaching, there is a lot you need to know about how and where to watch. Please see the info [HERE](#).

Enliven fitness are offering residents a free personal training session if you get in touch with them using the QR code and redeem the session before the 15<sup>th</sup> January.



## Ideas, Issues or Concerns? We want to hear from you

We want to encourage all residents and owners to reach out to the committee at any time with questions or concerns that they may have. In particular, if you have issues or concerns with the cleanliness or maintenance of the building, please contact us, we cannot help you if we do not know that there is a problem. If you have ideas about how we can make the building feel more like a home, please let us know and we will do what we can to make it happen. We are here and we want to help.

## WHERE TO FIND HELP:

**STAGE 1 BUILDING MANAGEMENT** is located at 288 WATTLE STREET between the hours of:

08:00 and 18:00 – Monday to Friday

09:00 and 13:00 – Saturday

2 unspecified by CSR hours per day – on Sundays and Public holidays

Contact details: **02 9518 8088** and [acacia@centralsydneyrealty.com.au](mailto:acacia@centralsydneyrealty.com.au)



**STAGE 2 BUILDING MANAGEMENT** is located at the office in the reception area of 71 JONES STREET between the hours of:

08:00 and 16:00 – Monday to Friday

10:00 and 13:00 – Saturday

Contact details **John: 0431 084 001** and [buildingmanager2@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:buildingmanager2@acaciagardens.com.au)

**SECURITY FOR BOTH STAGE 1 AND 2** is located at the office in the reception area of 71 JONES STREET between the hours of:

16:00 and 08:00 – Monday to Friday

And then 13:00 Saturday until 08:00 Monday (weekend)

Contact details **Security: 0410 408 873**

## ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

The following are the best ways to contact the people you need:

BCS – Samantha Edwards (Strata Manager) Phone: 02 8216 0398 Email: [stratamanager@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:stratamanager@acaciagardens.com.au)

Strata Committee (all members) Email: [stratacommittee@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:stratacommittee@acaciagardens.com.au)

Strata Committee Chairperson (Luming) Email: [chair@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:chair@acaciagardens.com.au)

Strata Committee Secretary (Nick) Email: [secretary@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:secretary@acaciagardens.com.au)

Strata Committee Treasurer (Matthew) Email: [treasurer@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:treasurer@acaciagardens.com.au)

Any other enquiries, Email: [newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au)

If you want to join the Acacia Gardens Owners groups on either WhatsApp or WeChat, or both, please email us with your phone number to be added. Email: [newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au](mailto:newsletter@acaciagardens.com.au)

You can find the Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/261530967880147>

The Acacia Gardens website is now up and running and has a lot of useful resources including new forms for renovations and pet applications. Check it out at: [www.acaciagardens.com.au](http://www.acaciagardens.com.au)

Thanks for reading!  
Acacia Gardens Strata Committee