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Enhancing community living

Strata property update

PICA
PROPERTY & FINANCIAL SERVICES



Feature story

Strata manager by day, community hero by night

Andrew Gavin isn't your typical strata branch manager, he is, in fact, one of Australia's greatest heroes. After Australia's worst bushfire season on record, Andrew shares his story and what committees and owners can do to minimise the risk of fire.

[Read more](#)



How to make sure you're covered against fire damage

With 33 lives lost, more than 11 million hectares of land burnt, and more than 2,000 homes destroyed, the Australian 2019–2020 bushfire crisis calls for all Australians to ask: is my property covered and prepared for a bushfire?

[Read more](#)



When it comes to insurance, what's the difference between storm and flood damage?

To insurance companies, the source of the water causing the damage can decide whether you're entitled to getting your insurance claims paid or not. Understand the classification to minimise your risk.

[Read more](#)

In the news

AUS

PICA Group and family donate more than \$60,000 to bushfire relief

For PICA Group, our every day is the homes and wellbeing of thousands of Australians living and working across the eastern seaboard. When our communities, including our customers and staff, are impacted by catastrophic events, like the 2019-2020 bushfires, we feel the sorrow. That's why PICA Group, and the broader PICA Group family network of organisations, including Nippon Kanzai and FEXCO, donated more than \$60,000 and then matched any amount given by staff. For many Australians, there is now a long road ahead to rebuild, recover and move on; our contribution is to help these Australians recreate their homes, workplaces, and worlds.

NSW

NSW Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019 to come into effect as of 23 March 2020

To improve the renting experience in NSW, the state government has replaced the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010. The new 2019 regulations look to enhance the residential tenancy system by proposing changes such as:

- Making it easier for tenants to make some minor works changes
- Landlords or agents are to inform prospective renters of any drug crimes pertaining to the property
- Sets out in detail how and when a landlord must repair or replace a battery in a smoke alarm
- Updates the form for a residential tenancy agreement and condition report

[Read more](#)

NSW

NSW sees fire safety reforms come into effect as of April 2020

In an effort to improve building regulation and certification, NSW buildings, as of April 2020, will only be able to have fire safety statements endorsed by "competent fire safety practitioners". A competent fire safety practitioner, or CFSP, is someone who can perform fire safety assessments according to the standards set out in legislation. Having the statement signed by a non-CFSP will make the statement invalid.

The CFSP must inspect and verify the performance of each critical fire measure that applies to the building, stating that they are in working order. The new checks must be assessed annually by the CFSP, and owners must consider the annual fire safety statement at the annual general meeting (AGM) and make arrangements regarding how the next statement will be obtained.

The CFSP will now assess all essential fire safety measures, including fire exits and

paths of travel, while checking that hose reels, hydrants, sprinkler systems, fire detection and alarm systems comply with the Building Code of Australia.

PICA Group tip: All buildings that have statutory fire safety measures (such as hoses, alarms, exits, and hydrant systems), must provide the statement to local council and the Commissioner of Fire & Rescue NSW. Failure to do so could result in fines, legal action, and void insurance. There are some exemptions, including standalone buildings, townhouses, and car parks. However, these exemptions are rare and should be stated within the AGMs minutes when the annual fire safety statement is considered.

The NSW Government are providing a growing list of registered CFSPs [here](#).



Changes to NSW fire safety statements forms as of 1 February 2020

NSW fire safety statements must use a standard template that is issued by the NSW Government. Following consultation and feedback from stakeholders, including building owners, committees, councils, and industry, the Department of Planning and Industry has since updated the fire safety statement form. The new and updated form must be used for all fire safety statements issued from 1 February 2020. The new form can be found under “standard template forms” on the department’s website. [View form here](#).



What does 2019’s changes to the Strata Schemes Management Act mean for 2020?

Last year, NSW had changes to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. Here, the new legislation placed restrictions on the utility agreements servicing an owners corporation, like energy, gas, water and electricity. One such change, is that owners must ‘consider’ the electricity contracts servicing their strata property at the annual general meeting (AGM).

But once considered at the AGM, then what?

PICA Group, via highly specialised staff and industry strength, have partnered with an expert energy panel to help you and your building save money. Community Utilities is PICA Group’s way of making sure your energy agreements are reviewed for competitive prices and help you avoid unnecessary fees. [Read more](#)



PICA Group love local

Because we love to support local organisations who help look after the same communities as we do, we have added to our sponsorship club. So far for 2020, PICA Group has started sponsoring: Albion Park Soccer Club, Narrabeen Beach Surf Life Saving Club, and Manly Malibu Boardriders Club.



NARRABEEN BEACH
SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB



Greater Sydney water restrictions wound back to level 1 on 1 March 2020

Thanks to much-needed rain during February, filling Sydney's dams to 80%, Greater Sydney has had its water restrictions wound back from level 2 to level 1 restrictions as of 1 March.

New water restrictions mean residents and businesses must:

- Have a trigger nozzle on all hoses
- Not leave hoses unattended, but they can be used
- Only water outdoors before 10am or after 4pm
- Not hose hard surfaces such as concrete, paths and driveways
- Not use standard sprinklers and watering systems-only use one hand
- Held hose or one drip-irrigation system at a time and between the hours of 5pm and 10am
- Only wash things such as cars, bins, and buildings with a hose connected to a trigger nozzle
- Only top up or fill pools and spas using a hand-held hose between 5pm and 10am.

[Read more](#)

Ask us at StrataFAQ.com.au



An owner of a car who parks on common property is making it impossible for me to get into my garage!

In cases like this, it could be best to talk to the person who is parking their car in the driveway and blocking your exit route. They may simply be unaware that their parking is causing you issues...

[Read more](#)

I'm in the process of purchasing an apartment I would like to renovate. Do I have to wait until I have settled?

You will have to wait until you have settled before you can apply for renovations. Likewise, you will have to wait for the strata manager to be formally advised, as the roll must be updated with new owner details. However...

[Read more](#)



Did you know we have a range of community living articles?

For more useful information on how to handle a similar situation, visit our article library.

[View our library](#)

Important dates



23 March 2020 New residential tenancy regulations

To improve the renting experience in NSW, the state government has replaced the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010, placing changes on what renters and landlords can and can't do.



April 2020 Fire safety reforms for NSW

NSW is having major mandatory changes to the annual fire safety statements that must be adhered to.



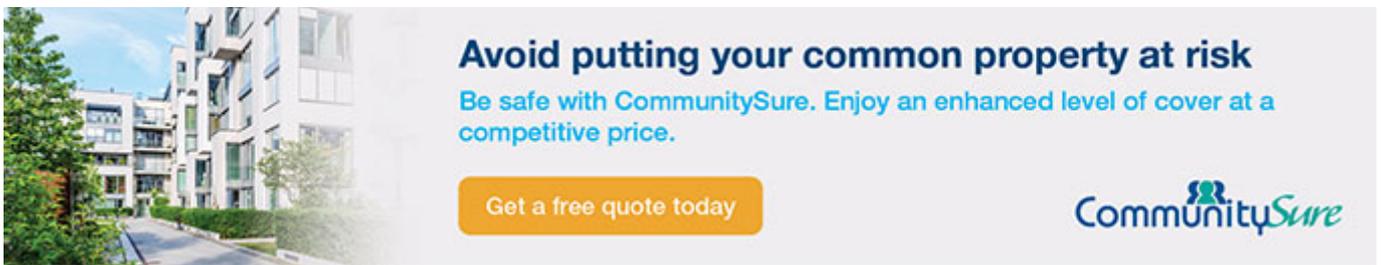
1 March 2020 Greater Sydney water restrictions

Greater Sydney has had its water restrictions wound back from level 2 to level 1 restrictions as of 1 March 2020.



1 February 2020 Changes to NSW's fire safety statement form

All buildings and properties must submit their annual fire safety statement via the updated form provided by the Department of Planning and Industry.



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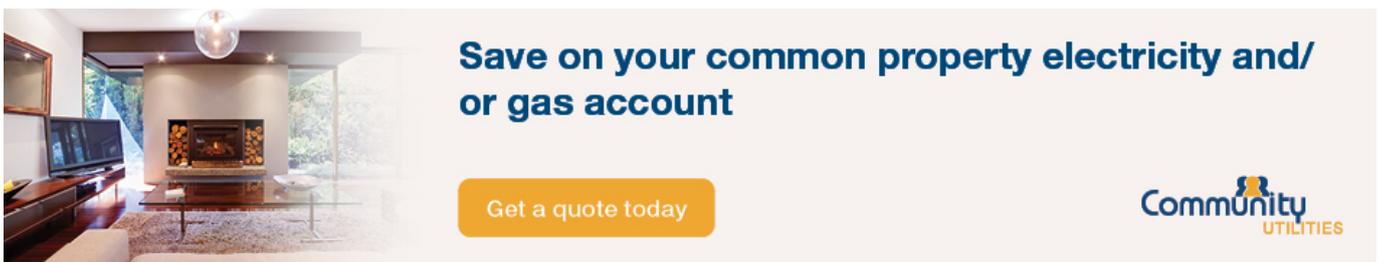
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Save on your common property electricity and/or gas account

Get a quote today

Community UTILITIES



Building management experts for more than 20 years

Customised full time and part time on-site services

Book an assessment today



Who is PICA Group

PICA Group consists of a diverse range of leading property services businesses. We have over 700 staff and 30 branch offices across 11,000 strata properties in Australia. Our professionals combine their local knowledge with the expertise and strength of a large organisation to offer customers superior service, advice and support.

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