



## viewpoint

### THE POWER OF KINDNESS

This year has been one of considerable turbulence both in Australia, the world and especially in America, the Middle East and Europe exacerbated by the pandemic of Covid-19.

A time to reflect on the need to be kind to one another, to suspend judgement and find what we have in common with one another rather than what separates us.

Dr. Ferrucci, in his book *The Power of Kindness*, reveals that the kindest people are the most likely to thrive, to enable others to thrive, and to slowly but steadily turn our world away from violence, self-centeredness, and narcissism- and toward love. Writing with a rare combination of sensitivity and intellectual depth, Dr. Ferrucci shows that, ultimately, kindness is not a luxury in our world but rather a necessity for us all.

Awful things and people won't go away because we mock them, better to aim to deal with others with a tone that is generous, curious and civil. If we understand them, see where they are coming from, and treat their advocates and supporters as fellow human beings, we have much more chance of dealing with them successfully and therefore of making the world a better place.

As we hopefully move towards the eradication of Covid-19 we wish you, your family and friends much joy in 2021

Cheers

Gordon Russell

ps: Do you have any friends who need to read our newsletter? Ring and we will post one out or they can download it from our website ☐

### CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

Our best wishes for Christmas & the New Year, to you and those close to you.

This Christmas we are closing our office from 5pm Monday December 21st and opening on Wednesday January 6th from 9am.

For accounts due Jan 1st or before, you have until Jan 11th to pay before penalties apply.

If you have an emergency over the break and you need assistance see Emergency Numbers on the front page or just ring (08) 8333-5200 for up to date details on contractors and emergency services.



### USEFUL LINKS

Our colleagues at [www.lookupstrata.com.au](http://www.lookupstrata.com.au) have sent us some useful links.

The following are from some of their most viewed pages...

[www.lookupstrata.com.au/sa-neighbour-smoking-on-balcony/](http://www.lookupstrata.com.au/sa-neighbour-smoking-on-balcony/)

[www.lookupstrata.com.au/category/parking/parkingsafaq/](http://www.lookupstrata.com.au/category/parking/parkingsafaq/)

[www.lookupstrata.com.au/factsheet-maintenance-common-property/](http://www.lookupstrata.com.au/factsheet-maintenance-common-property/)

<https://www.lookupstrata.com.au/category/noise/noisesafaq/>



### NEW LEGISLATION PETS TO BE AUTOMATICALLY ALLOWED

There are important changes ahead for our investor owners.

The following article is from Nathan Jolly Elite Real Estates' website <https://eliteagent.com/>

The Greens Party have introduced a "Renting with Pets" Bill into South Australian Parliament. It has passed its second reading.

Currently the default position of most residential tenancy agreements in South Australia is that pets are not allowed.

This Bill reverses this so that pets are automatically allowed, except in certain circumstances.

"If a tenant applies to keep a pet and the landlord doesn't consent, the landlord can apply to SACAT (South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) and SACAT will determine whether the pet can stay, and any conditions that would be imposed, after giving consideration to the circumstances," according to a Greens statement.

"The Greens believe that this is a much fairer system than we currently have where the tenant has no rights at all when it comes to keeping their pets with them. Having to give up your much loved pet in order to have a place to live, is not a choice we think people should have to make," said Greens MLC Mark Parnell.

During the 2018-19 year, 259 South Australian pets were surrendered to the RSPCA and 108 were surrendered to the Animal Welfare League because their owners could not find pet-friendly rental properties.

In 2019-2020, there were 293 pets surrendered to the RSPCA for the same reason – an increase of 13%.

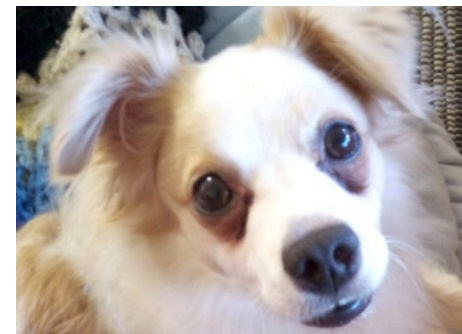
"This is a concerning trend and it shows that this reform is now more urgent than ever," said Mr Parnell.

"I've been contacted by many South Australians who've shared their stories of how difficult it is to rent with pets.

"Pets are part of our families, so being told that you're not allowed to take them with you to your new home is an awful position to be put in. Sadly though, this is a reality for many South Australians."

The Bill is based on laws passed in the ACT, Victoria and NT.

**Editor's Note:** We understand that Strata and Community Titled groups will continue to have a say on pets at their corporations, subject to their Articles (Strata) or ByLaws (Community) and fair process in assessing applications.



RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (RENTING WITH PETS) AMENDMENT BILL 2019

South Australia

**Residential Tenancies (Renting with Pets) Amendment Bill 2019**

A BILL FOR

An Act to amend the [Residential Tenancies Act 1995](#)

Division 6A Keeping of pets on rented premises

(1) Subject to this section, a tenant may keep a pet or pets at premises rented under a residential tenancy agreement if—(a) the landlord (whether as part of the agreement, on an application under this section or otherwise by written notice) consents to the keeping of a pet or pets (as the case requires) of the relevant kind; or

(b) the Tribunal (whether on an application by the tenant or otherwise) makes an order permitting the tenant to keep such a pet or pets (as the case requires).

(2) A tenant may apply to the landlord, or an agent of a landlord, for consent to keep a pet, or specified number of pets, of a specified kind on premises rented under a residential tenancy agreement.

(3) An application under subsection (2)

(a) must be made in the prescribed form; and

(b) must be given personally to the landlord or an agent of the landlord; and

(c) must comply with any other requirements set out in the regulations.

(4) Except where the Tribunal makes an order under this Act to the contrary, the landlord, or an agent of the landlord, must, on receipt of an application under subsection (2), give written consent to the keeping of the pet or pets specified in the application on the relevant premises.

(5) The landlord, or agent of the landlord, may impose conditions of the following kinds on a consent under this section:

(a) a condition reasonably limiting the number of pets that may be kept on the premises;

(b) a condition imposing reasonable requirements in respect of cleaning and maintenance of the premises in relation to the keeping of pets on the premises;

(c) any other condition approved by the Tribunal on an application under section 66B

### emergency numbers

Plumbing , Gas, Roof Leaks	8152 6780
Electrical	8274 0100
Building repairs, breakins & glazing	1300 362 515
Police to attend - noise/robbery etc	131 444
State Emergency Service - storm/flood	132 500

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abn 16 988 263 326 This is a publication of UnitCare Services and is offered as information only and is not intended as a substitute for professional advice.

**after hours emergencies - phone 8333 5200 for up to date information.**





## NEW FACES AT UNITCARE

Over recent months two of our longest serving employees have retired. Pam Maynard after 13.5 years and Marie Stead after 14.5 years. We are truly grateful for their service to our clients and their friendship with us all. We wish them lots of fun and happiness in their retirement. We have some new personnel.

**Danish Siddique:** Danish has taken over Marie's portfolio. He was born in Karachi, Pakistan but he has worked in the Middle East, specifically Saudi Arabia, for 10 years. His background is in managing production in the plastics manufacturing Industry and he has a degree in Management from the University of Phoenix, Arizona. But, as his two boys (now aged 6 and 9) began to grow, he was keen to move to a better place to raise them, somewhere safe and not too crowded. And what better place than Adelaide! Not only does Danish think Adelaide is a good place to bring up a family, he was also able to secure a sponsorship here.



On arriving in Adelaide Danish found that his experience in the plastics industry was difficult to capitalise on so he moved into real estate. He completed a sales course while at Harcourts and became a licenced salesperson but ended up in property management where he could engage his management skills.

"Strata management is very busy compared to my previous roles but I like that – makes the day go fast!". Danish started with UnitCare in August and thinks we are a good bunch to work for! "I'm much happier here than at the other place!" he says.

**Pam Proctor:** Pam is an Adelaide native who grew up around Black Forest, Clarence Park and Marion. Initially Pam worked as a primary school teacher but has since gone on to a variety of jobs, mostly in sales and management. A big change in her life was when she and her husband sailed a yacht to the Gold Coast where they jumped on another yacht and sailed to Alaska! "That took around a year and we did spend some time in French Polynesia along the way!"



## MEETING REMINDERS

We have recently rewritten the software that emails a meeting reminder to owners the week or so before their body corporate meeting.

To help with owner agenda item requests, we have written some software that pops up the requests when arranging the corporation meeting. This helps eliminate diary notes and reminders that can be overlooked.

UnitCare 2

Dear Mr & Mrs Benson  
PROPERTY: COMMUNITY CORPORATION 12169 INC.  
UNIT AT 2/57 FRANCIS RIDLEY CIRCUIT BROMPTON 5007

MEETING REMINDER

This is a reminder that your unit group is holding its next meeting as follows....

Place: ....  
2/57 FRANCIS RIDLEY CIRCUIT BROMPTON 5007

RE: ....  
THURSDAY 08 DEC 2020

Please return your proxy if if you are unable to attend or call 081 333 3200 the business day before if you wish to join via Skype video conference call or a telephone conference call.  
This does not apply to our Group Admins who make their own arrangements to meet.

If sent by a generic proxy form can be found at: [www.unitcare.com.au/ProxyForm.pdf](http://www.unitcare.com.au/ProxyForm.pdf)

Thank you,  
Regards,  
PAM PROCTOR - GROUP ASSISTANT  
UNITCARE SERVICES [www.unitcare.com.au/ContactUs.aspx](http://www.unitcare.com.au/ContactUs.aspx)

Pam has spent the last 30 years living on the Gold Coast where she was mostly doing property management. "The humidity there really wears you down." Pam says, "and frankly I was bored with what I was doing so I moved back to Adelaide and moving into strata management represents a bit of a challenge."

Pam joined UnitCare in mid October. "It's busy, and every day there's something new!" she says. Pam rates her evil sense of humour as a real asset that she brings to UnitCare! "Adelaide is the greatest place in the world." she beams.

**Tiffany Gambranis:** Tiffany is another Adelaide native who grew up around Prospect. Property management is in her blood! Tiffany went straight into the family property management business after completing High School and she spent the last 8 years there. "It's something I took on very quickly. I like working with people."



Tiffany also started with UnitCare in mid October. She assists the Business Manager Debra Conlin. She particularly likes conflict resolution and mediation, helping groups in conflict to find a way forward. And look out UnitCare: Tiffany sees herself rising through the ranks over the next five years. Optimistically she chimes, "I can see myself as a Body Corporate Manager in that time!"

## LEVIES DUE - 1 WEEK REMINDER

Following up on a request from our Focus Group (see story opposite) we have written and installed software that emails owners advising them that their regular levies are due to be paid in the coming week. Below is an example. We hope this is helpful.

REMINDER - LEVY DUE SHORTLY  
FOR PROPERTY: STRATA CORPORATION 12169 INC.  
UNIT AT 2/57 FRANCIS RIDLEY CIRCUIT BROMPTON 5007

Just in case you overlooked the levy account notice we emailed previously, this is a reminder that the total of the levies owing for your unit/lot are as follows...

Total Owing: \$500.00 due by 24/11/2020

You can pay your account by...

1: Bpay: BPay Biller Code = 52878 Your Bpay reference number is 012169025

2: Credit Card: Call us on 8333 5200 to pay your account by credit card

3: BankSA : To pay your levy at a Bank SA branch please use this link to print the deposit slip and write in the Bank Agent No for the teller.

[www.unitcare.com.au/pdfs/BankSA\\_deposit\\_slip.pdf](http://www.unitcare.com.au/pdfs/BankSA_deposit_slip.pdf)  
Your Bank Agent No is 1216902

Call our office if you have any queries.

## FOCUS GROUP 2020

By Deb Conlin

A big shout out to everyone who participated in our second Focus Group in October. At UnitCare we aim to provide personalised and prompt attention to our clients and feedback is an important part of the process. The focus group was an opportunity to hear from you face to face, which was quite a delight during covid times when our meetings are mostly on skype!

Held at the Alma Tavern's upstairs function room in Norwood, we wanted to create a space to hear from you about the level of satisfaction with our services, what works well and what could be tweaked or done differently.

I had the pleasure of facilitating the evening and would like to thank Body Corporate Manager, Irene Patiniotis and Director of The Life Creative, Kathryn Brewer for helping out, and of course, our Managing Director, Gordon Russell who came along to kick things off.

Welcoming everyone, Gordon outlined why he started UnitCare and the importance of the Performance Guarantee, noting that strata managers being available via phone continued to set UnitCare apart from many other strata management companies. Currently UnitCare has some 4,600 unit owner clients and continues to grow.

**Accounting:** Interest was expressed in having the option of payment plans and the option to pay levies etc. monthly. In addition, some found the format of statements hard to read, especially the Treasurer reports. Generally, people were happy at notices being emailed but would appreciate information on how to set up direct debits. There was a comment that levy invoices were sent too early leading to them being forgotten, also that payments on Wednesdays led to delays for smaller contractors (Note: the turnaround time for invoice payment to contractors is 10 days if officers need to check , otherwise within 7 days for payment on the Wednesday).

**Information:** There was a comment that managers change frequently – I'd like to note here that in the last couple of months we have had two of our long standing staff retire after combined service of 28 years and have also added a part time administration assistant to support our team. We appreciate your patience with managers transitioning into new roles.

Suggestions were made that there could be an officer calendar of regular maintenance and more promotion of the officer login, and the strata plan flyer could be updated. Feedback was that the options of service levels are good, as is the Unit Owner kit we send to all new owners.

The monthly/quarterly financial, arrears and activity reports and annual audit reports are generally well received, with a comment that activity reports are useful for resolving disputes.

The help available by phone or email during office hours and the resources on the UnitCare website are appreciated although responses from managers vary, some are prompt, some are not.

**Insurance:** Feedback was generally positive in this area. There is good guidance on placing and renewing insurances and good selections suited to group sizes, as well as sufficient comparison quotes. UnitCare managers explain the quotes and policies clearly. In relation to repairs, it is noted that contractors do not always complete them to the requested standard, however persistence pays off and the end result is positive.

**Maintenance:** Groups would like UnitCare's preferred contractor

list expanded and were encouraged to share the details of proven contractors they know with UnitCare. The correspondence about paying a service/bill (*work okay procedure*) is good and useful and as mentioned earlier, a calendar of regular maintenance to keep tabs on upcoming expenditure was suggested.

In general, participants found UnitCare extremely helpful in providing guidance and suggesting contractors and happy with completed works. Comments ranged from cost effective, simple and a quick response. There was discussion about the different owner occupier vs investor scenarios when it comes to maintenance issues.

Feedback was that UnitCare offered a prompt and much appreciated service in relation to emergency maintenance works and meeting onsite when needed.



**Mediation:** There was a suggestion to have specialist/nominated managers to take on mediation roles and that training could be strengthened in phone etiquette in this regard.

**Meetings:** Presiding Officers reported meeting notices are sent out on time and the documents to assist are helpful, with clear instructions. Groups are generally very happy with the services. Where meetings are attended by managers, these are well managed. Groups are also pleased with meeting follow up, in particular meeting minutes posted within 14 days. In addition, a comment was made that any disagreements are quickly resolved and UnitCare are helpful in this regard.

**Secretarial:** The way reception deals with calls is great. More broadly, in relation to communication some groups are very happy with manager responses, and a minority are not happy at all.

**What we could do:** Finally, Kathryn Brewer gave a short presentation on the concept of LETS (local exchange trading systems), a community bartering system that started in the 1980's. LETS builds local relationships and encourages community, benefits UnitCare values but upon discussion, the majority of the groups present did not think it would be a useful value-add for UnitCare.

**Conclusion:** The focus group provided a range of valuable feedback to UnitCare on our current and future services. I would once again like to thank everyone who gave up a couple of hours on their Tuesday night to participate. It was lovely to meet you face to face and the information you shared allows us to become more responsive to your needs. Stay tuned for another focus group event in 2021!