



viewpoint

NEW CITY SHED FOR ALL

A new community shed has opened in the City of Adelaide. We are pleased to be able to support this much needed community service.

Traditionally a space dominated by men, the community shed is open to everyone and anyone, with men and women invited to get involved in a hands-on project.

The project was instigated and championed by the Lord Mayor's husband, Gregg Mitchell and supported by Council.

"This isn't just a Men's Shed, anyone can get involved. The space is a chance to share ideas and skills and to discuss your methods and pick up new techniques," said Mr Mitchell.



Meeting every week, the group are putting their minds and skills towards making bird boxes for the Cuddlee Creek area which was destroyed by bushfire in 2019.

City Shed President Gordon Russell says the space will be more than just a workshop.

"There is a saying in the Shed movement that the most important tool in the shed is the kettle," Mr Russell said.

"The objectives of the Shed are to advance the health and well-being of our members by providing a safe and happy environment where skilled and unskilled members can pursue hobbies, learn new skills and contribute to the community.

With backyards getting smaller, the traditional shed is harder to come by. The Adelaide City Shed will be a place to share tools whilst avoiding the costs and clean-up of doing it at home.

The Adelaide City Shed is based in Franklin Street workshop, Makerspace, a state-of-the-art space equipped with all the necessary tools and equipment.

Adelaide Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor said it is an important initiative.

"Whether you're as skilled as a tradie or still learning the difference between a screwdriver and a Phillips head, I think it's important the City Shed is open to everyone," the Lord Mayor said.

"As we slowly return to normal practices after the impact of COVID-19, I think this project will provide a real opportunity for people to socialise and is a great alternative to the pub or sporting field."

The City Shed launched on April 12 at Makerspace, 100 Franklin Street, Adelaide and will be open every Monday from 10am to 4pm.


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



DISTRICT COURT RULES ON COST RECOVERY BY STRATA

Recently Her Honour Judge Karen Thomas of the District Court ruled on the right of strata corporations to recover debts and related costs. The following story is courtesy of Ryan James Law Clerk at Barry Nilsson lawyers.

1. Introduction

1.1 We wish to draw your attention to a recent decision handed down in the District Court of South Australia, being Wamije Investments Pty Ltd v Strata Corporation 1232 Inc [2021] SADC 4. It, inter alia, confirmed that a debtor is liable to pay the legal costs by way of debt recovery (as approved as a taxation by the court) incurred by a Corporation in the process of debt recovery.

1.2 The significance of this being, that there is no longer ambiguity surrounding the ability for a Corporation to claim costs incurred 'over and above' the costs scale, as well as outlining the necessary steps required to be taken for the costs to be validly recoverable under the relevant Acts.

2. Wamije Investments Pty Ltd v Strata Corporation 1232 Inc [2021] SADC 4

2.1 The Applicant, Wamije Investments Pty Lrd ("Wamije") was dissatisfied with the decision of the Magistrate made in the minor civil action, which took place for debt recovery. Wamije was then invoiced \$5,298.30 for legal costs and disbursements which was incurred and paid by the Respondent, Strata Corporation 1232 Inc ("the Corporation"), to its solicitors, Mellor Olsson, in the course of their debt recovery action ("the Legal Costs").



2.2 Wamije denied liability to pay the Legal Costs, as they were not in accordance with the Magistrates Court (Civil) Rules 2013 costs scale for a minor civil action. This being on the grounds that to do so circumvented the applicable costs rules or that legal costs incurred in suing for damages are not damages as a matter of general principle.

2.3 Wamije further challenged the validity of the resolutions passed in the annual general meeting ("the AGM") adopting the levy arrears policy.

2.3.1 The levy arrears policy levied a contribution against the unit holder for costs (including legal costs) associated with debt recovery action for levy arrears. Since the contribution levied was not proportional to unit entitlements, a unanimous resolution was required to bind the relevant unit holders under s27(2) and (3) of the Strata Titles Act 1988.

2.4 In summary, her Honour Judge Thomas dismissed the matter and affirmed the judgment of the Magistrate, being that the Corporation is entitled to be paid the Legal Costs incurred in debt recovery action for arrears under its levy arrears policy.

2.5 In her judgment, her Honour discussed that, for a policy to validly give rise to a legal obligation for the unit holder, it is necessary for it to be adopted by the passing of a unanimous resolution at a validly convened general meeting, in accordance with s27(3) of the Strata Titles Act 1988. This then allows for that debt to be recoverable pursuant to s27(5).

3. Action that we would recommend

3.1 We would suggest that all Body Corporations recommend to all Corporations, if they have not already, to pass a resolution at successive validly convened general meetings, a similar clause regarding Debt Collection namely, that:

3.1.1 All related costs associated with the recovery of any outstanding monies will be recovered from the relevant unit owner as debt against the unit.

This ruling is welcome and will give greater certainty to strata and community titled groups pursuing debts owed by their unit owners. We recommend the following wording to our clients....

OVERDUE CONTRIBUTIONS INTEREST & FEES:

Policy - Overdue Contributions Interest & Fees: That the payment of the Corporation Account Notice is the responsibility of each lot holder and accounts must be paid within twenty-eight (28) days of the due date for payment. If any account is not paid within 28 days of the due date lot owners are required to pay interest on the overdue amount at the rate of twelve (12%) per annum calculated from the due date until payment, and to pay all expenses incurred in pursuing recovery of overdue amounts including (but not limited to) legal fees, administrative costs, location and service fees and any commission payable to debt recovery consultants or solicitors. If the account is not paid by the due date a reminder notice will be sent with a late payment charge as per the contract fee.

For the Judges full ruling go to..

http://www.unitcare.com.au/pdfs/court_case_fees_2021.pdf

emergency numbers

Plumbing , Gas, Roof Leaks	8364 5855
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

USEFUL LINKS

Our colleagues at 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/
- www.lookupstrata.com.au/category/parking/parkingsafaq/
- www.lookupstrata.com.au/factsheet-maintenance-common-property/
- <https://www.lookupstrata.com.au/category/noise/noisesafaq/>



MEN HAVE HAD THE VULNERABILITY BASHED OUT OF THEM

The following article appeared in the Guardian newspaper <https://www.theguardian.com/au> and looks at the struggles of being male. **Australian author and journalist Rick Morton. argues that "Men, we need to get our own house in order"**

Rick Morton learned early that weakness was 'gay', and that only women asked for help. In this edited extract from his new book, he writes about the trap of masculinity – and how to be free of it

Guardian Australia's book club: join Rick Morton to talk about men, vulnerability and complex PTSD

We don't need to look far to find these tragicomic representations of manhood reflected back at us as serious propositions. Kleenex has marketed "man size" tissues; in the United States, the laundry brand Bounce developed fabric softener sheets "for men and people who smell like them"; and, for a brief period, the yoghurt brand Powerful was labelled as "brogurt" for its positioning as a protein-enhanced super treat for men.

If a man wishes to bathe but not appear gay in doing so, he may wish to purchase a bath bomb shaped like a hand grenade and soak with a "hero's explosive rush of black pepper and rosemary". There are bronuts and bread for men, mancandles and cotton buds from Q-tips sold as the "men's ultimate multi-tool" so that cleaning one's ears cannot be mistaken for both having and enjoying penetrative sex with another man.

Mancan developed a wine in a can, under the pretence that "we believe wine is for drinking, not pairing". The tagline is a brusque, efficient: "Shut up and drink."

Remember, if you're a bloke and you talk, then you are probably a woman.

Some of these products were too damn stupid to last very long, but the rest are still out there. They press on precisely because there is a market for them, of men so bound up in gender stereotypes that it would be unfathomable to use a soap product every day while having to yell "not a homo" at the shower head as it washes over you.

Men, we need to get our own house in order: Australian author and journalist Rick Morton.

For me, this messaging started at school. Everyone and everything that was out of favour in high school was "gay", with remarks ranging in severity from "that's so gay" to "you're a fucken gay cunt". I was never the target of this stuff, but I didn't need to be to be affected by it. I knew what not to be – and that meant presenting as straight as possible. That meant being a man even when I scarcely knew what that was.

This is not a problem peculiar to the gay kids in school. All the other boys were performing the same routine and some of them had come from broken homes, like me, or had fathers who hit them. Others had dads who never touched them, not even to hug them, and I wondered what that must do to a boy. I remember one night in year 8, when I stayed over at a boy's house. I'm going to call him Greg, but that's not his real name.

On that Saturday, Greg's dad questioned him about not putting the bins out earlier in the week. When Greg attempted to explain himself, his dad punched him right in the head for talking back. I was just standing there, mouth agape. It wasn't a gentle tap in jest or mock anger, it was a bone-thudding whack. Greg was straight. But I knew in that moment that even that wasn't going to be enough to protect him. He, too, would have to be a man. And what better place to learn masculinity than at the end of your father's fist?

In his debut novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, the poet Ocean Vuong writes about the prickly passion between Vietnamese-American "Little Dog" and a whitebread, all-American ball of anger and hurt called Trevor. There is no finer book, and his assessment of the trap of masculinity was a punch in the gut for me:

In his backyard, an empty dirt field beside a freeway overpass, I watched Trevor aim his .32 Winchester at a row of paint cans lined on an old park bench. I did not know then what I know now: to be an American boy,

and then an American boy with a gun, is to move from one end of a cage to another.

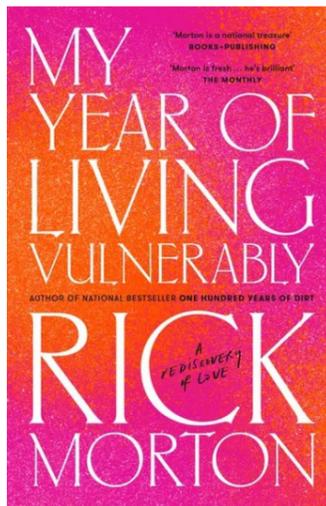
Here's what I think Vuong means when he speaks of a cage. It is not one put there by women or people with different-coloured skin, nor those with a galaxy of sexualities. The cage belongs to all men, put there by all the men that came before us, and blaming others for its existence can never free us from it.

Men, we need to get our own house in order.

What we deny ourselves in this strange, sad affair is love. Not the emaciated, sclerotic substitute we've been taught to accept, but actual, real love.

An analysis of two decades' worth of data by researchers from Duke University and the University of Arizona and published in the *American Sociological Review* in 2006 found that white, heterosexual men have the fewest friends of anyone in the United States.

Straight married men just do not know how to hold on to their mates



Between 1985 and 2004, the "discussion network" for most people shrank from almost three people to slightly more than two. Most of the time these were a person's spouse or parents. This is particularly significant for men as they age.

You will have witnessed this in your own circles. The number of confidantes a married woman may have as she grows older will shrink, as it does for us all, but typically these will always include some other women or men outside of the marriage and her immediate family.

Straight married men, and I'm speaking broadly here, just do not know how to hold on to their mates. As the researchers note, they rely more and more on their wives for emotional support, despite deriving less satisfaction from these relationships than they do from their friends.

A 2014 study released by Beyond Blue in Australia suggests that one-quarter of all men in their middle age – that is aged 30 to 65 years old – "have no one outside their immediate family whom they can rely

on".

It might never be said in these terms, but many men know this one thing better than they know themselves: it is weak to ask for help. Even calling a friend and asking them to catch up is an act draped in the silent oppression of gender "norms".

Is it gay, and therefore "woman-like", to ask a mate out for a drink? Is it gay to have good mental health?

For a particular subset of men, the corner pub or local and national sport are the only acceptable outlets for socialising, and even in those contexts it is generally forbidden to speak of personal troubles or loneliness. As one friend put it to me: "You go there so you don't have to talk about it."

You see this kind of thinking in pockets everywhere, but never so densely as among the working class and the working poor. These are the people I know best. Men who have shaped me, for better or worse, have typically come from these hard-knock backgrounds where their hands and backs were put to work and the work served a purpose and that purpose was unyielding in its purity – to have wife and child.

Whether it was a significant minority or even a majority of fathers over the last century, we'll never know, but I think it safe to say many of them never knew enough themselves to teach their own sons that the needs of a family may yet stretch beyond food and shelter.

Those things are important, absolutely, but it would have been just as helpful to advise all sons who wished to be fathers: if you're going to focus on, and even demand, the antiquated role of being the provider, then you'd best learn a thing or two about the provision of emotional and intellectual support, too.

In other words, you'd bloody well better learn how to love.

COMPOSTING AT YOUR APARTMENT

By Nell Geraets of The Guardian newspaper

Anyone can compost with enough time and commitment, but for the time-poor or commitment-phobic, Australian local councils may have a solution.

On paper, composting seems simple. But in reality, it can open up a whole can of worms. For Andrew McCarthy, that can was specifically 20,000 dead worms, and "the stench of ammonia" after a five-day trip down the coast.

McCarthy, who is chairperson of the South Melbourne Sustainability Group, discovered worms do not fare well in direct sunshine. The heat essentially cooked them.

"Worm farming is a lot more challenging than what you would read on the back of the box at Bunnings," he says. Beyond the death of these poor wriggly warriors, McCarthy's zero-waste sojourn caused panic throughout his apartment complex.

"My neighbour smelled it two nights before and ... thought there had to have been a gas leak for such a bad smell to be emanating from the front of the apartment block. He proceeded to bang down another neighbour's door at two o'clock in the morning, worrying about the gas leak ... which was just my dead worms."

But even after this incident, McCarthy believes that if you're passionate, you can compost in an apartment – you just need the appropriate information and drive.

A spokesperson from Sydney's Inner West council says the garbage bin of an average household in its district contains about 36% food waste. This waste is sent to a landfill where it decomposes without oxygen, releasing huge amounts of methane – a greenhouse gas that is said to be 32 to 34 times more environmentally damaging than carbon dioxide.

Composting helps tackle this problem. McCarthy says that would-be waste reducers should think of home composting systems "like pets" – very sustainable ones. "They have living needs. They require a very precise environment in which to



live."

Ishka Bless, who is the resident support officer at Compost Revolution, says the key to composting is observation. Not only do you need to consider where to put your composting system – ideally out of the baking sun – you also need to determine what you will do with the final product. Unless you have your own home-jungle to feed, the chances are you will have leftover compost or worm castings.

Bless recommends worm farms over bokashi bins for those who live in particularly tight spaces, without access to a community garden or outdoor areas. You only need to collect worm castings every few months, and the worm farm itself is generally small in size.

Although they're often marketed as apartment composting solutions, having garden space nearby and the time to visit is imperative with bokashi systems. Bless says fermented scraps from a bokashi bin need to be dropped off at a community garden every two to three weeks, as the waste cannot finish its composting process without being buried in soil or a large compost bin.

Apps such as ShareWaste are also a way to get rid of food scraps. Or you can take them straight to a community garden. "Some people just walk their bin to the garden, others cycle or drive and one amazing lady pushes it on her shopping trolley which she's been using since the 70s," McCarthy says of his cohort of composters.

But for those without time, space or energy, local councils could provide a solution. Several councils across New South Wales and Victoria have launched organic waste recycling services. If composting yourself is like owning a pet, these services are more like patting a stranger's dog in the park.

Note: Many Councils in South Australia provide a green waste kerbside collection service. We understand that this waste is incorporated into Council's composting arrangements that supply their parks and gardens departments.

If your Council does not provide a kerbside program then we suggest you and your fellow unit owners lobby your local councillors for said service.

SMALL FEE INCREASE

These have been difficult times for South Australians. Wages have been stagnant, job opportunities scarce and then there has been the pandemic.

Fortunately it looks like we are on the way out of the pandemic.

At UnitCare we have held our PrimeCare management fees at \$233/unit since July 2018. Three years on we find that we need a small increase in our fees as many of our business costs have risen over this time.

Our new fees are as follows...

For PrimeCare clients up from \$233 to \$238/unit with a minimum (7 units) of \$1,666 per group.

For GroupAssist clients up from \$175 to \$178.50/unit.

For our Select Care clients the hourly rate will increase from \$165 to \$168

THANKS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Most of our clients groups have active Management Committee members. We appreciate, acknowledge and commend their conscientious efforts on behalf of their fellow unit owners.

Some properties require more maintenance than others, and some committees are dealing with very complex scenarios and dynamics. Some committees are having to make tough decisions about expensive maintenance. We wish to thank all the proactive committee members who, sometimes, put in many hours of their own time to liaise with contractors on site, and communicate with their fellow committee members and/or other unit owners and residents in an effort to keep the property in good condition and make it a safe and pleasant place to reside, maintain value and attract good tenants.

While UnitCare can help co-ordinate maintenance and facilitate policy making, it is ultimately up to the owners to decide and fund how the units will be maintained and operated in accord with the legislation.

At UnitCare, we rely on collaborative and co-operative owners and committee members who are willing to work according to our procedures and the legislation in order for us to be able to offer our services effectively.