

RESPECT FOR THE TRUST OF CLIENTS

It is easy to take the trust of our clients for granted. This is no more apparent than when dealing with their money.

Over many years clients have come to us from other managers having had problems with the management of their money. There have been unauthorised works amounting to \$1,000s, financial statements that did not add up, missing funds and disputes over accounts for works and jobs paid for but only part done.

There will always be some misunderstandings between managers and their clients however there are ways to minimise the risk and improve the level of trust.

- ✓ Have the committee check the specification for any major works before going to tender
- ✓ Get approval for special works/accounts by the management committee before paying them
- ✓ Send a monthly ledger of the accounts to the Treasurer
- ✓ Send a copy of the Audit report to the group

These precautions keep managers on their toes and have the owners sharing the responsibility.

On a related issue we continue to hear stories of strata managers hiding behind the Privacy Act when owners are seeking information about their body corporate.

Owners seeking a list of owners or ledgers have been refused with managers citing the 'Privacy Act' as forbidding them to release this information.

This is not true, the Privacy Act prohibits third parties receiving information from a manager. For example a manager may not release a list of owners to a real estate agent unless the owners and the Body Corporate have granted permission. As the owners are the Body Corporate they are not third parties for the purposes of the legislation.

A recent example of this reprehensible behaviour was a manager refusing to supply the list of owners to a group of owner occupiers. The owners then went to their local Council and were supplied the list from the rate payer files.

It is clear to us that some managers are lying to clients using an Act that does not apply in order to withhold information that may be used against them.

Trust should not be taken for granted, although intangible it is precious and underpins our job as body corporate managers.

Cheers

Gordon Russell cpm
Managing Director

ps: our current newsletter can be downloaded from our web site



viewpoint



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Managing Director
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Service	Number
Breakins, Electrical, Glazing	8299 0050
Plumbing, Gas, Roof Leaks	8356 2750
Police to attend - noise/robbery etc	131 444
State Emergency Services	1300 300 177

www.unitcare.com.au

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New Services from UnitCare

In July this year UnitCare Services introduced two new services for unit owners.

On site visits:

The service features:

- > An on site visit before your annual meeting
- > Photographs of your group including issues of concern
- > A set of photographs with observations & comments to all owners (expect to be 2 pages and around 8 pertinent photos) - sample appears on this page.

There are a number of benefits for your manager and unit owners:

- ✓ All owners including the increasing number of investors receive an annual update on their unit and the group
- ✓ Your manager is up to date on the state of your property and can request quotes for the annual meeting if needed
- ✓ Photographs are available to help contractors identify works for quoting or repair
- ✓ If your annual meeting is not held on site all owners attending the meeting can refer to the photographs as needed
- ✓ Your group has a regular photographic record for reference.

Pay only or what you need:

Not all group's need or want the same range of services. With this in mind we now offer a number of options: (see page 2 for details)

- > **PrimeCare** - fixed management fee, full service including maintenance, financial & secretarial services along with advice
- > **SelectCare** - Pay only for time used and services needed. (applies to all Community Titles)
- > **GroupAssist** - limited service low fee option for small groups (applies to groups of less than 7) 15% off PrimeCare fee. Financial service only.

With an eye to costs, GroupAssist is designed to help owners in smaller groups of six (6) and less. Owners pay 15% less as a group than the Prime Care option, and continue to receive a full financial service. UnitCare pays the group's bills,

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Strata Corporation #####
On site annual visit August 2004

Carports - general view

Tree roots - developing trip hazard outside unit 5

Developing trip hazard outside unit 5, tree roots

On site visit: Please note that UnitCare Services are not licenced builders or architects. Any property visit by the staff of UnitCare Services is not intended nor should be considered or treated as a building inspection.



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after hours emergencies - must phone 8364 0022 for up to date numbers

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ABN 193 4872 3265

Services & Fees a comparison

We thought it might be useful for our readers to compare our services and fees with those of the other major body corporate managers in South Australia.

The fees in the table below include GST and are based on information gathered in July 2004, based on a group of 8 units. Services and fees may vary according to the size of a group. Fees for additional duties by UnitCare are by negotiation. All care has been taken with this information and we advise that you confirm our competitors fees directly with them. E & O E .

Services (inc. GST)	UnitCare Services	Whittles	Strata Data	Adelaide Strata	Horner
PROTECTION...					
Money Back Performance Guarantee	Yes - 1 weeks management fees	not available	not available	not available	not available
Three (3) month money back trial	Yes	No	No	No	No
Financial reports to monitor expenditure	monthly ledger to Treasurer, annually to owners	to owners annually	to owners annually	to owners annually	to owners annually
Activity reports to monitor manager's service	monthly to Treasurer, annually to owners	No	No	No	No
Trust Account Auditor's report to Treasurer	Yes	No	No	If requested \$4/report	No
Committee / P.O. approve any extraordinary payments	Yes	-	-	-	-
INFORMATION...					
Unit Owners Kit (inc. REI Notes for Owners)	Yes	No	No	No	No
Newsletters	Yes - quarterly, hot topics & help for unit owners, downloadable from web site	Occasional	Yes	-	No
Web site	Yes - 20+ pages of indexed help	Yes - limited Flash movie	No	Yes	No
FEES...					
Option 1 PrimeCare - Fixed Management Fee per unit per year. Full service (minimum fee is 7 units)	\$140/unit includes maintenance, financial & secretarial services.	\$143/unit	\$132/unit	\$165/unit	\$137.50/unit
Option 2 SelectCare - Time based fee option. (applies to Community Titles)	\$120/hour Pay only for time used. Full report on activities and line taken. (applies to all Community Titles)	-	-	setup fees may apply	setup fee \$55
Option 3 GroupAssist - limited service low fee option for small groups (applies to groups of < 7)	15% off PrimeCare fee. Financial service only. Ask for full details.	-	-	-	-
Meeting Fees	\$100 for 1 st 1.5 hrs anyone	\$132 for 1 st 1.5 hrs evening at units	\$110 for 1 st 1.5 hours	\$176 for 1 st hour > 6pm	\$90.75 for 1 st 1.5 hours
Maintenance - comments	No commissions or ownership of maintenance firm	Charge commission on many works	Own a maintenance firm - Strata Data Maintenance	\$55 to enter a non-ASM preferred contractor	Own a maintenance firm - Murray Maintenance
Annual on site visit - report/photographs to all owners	Yes - fee of \$4/unit min \$32	\$11 recovered from owner	\$11 recovered from owner	\$11/\$27.50 recovered from owner	\$2.20 recovered from owner
Fee for overdue account notices	\$28 to send to debt recovery	\$33 to send to debt recovery	\$7BA to send to debt recovery	\$27.50 to send to debt recovery	\$22 to send to debt recovery
all fees billed to owner	No	Yes	-	-	In Part
Funds investment fee - charge to manage funds	-	-	-	-	-
Photocopying & Postage	At cost	At cost - ave \$20/unit	Approx \$20/unit/year	At cost	Estimated at \$15/unit/ave
Annual Audit, Reconciliation & Archiving Fee	\$7.70/unit/annum	\$6.60/unit	\$6.65/unit min \$66	\$7.70/unit min \$77.00	\$8.25/unit + \$22/group
Produce/Lodge Corporation's Tax Return	\$95	\$110	\$72	\$38.50 + tax agent fee	\$55
24 Hour emergency maintenance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

compare services & fees

What the Doc really thinks

We thought the following was worthy of a reprint. Thanks to Helen Tablet (The Australian 03/04)

If you reckon your doctor's thoughtful look during a consultation is just a diagnosis in progress, you may have to think again.

Your GP 'could be pondering something along the lines of "Go home, you're a hypochondriac", "You need to lose weight" or "Please wash before you see me

These are among the inner thoughts revealed in a survey of 200 GPs that shows widespread frustration at patients' refusal to follow basic 'advice, demands for services such as sick notes and lack of honesty,

The survey across several states by *Australian Reader's Digest* asked doctors what they would like say to patients but felt they could not for legal or ethical reasons, or out of politeness.

Six out of 10 said they wanted to say "You're not sick, you just want a note to get off work", while '94 per cent 'wished they could tell their patients to lose weight.

Eighty-six per cent said they wanted patients to own up when they did not take medication properly. Six out of 10 wished they could say: "If you followed my advice, you wouldn't be here so often."

Another annoyance was patients trying to cram several problems into one visit,

But Australian Medical Association council of general practice chairman David Rivett said expecting everyone to do exactly as they were 'told was unrealistic, and a GP frustrated by patients should consider another career.

"You're there to 'help people, and if you get frustrated or embittered about them not following your advice, you've lost the plot," he said.

He believes GPs lose their frustrations as they become older and more experienced.

If a GP' kept telling a patient smoking was bad for them, it had' a cumulative effect, but the patient might only give up the habit years down the track, he said. "It's a bit like water dripping on a rock." □

Services (continued from page 1)

collects and banks the levies, provides a regular report to the Treasurer along with an annual financial statement to all owners. There is no designated manager and the group needs to organise your own meetings and common property maintenance.

We expect GroupAssist will suit unit groups where there is a strong management committee who are accustomed to organising maintenance and meetings and just need help with the books.

If you want more information about GroupAssist or any of our services please visit our web site or give us a call □

The benefits of an ageing population

The following is an extract from *The Australia Institute paper written by Judith Healy of the ANU. It paints a positive future with older citizens making a vital and valuable contribution to our community.* The full text can be found at <http://www.tai.org.au>

'Several areas in the community will benefit from the surge in numbers of retirees who are active and healthy, independent and with time on their hands. Previously, women have provided much of the volunteer work performed in the community but today, women are in the work force in increasing numbers. At a time when the contribution of volunteers is increasingly important given the rising demand for such services, many health and welfare agencies are seeking to recruit from the growing numbers of retirees. And it appears that rates of volunteering among the baby boomers are continuing to rise compared to previous generations (Wilkinson and Bittman 2002).

The gross value of all volunteering in 1997 was assessed at \$41 billion (Ironmonger 2000), equivalent to the amount the government spent on all aged care services in that year (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare 2001). Not only does the community benefit from volunteer work contributed by older Australians, but older Australians themselves also benefit. The 'young old' care for the 'old old' and in doing so, report a high level of satisfaction with their volunteer work (Cummins *et al.* 2002b). Volunteering is regarded as one measure of social capital and thus an indicator to a healthy civil society. Organisations such as the World Bank view social capital as 'not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society - it is the glue that holds them together' (World Bank 2003). Older people contribute to this 'glue' in other ways as well. They play an important role in supporting and maintaining informal social networks thus binding communities and families within communities.

Far from being net receivers of help and support, older people are, in fact, net providers, at least up to the age of 75 years. They provide childcare, financial, practical and emotional assistance to family members including helping people outside the household with the tasks of daily living. Such unpaid caring and voluntary work adds up to a significant proportion of GDP, around seven per cent on some measures (Ranzijn *et al.* 2002; De Vaus *et al.* 2003). Grandparenting has become an important social role in an age when people tend to have more living parents than children. Not only does it benefit grandparents themselves who find that grandparenthood is an important aspect of their lives, but it also appears to benefit grandchildren substantially.' □



valuing volunteers