



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

8th International Research Forum on Multi-Owned Properties

UNSW Sydney, Australia
28-30 January 2026



UNSW
City Futures
Research Centre



UNSW
SYDNEY

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/city-futures/events/ifomp-2026>

Sponsor



MICHAEL TEYS

—— Strata Advisory ——

Foundation Sponsors



Lannock
STRATA FINANCE



**STRATA
COMMUNITY
INSURANCE**

Day 1: Wednesday 28th January 2026

Lvl 16, 10 Carrington Street Sydney (Allianz)

| Time | Speakers | Affiliation | Presentation title |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Hazel Easthope & Laura Crommelin | UNSW | Welcome |
| 9:15 – 10:15 | Cathy Sherry | Macquarie University | Keynote Presentation Painting Ourselves into a Corner: The reality of high density mixed use development |
| 10:15 – 11:00 | Thomas Gibbons | Thomas Gibbons Law, Macquarie University (PhD Student) | Private Communities and Hybrid Property Forms: Theory and practice |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | Coffee break | | |
| 11:30 – 12:15 | Yasuo Okada | Kokugakuin University | The 2025 Amendment of the Condominium Act in Japan |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | Nomazotsho Memani | The Council for Higher Education | Joint and Several Liabilities in Property Ownership: A comparative analysis of joint tenancy, tenancy in common, and sectional title schemes in South Africa |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Lunch | | |
| 2:00 – 2:45 | Susan Proctor | Proctor Legal and Australian College of Strata Lawyers | Holistic Legislative Change: A mixed title environment case study |
| 2:45 – 3:30 | Michael Teys | Michael Teys Strata Advisory | Diverging Paths in Building Safety Law: Post-grenfell reforms in England, Florida, and New South Wales |
| 3:30 – 3:45 | Coffee break | | |
| 3:45 – 4:45 | David Rouse & Therese Konwerski | The Housing Agency, NSW Department of Customer Service | Panel 1: International Legislative Reform |
| 4:45 – 5:30 | Travel to cruise | | |
| 5:30 – 8:30 | Sydney Harbour cruise | | |

Day 2: Thursday 29th January 2026

Lvl 16, 10 Carrington Street Sydney (Allianz)

| Time | Speakers | Affiliation | Presentation title |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Hazel Easthope & Laura Crommelin | UNSW | Welcome |
| 9:15 – 10:00 | Charlie Gillon & Fred Tuckwell | UNSW & Owners Corporation Network of Australia | What Do Owners Want? What Does 'Good' Look Like? Using surveys to better understand strata owner experiences, preferences and priorities |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | Jasmine Palmer | Independent Researcher | Wellbeing, Community and Sustainability: A longitudinal study of three atypical apartment building communities in Melbourne |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Coffee break | | |
| 11:15 – 12:00 | Denise Ryan | University of Melbourne | Building Sustainability Knowledge: Mapping Australian retrofit processes from apartment owner perspectives |
| 12:00 – 12:45 | Jeeva Sajan & Awais Piracha | Western Sydney University | Improving Accessibility in Strata Housing: Barriers and policy directions in Australia |
| 12:45 – 1:45 | Lunch | | |
| 1:45 – 2:30 | Vaishali Anagal, Abhijit Natu & Hazel Easthope | BNCA, BKPS & UNSW | Owner-led Redevelopment through Collective Decision-making: Case studies of redevelopment of multi-family housing in India |
| 2:30 – 3:15 | Bill Randolph, Simon Pinnegar, Laurence Troy & Reg Wade | UNSW & University of Sydney | Making Super Normal Profits in the Compact City: A case study of the Sydney apartment market |
| 3:15 – 3:45 | Coffee break | | |
| 3:45 – 4:45 | Melinda Dewsnap, Dawn Bauman & Paul Keating | Resilient Sydney, Community Associations Institute & SCI Insurance | Panel 2: Resilience |
| 5:00 – 6:30 | Break | | |
| 6:30 -10:00 | Conference dinner | | |

Day 3: Friday 30th January 2026

10:00 - 4:00 Fieldtrip to Green Square Neighbourhood



Credit: Anthony Kerr

Keynote Speaker

Painting Ourselves into a Corner: The reality of high density mixed use development

Prof. Cathy Sherry

Macquarie University

Ever since Jane Jacobs looked out her window in 1950s Greenwich Village, observing the benefits of a dense, mixed use, mixed tenure city (Jacobs 2011), planners have rightly been striving to recreate this diverse urban environment. However, because all land is owned by someone – either the government or more likely private citizens - planning ideals can only be realised through private property titles. Unlike the private property titles that facilitated the Garden Suburb movement - ordinary ‘fees simple’ - the private property titles that create high density, mixed use cities are far from simple.

Strata and community titles, and now stratum or ‘volumetric’ subdivisions are complex legal structures that impose extensive legal and financial obligations on owners and tenants, absent non-strata titles. Most significantly, they impose obligations to pay for services and infrastructure in ways that can be harnessed by developers, the strata industry and by governments for their own ends. For example, owners of apartments in large mixed use developments now routinely find themselves responsible for the ongoing maintenance and management of publicly accessible open green space and private energy networks, or more accurately, obliged to pay contracts for professionals to discharge these responsibilities for them. The costs of these facilities and services are considerable.

In planning high density cities, particularly in the context of global housing crises, we are paying too much attention to planning and supply of housing and too little attention to the complex property titles that will deliver that housing. We need all actors in city building – architects, designers, engineers, surveyors, planners and governments – to understand the reality of complex property titles or we will compromise the long-term financial, environmental and social viability of our cities and communities.

Paper Abstracts

Private Communities and Hybrid Property Forms: Theory and practice

Thomas Gibbons

Thomas Gibbons Law, Macquarie University (PhD Student)

Property law is intimately concerned with forms, as evidenced by the ubiquity of, and ongoing interest in, the numerus clausus principle. In the context of multi-owned properties, this paper will consider hybrid property forms: arrangements that are combinations of existing property and governance forms, with a special focus on New South Wales and New Zealand. Examples in New Zealand include cross-leases, covenanted unit titles, and other arrangements; while examples in New South Wales include stratum estates and contractual lease arrangements. Drawing on PhD research, including interviews with property professionals involved in the design and implementation of hybrid property forms, this paper will outline and interrogate these hybrid property forms. It will consider the reasons and drivers for their existence, how they operate in practice, their limitations, and areas for reform. Bringing together practical and theoretical threads, the paper will examine how these hybrid property forms create numerus clausus difficulties, while also looking at ways they can be improved and made to work better – especially for those who live within the private communities they are used to constitute and create.

The 2025 Amendment of the Condominium Act in Japan

Yasuo Okada

Kokugakuin University

Japan's condominium ownership system, established in 1962 and reformed several times since, has long provided the legal foundation for collective housing in one of the world's most densely populated urban environments. In May 2025, a major set of amendments to the Act on Building Unit Ownership, etc. have been enacted. These reforms respond to pressing challenges of aging condominium stock, demographic shifts, and the growing difficulty of collective decision-making in condominium buildings.

This presentation will outline the main elements of the 2025 reforms. Key innovations include new mechanisms to facilitate the renewing or large-scale repair of aging condominiums; strengthened governance provisions to improve transparency and accountability of management associations; and the introduction of flexible schemes to support decision-making in cases where owner participation is low. The reforms also expand the scope for external support from local governments and professional managers, aiming to balance private ownership with broader public interests in urban renewal and safety.

Beyond a descriptive account, the presentation will situate the Japanese reforms in comparative perspective. Many jurisdictions in Australia and the Asian-Pacific and beyond are grappling with similar issues of aging strata housing, fragmented ownership, and collective governance. The Japanese case illustrates both the potential and the limitations of statutory reform in addressing these challenges. By highlighting the policy debates and legal techniques underpinning the 2025 amendments, the presentation seeks to contribute to broader discussions on the future of condominium law and governance in global cities.

Joint and Several Liabilities in Property Ownership: A comparative analysis of joint tenancy, tenancy in common, and sectional title schemes in South Africa

Nomazotsho Memani

The Council for Higher Education

This study examines co-ownership and the implications of joint and several liabilities within three models: joint tenancy, tenancy in common, and sectional title co-ownership, all governed by South African common law and statutes . This paper aims to thoroughly analyze the distinct advantages and disadvantages of the concept of joint and several liabilities.

In a joint tenancy, each owner holds an equal, undivided interest in the property, including the right of survivorship, which allows the deceased owner's share to transfer to the surviving owners. However, a major drawback of this arrangement is the principle of joint and several liability, which holds each owner fully responsible for all debts related to the property. Unlike in the UK, South African law does not differentiate between "tenants in common" and "joint tenants," which can lead to complications if one co-owner fails to meet their obligations . The courts rule that, where physical division is impossible, an asset must be sold, and the proceeds divided fairly.

In such cases, the courts may determine that, where physical division of the property is impossible, the asset must be sold, and the proceeds fairly divided, as established in the case of Robson and Theron . Importantly, no co-owner is obligated to remain in the partnership against their will .

Conversely, tenancy in common allows each owner to possess a separate interest in the property, providing the freedom to sell or bequeath their share. However, it still introduces joint and several liabilities for shared obligations, particularly for shared expenses like taxes and maintenance.

Sectional title co-ownership, commonly found in multi-unit developments, differentiates ownership of individual units while sharing responsibility for common areas. This model limits liability, as owners are generally only responsible for their unit's expenses, presenting a more secure structure compared to traditional co-ownership

In conclusion, while joint tenancy and tenancy in common offer straightforward structures, they come with significant risks due to joint and several liabilities. Sectional title co-ownership provides a more organized approach, effectively reducing these risks and responsibilities.

Holistic Legislative Change: A mixed title environment case study

Susan Proctor

Proctor Legal and Australian College of Strata Lawyers

A critical question for strata reform – a ‘Wicked Problem’ – is how we inform legislative change holistically for our buildings so we can arrive at better buildings and communities across all multi owned properties, both new and old.

This paper will consider a case study of issues arising from introducing a mandated requirement (applying to all new buildings that contain a units plan in the ACT that will exist in a larger building envelope, among other titles) to have a building management statement (BMS) registered prior to registration of the Units Plan. Through this requirement, the ACT has created a situation where there are two rules for the same building configuration dependent on when it was built.

While this situation is not unlike a building only being required to comply with the NCC at the time the plans were drawn, the outcome arising is that we have Owners Corporations at risk of becoming uninsurable in respect of existing building stock where they are not alone in the building, typically sitting on top of a commercial/retail owned stratum parcel, as there is no legal obligation to force the other lot owner/owners to enter into a BMS.

In a case like this, the question arises of how we work across industry to find the solution for Governments, noting similar issues will arise across all building reforms that will become necessary. This involves consideration of the reluctance to adopt retrospective laws, as the courts have consistently stated that, unless there is clear legislative intent, statutes should not be given retrospective effect, especially when doing so would affect existing substantive rights or obligations. The paper asks: Is there an acceptable level of grandfathering of obligations that can be considered, perhaps at the same time as a degree of discretion in relation to owners’ corporation mandatory building insurances.

I intend to work through this particular issue with the Australian College of Strata Lawyers Improving Strata Laws Committee, key industry stakeholders and local government between now and the conference. I hope to be able to provide an understanding of the challenges, the progress, and the outcomes as part of this paper.

Diverging Paths in Building Safety Law: Post-grenfell reforms in England, Florida, and New South Wales

Michael Teys

Michael Teys Strata Advisory

Tall buildings in disrepair are emerging worldwide as risks to life, health, well-being, and the financial security of their owners and occupants. Internationally, governments have responded differently to high-profile tragedies such as Grenfell Towers (UK) and Champlain Towers (USA). In Australia, building failures such as Lacrosse, Opal Tower, and Mascot Towers, while not fatal, have inflicted significant mental, social, and financial harm on owners and residents.

Much scholarly and regulatory attention has focused on the causes of these failures: 'light touch' building standards, housing financialisation, split incentives, product supply opaqueness, aging buildings, and poor decision making. However, less work has examined the legislative and regulatory responses to these events.

Using comparative law methods, this research analyses building safety law reform in three jurisdictions where tall buildings have failed catastrophically: England, Florida (USA), and New South Wales (Australia). It identifies divergence in both retrospective and prospective legal reforms governing building safety in multi-owned properties. The study highlights a shift in some jurisdictions from neoliberal regulatory approaches to more interventionist frameworks, particularly concerning new construction and the remediation of at-risk buildings. This research is internationally significant as it illuminates how different legal systems confront the intersection of public safety, private law, housing markets, and governance. By drawing comparative lessons, it advances a global discussion on how to improve building safety, protect vulnerable populations, and maintain the financial sustainability of dense urban housing.

What Do Owners Want? What Does 'Good' Look Like? Using surveys to better understand strata owner experiences, preferences and priorities

Charlie Gillon & Fred Tuckwell

UNSW & Owners Corporation Network of Australia

Strata owners are diverse, often categorised into two (often competing) groups: owner-occupiers and owner-investors. Within each group is a spectrum of interests, priorities, knowledge and risk tolerance. Owners also live or lease in diverse contexts, in buildings of varying sizes and ages, in regional and metropolitan locations. Better understanding this diversity of owner needs and priorities is crucial for the effective operation and management of strata schemes. Research targeting what owners want, and what 'good' looks like for strata, can help to (1) inform how the Government and broader strata industry operate to support owners, and (2) identify educational requirements, to help owners better understand their responsibilities. Both interventions are needed to support owners to navigate common challenges, including: professionalism in the strata industry, rising costs of insurance and repairs, understanding legislation, and managing risk and liability.

This joint presentation draws on research with strata owners, outlining two surveys designed to highlight strata owner's experiences and decision-making priorities. First, a UNSW City Futures Research Centre survey of recent apartment purchaser perceptions and preferences, which targeted purchase choice and how apartment building features such as age, size, and scale factored into purchasing. Second, an Owners Corporation Network survey, which asked owners about the consumer experience of strata to help inform a 'customer first approach' advocacy platform for multi-owned apartment owners in Australia. Together, these survey findings present a fuller understanding of owner experiences and preferences, which help inform advocacy priorities for owners in multi-owned apartments and target areas requiring further research.

Wellbeing, Community and Sustainability: A longitudinal study of three atypical apartment building communities in Melbourne

Jasmine Palmer

Independent Researcher

It is oft stated that resident involvement in housing provision and community development increases community cohesion (e.g. Bresson & Labit, 2019), reduces resource consumption (e.g. Tummers, 2016), and has long-term health benefits (e.g. Karnekull, 2010). However, no research has been undertaken in Australia to quantify these benefits. The research presented here is a longitudinal study of residents of three atypical apartment building communities in Victoria. All three communities were occupied in 2022 and are atypical in that residents have been pre-identified and engaged in the development process, to varying degrees.

The communities studied are Urban Coup cohousing (Brunswick), Assemble Future's Macaulay Rd (Kensington), and the five Nightingale buildings which make up the Nightingale Village (Brunswick). Wave One participants completed an online survey before moving to their new homes (2019/2020) documenting their health and wellbeing, community engagement, and motivations for choosing their new home. The survey primarily employed standardised survey instruments, alongside bespoke questions. Interviews were conducted with one quarter of survey respondents. Wave Two occurred in 2023, repeating the previous data collection processes with additional questions on the degree to which respondents' expectations had been met by their new residences. Wave Three of data collection is currently underway (August 2025).

The outcomes of this study will contribute empirical evidence relative to the development and occupation of future apartment communities. Providing evidence of health, community, and environmental outcomes of resident participation in the development of multi-unit (apartment) buildings can inform future urban policies, building approval processes, and apartment design guidelines.

| |
|--|
| Building Sustainability Knowledge: Mapping Australian retrofit processes from apartment owner perspectives |
| Denise Ryan |
| University of Melbourne |
| <p>Given the growing place of apartments in city housing stocks, there is a pressing need for strategies to ensure the sustainability of these buildings. Planning policy is lifting the standard of new buildings, however, the scale of existing stock offers the potential for greater gains. This research asks what real world experiences can tell us about how to better realise this potential. It uses a novel method to capture the process of completed retrofits in occupied apartment buildings from the perspective of owners. Informed by Actor Network Theory, the approach centres clients and the sociotechnical characteristics of their buildings rather than the perspectives of built environment professionals to build a detailed picture of how human and non-human actors shape retrofit possibilities in multi-owned apartment buildings. This new perspective highlights the points in a retrofit project that need to accommodate strata processes and demonstrates that the practical experience gained by owners volunteering on their strata committees can be harnessed to inform future projects.</p> |
| Improving Accessibility in Strata Housing: Barriers and policy directions in Australia |
| Jeeva Sajan & Awais Piracha |
| Western Sydney University |
| <p>In 2024, about 21.4% of the Australians were living with a disability, including those with age related conditions (ABS, 2024). About 96% of people with disability reside in private dwellings, with 18% living in multi-owned developments such as semi-detached houses, row or terrace houses, townhouses low to high-rise apartments (AIHW,2024). The proportion of people with disability living in strata properties is expected to rise due to housing affordability pressures. With Australia’s aging population, it is projected that 60% of the Australian homes will be occupied by at least one person with a disability (Gusheh et al., 2021).</p> <p>A human-rights-based approach to “housing for all” is essential to plan and deliver disability inclusive homes (Chris et al., 2023; Newman et al.,2025). National policy directions including the National Disability Strategy 2021–2031, calls for affordable and accessible homes in private sector, while the Productivity Commission (2022) highlights the urgent need to embed accessible design standards in housing. Although the National Construction Code 2022 mandates minimum Liveable Housing Design Standards (LHDS), their implementation remains inconsistent across jurisdictions. This paper presents findings from a state-of-the-art review examining barriers to disability-inclusive homes in strata developments and the gaps in mandating LHDS across Australia. It also draws on international case studies to highlight good practices and offers policy recommendations to incentivise upgrades to the existing housing stock, strengthen regulatory compliance, and improve awareness of accessibility requirements among building certifiers and strata managers.</p> |

Owner-led Redevelopment through Collective Decision-making: Case studies of redevelopment of multi-family housing in India

Vaishali Anagal, Abhijit Natu & Hazel Easthope

BNCA, BKPS & UNSW

The quality of the built environment is an important determinant of the quality of life of people. Deteriorated buildings are uncomfortable, unsafe to live in, and become eyesores at the neighbourhood scale. Redevelopment is one means of overcoming these challenges and securing new, better-quality housing.

Owner-led redevelopment of co-operative housing societies taking place at micro-level is a significant urban phenomenon in ageing Indian cities. However; due to the multiple ownership, redevelopment of apartments in India involves complex stages of collective decision making including the decisions of project initiation, finances, design brief formulation and the selection of a project team. This research paper explores the stages in collective decision-making process of redevelopment and how individual and collective needs of owners are balanced and negotiated through this process.

Face-to-face interviews with members of managing committees of six redeveloped co-operative housing societies were analysed to map the timespan for different stages in the collective decision making and investigate associated reasons for delays across the case-studies. Decision making in residential redevelopment was contemplated using a theoretical model developed by Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (EBM). The research highlights how the collective decision-making process can secure the interests of individual households without affecting the common good. It highlights significance of preferring a collective agenda over individual aspirations, and the need of mutual agreement among stakeholders for a successful and timely owner-led redevelopment.

Making Super Normal Profits in the Compact City: A case study of the Sydney apartment market

Bill Randolph, Simon Pinnegar, Laurence Troy & Reg Wade

UNSW & University of Sydney

High density urban renewal has become the orthodoxy de jour among urban planners seeking solutions to the alleged housing supply 'crisis'. Sydney is no exception where at least twenty years of strategic metropolitan planning has pushed ever higher density development across the city. While the drivers of this boom are well established, there is little, if any, detailed analysis of the actual economics of the process itself, namely, the search for profitable development opportunities in the context of urban renewal. Yet profitability, as measured by the developers' feasibility calculations, has now become the principal rationale in the decision making for planning residential development with the models themselves exacting a performative impact on land use planning outcomes. Using a detailed integrated database for over 1,200 apartment buildings developed across Sydney between 2010 and 2019, the aim of this paper is to present an analysis of the actual level of profit generated during the post-GFC apartment boom. The findings contribute to discussions regarding the malleability of developers' feasibility arguments and the now universal acceptance of value creation as the explicit logic underpinning urban development through the 'calculative turn' in strategic urban land use planning.

Notes



IFMOP

UNSW City Futures Research Centre