



VBCS

VICTORIA  
BODY CORPORATE  
SERVICES PTY LTD

your strata care company

# ELEVATION

## Your Strata Community Newsletter



## National Broadband Network Rollout!

The NBN is an upgrade to our existing telecommunications network, designed to provide the infrastructure for affordable high speed internet and phone access for all Australians.



### How will the NBN benefit you?

In your area, the NBN can deliver super fast internet with wholesale speeds of up to 100 Mbps download and 40 Mbps upload and can also deliver high speeds no matter how far you live from the exchange. The NBN is planned to be upgraded in the future to deliver increased wholesale speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps download and 400 Mbps upload.

With the NBN, you'll be able to access the benefits of super fast broadband, including:

- High quality video calls to stay connected with family and friends;
- Access to health services and interactive educational content online;
- Working from home like you would at the office;
- Getting the whole family online at once;
- Downloading movies in minutes and streaming TV online;
- PLUS you'll be able to make phone calls over the NBN's fibre optic technology.

### What will it cost?

A standard installation of the NBN equipment is free of charge at this time. There's a great range of competitive NBN packages available for purchase from a large number of participating phone and internet service providers. This means you could access internet and phone services over the NBN for around the same price as you're paying now. Speak to your service provider to see if they have any other fees. Remember, you need to order services over the NBN from a service provider as NBN Co doesn't sell direct to the public.

### How do you connect to the NBN?

Connecting the property to the NBN is a three-step process:

#### 1. Inspecting the property

The property including the common areas will be inspected by an NBN Co construction partner to produce design plans for how the NBN will be installed.

#### 2. Connecting NBN fibre to the property

This involves connecting NBN fibre optic cable from the street to NBN equipment installed at the property based on the design plans produced in Step 1.

#### 3. Ordering services over the NBN

We'll contact you when the NBN rollout has been completed in your area. You can then call your preferred phone or internet service provider to order services over the NBN. Your service provider will arrange for the NBN to be installed inside your individual home or business.



To find out when your suburb is due to be rolled out please go to the link below:

<http://www.stratacommunity.org.au/strata-living/register-your-strata-building-nbn-cabling-0>

To register an apartment complex, townhouse, commercial or industrial building please go to the link below:

<http://www.nbnco.com.au/get-an-nbn-connection/home-and-business/connecting-fibre/register-your-building.html>

\* Victoria Body Corporate Services offers the Elevation Newsletter to clients to assist in updating them on company and industry news. The content within this newsletter is of a generic nature and may not be applicable to all owners corporations. Victoria Body Corporate Services attempts to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information for our clients, however we strongly recommend that individuals and Committees seek further advice before acting on any information in this newsletter.

## The Groom who updated Facebook...

What is the groom supposed to do after the vows of love and obey? Kiss the bride?

Hmmm, not in a geek's wedding. Before kissing the bride, Dana Hanna, a Software Developer took his mobile phone and updated his relationship status on Facebook and Twitter. He also handed one over to his new wife to do the same.

Ok, so maybe this is going a little too far, but are you a fan of social media?

VBCS wants to keep you up to date on all the latest property news, events, workshops, training notes, by-law amendments etc. Make sure you like us on Facebook and Twitter to find out the latest Strata Industry news when it happens.

For a fresh change in your body corporate management contact VBCS today.

### POSTAL ADDRESS

Locked Bag 1291  
Port Melbourne VIC 3207

t. (03) 8531 8100  
vbcs@vbcs.com.au



[vbcs.com.au](http://vbcs.com.au)

VBCS has been working very hard over the last few months, putting together a wide range of new service initiatives to add more value to your community.

The first being the successful launch of our educational workshops in June and July, we received great feedback from all who attended and are looking forward to presenting regular monthly topics! The first series of our Smarter Strata (Committee Member Education Network) has concluded, with rave reviews from our committee members on the relevance of information provided. July will see the launch of our second series on Effective Communication.

VBCS workforce of 55 dedicated professionals continue to work hard on improving our service to you and your community on a daily basis.

VBCS is always finding new ways to ensure we are your number 1 property care company, so watch this space as there are more exciting service initiatives on the way!

Kind regards,

**Richard Eastwood**  
General Manager

## New Workshops Coming Soon!

The launch of our seminars and workshops have had rave reviews! Septembers workshop will be presented Tymaline on Construction and VBCS on Responsibilities of a Committee. Presentations will include 15 minute Q&A and plenty of time to mingle.

### TOPICS:

**Emergency After Hours Service**- Tymaline Building Services  
**Responsibilities of the Committee** - VBCS

Tuesday 17th September 2013  
5.30pm to 7.00pm  
VBCS Office:  
64 Fennell Street  
Port Melbourne VIC 3207

Spots are limited so register your details to secure your seat by email [rsvp@vbcs.com.au](mailto:rsvp@vbcs.com.au) or telephone (03) 8531 8100.

## Update your details and support charity!

Help us raise money for Little Miss Miles 777 Challenge and Bravehearts by making sure your contact details are up to date!

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\$1 for each registered email address will be donated by VBCS to Little Miss Miles 777 challenge for Bravehearts. Little Miss Miles will be taking on an inspirational journey to raise much needed awareness and funds for the Bravehearts charity, running 7 Marathons in 7 states in 7 days from 19 - 26th October 2013.

To ensure VBCS has efficient communication with our clients by ensuring accuracy of information in our database and to help us raise funds, go to our website [www.vbcs.com.au](http://www.vbcs.com.au) and click on the quick link located on the front page to update your email address and phone number.

To read the full article visit:  
<http://www.vbcs.com.au/pdf/Little%20Miss%20Miles%20Charity.pdf>

Every email address & mobile phone number updated = \$1 donation to **Little Miss Miles 777 Challenge for Bravehearts**




**Little Miss Miles**

**Bravehearts**  
Educate. Empower. Protect. Our Kids.

**Educate, empower & protect Australian Children**



## Victoria property prices up

The national median house price has now risen solidly for two quarters in a row, up by +1.7%. Melbourne records the best capital city quarterly result up by +3.6%, its best result since March 2010.

Melbourne house prices rose strongly by +3.6% over the quarter. Unit prices in Melbourne rose for the third consecutive quarter also up strongly by +2.6%.

Melbourne house prices have risen by +3.7% over the year ending March with units up by +1.7%. The median house price is now \$538,922, with the median unit price \$404,197.

The national housing market has recorded its best start to a year since the strong market conditions of 2010. Buyer activity is set to increase through the remainder of 2013 driven by growing optimism and record low interest rates that have likely bottomed out, but much will depend on the performance of both the national and local economies.

## VBCS Plus presents: Building Maintenance



### Balcony Collapses—Prevention and Protection

The recent balcony collapse in Lane Cove that injured 12 youngsters is a critical reminder to everyone to ensure their decks and balconies are safe enough to hold large gatherings. While this incident was highly alarming, luckily no-one was critically injured.

These worrying cases are becoming more and more common and the risks increase as winter abates and people head outdoors to enjoy the warmer weather. Another factor contributing to an expected spike in balcony collapses is the trend for more people to incorporate balconies and decks into home designs as a way of adopting the 'alfresco' lifestyle.

So the time for due diligence in checking these structures is now! Figures published by the Building Commission estimate that as many as 40% of properties have an elevated deck or balcony. While most of these are built and maintained correctly, many are not and sadly the price paid is often very high for the injured individuals. The challenge to home owners and Owners Corporations (when responsible for a balcony or a deck) is to find out which ones present a safety hazard before a collapse occurs.

Here are some tips to help ensure you are not exposed:

- 1. Check documentation:** buyers should ask to see evidence of building approval before purchasing a property as decks can easily be built without the statutory checks and balances.
- 2. Check Timber:** have timber decks checked for rot and rust as timber or metal fixing failure can trigger a collapse.
- 3. Check Concrete:** have concrete balconies checked for cracking or flaking as water may penetrate here and corrode steel reinforcing particularly in coastal areas.
- 4. Be Wary of Loads:** Large, well-watered pot plants can accelerate timber deterioration whilst a gaggle of guests grouped for a photo in one corner of a deck can bring a party to an abrupt end.

As well as the trauma of a collapse and the injuries, there is the cost to repair damage and even the possibility of legal action as claims are taken out against the owner or Owners Corporation so make sure your decks are checked.

### Electrical Safety—What you need to know

It's an alarming statistic — about 1/3 of homes have some kind of electrical fault. This is usually one of 3 things:

- 1.** An original meter box without safety switches (required for all new homes and recommended for old ones).
- 2.** A dodgy power point or two (incorrectly wired, loose or damaged).
- 3.** Home wiring (electrical wiring has to be done by a licensed electrician). If you're arranging work on a property make sure the electrician is licensed and make sure they are going to provide a Certificate of Electrical Safety on completion. If the answer is "no" to either of these questions find someone else! Certificate of Electrical Safety must be issued for either Prescribed electrical work (up to the meter) which must be inspected or for Non-Prescribed electrical work (within the home) which may be inspected. The COES will be either \$5 or \$20 depending on which sort of work it is.

There are two critical areas relating to electricity safety:

- 1.** Proper installation of new or replacement electrical appliances.
- 2.** Correct maintenance and use of existing appliances by following manufacturers instructions. It is recommended that an electrical home safety inspection of a property is done at least every two years. When was the last time one of your properties underwent an electrical safety check?

## Water Damage

Apartment owners across Australia face repair bills of tens of thousands of dollars or more in repairs because of faulty workmanship, poor design or poor quality materials in relation to water leaks.

Water leaks are one of the biggest issues facing the ongoing boom of apartment building as major cities consolidate with high rise buildings and suburban areas undergoing revitalization with increased apartment developments.

As one common example, balconies constructed above another unit only need one leak caused by a poor sealing job or a broken tile or a blocked drainage point to cause substantial damage to an adjoining property.

The replacement of defective tiling on a number of apartment balconies as the balcony waterproofing had failed and water leaks were being experienced. Recent inspected balconies in an apartment block with over 100 balconies, nearly all of which had a similar leak impacting on the apartments below. Intrusive inspections of selected balconies revealed waterproofing problems leaving the property owners with substantial repair bills.

With the drought broken and rainfall increasing, the level of complaints and costly issues facing apartment owners over leaks have increased.

Water has a number of ways of impacting on apartments including:

- Poor sealing of balconies.
- Lack of roof maintenance.
- Lack of maintenance of windows.
- Deterioration of tanking for below ground car parks and basements.



## They're up, they're down, they're gone!

### Insurance Taxes | What's the latest for your state?

Last month the Queensland Government announced it will increase stamp duty on insurance policies from August 1, 2013. Under the changes in the Queensland Budget, stamp duty on insurance products will rise from 7.5% to 9%.

The Queensland move goes against the recent trend for states to loosen their reliance on insurance as a means of raising funds for general revenue.

ACT has announced that they will cut stamp duty on insurance premiums by 20 percentage points from July 1, taking the rate from 8% to 6%. The ACT's stamp duty rate is being scaled down each year until it is abolished on July 1 2016.

But probably the most dramatic change will occur in Victoria where, as of July 1, a levy on premiums to fund the state's fire-fighting services will be replaced by a funding system collected through council rates.

The Fire Services Levy was raised in Victoria to provide rebuilding capital in the wake of the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009 - many of the thousands of buildings affected were underinsured or not insured at all and rural fire services also needed to be completely rebuilt.

However, the impact on policy holders across the state was severe and it reached a point where in many cases the tax was higher than the actual premium. The royal commission investigating the bushfires recommended the abolition of the levy on insurance.

Most insurers have now completed collecting their levy commitments, and premiums are dropping prior to the July 1 deadline. The exact amounts will fluctuate as insurers raise some premiums to reflect rising reinsurance rates, global catastrophes and falling investment returns.

Only New South Wales and Tasmania continue to fund their fire services through a levy, and New South Wales is expected to introduce a more equitable emergency services funding system soon.

If you would like to discuss the level of taxes you are paying on your insurance policies, and what you can expect over the next year, contact your Whitbread broker on 1300 424 627.

*The above information is general advice only. It is not intended to take the place of professional advice. Before acting on this information you should consider the appropriateness of this advice to your particular objectives, needs and financial situation. You should also refer to the Product Disclosure Statement and policy wording before making any decision. Whitbread Associates Pty Ltd ABN 69 005 490 228 trading as Whitbread Insurance Brokers Licence Number: 229092*

**Do you own a tenanted property?**

Don't fall into the trap of assuming that standard home insurance will cover your leased or tenanted investment properties. Protect yourself with Landlord Insurance!

Click here for a quote or call 1300 424 627