

Castel

Residents Handbook

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WELCOME TO CASTEL ESTATE

Those of us who already call Castel Estate home are pleased to welcome you as new residents into our small community.

As the Executive Committee of Castel Estate elected at our Annual General Meeting (Strata Plan No 270516) we want all residents to find this complex to be a great place to live. We hope that you will find:

- The other residents friendly but respectful of your privacy – please say hello when you see other residents;
- The common areas clean and well maintained;
- The value of your investment in your property enhanced.

While we all want to respect the privacy that each of us wants and needs in our own home space, it is a fact that in a residential complex like Castel Estate we live in close proximity to each other and we share the club house, landscape and lots of other common areas.

So above all, this means that we all need to be considerate of the other residents in the Castel Estate complex.

The By-Laws for the Strata Plan, along with the relevant pieces of government legislation are the official 'rules' that govern the way each of us must work together as joint owners and/or residents of this property. The current By-Laws are included at the end of this package, but as the Executive Committee of the complex we would like to highlight some of the important things that we have found make a difference to our enjoyment of living in the Castel Estate.

We all hope that we will get to know you very soon.

Castel Estate Executive Committee

Chairman – Peter Brown

Secretary – Neil McTavish

Treasurer - Sid Edwards

Member - Michael Christian

Member – Aimee Chun Li

Member - Dr Aruni Thambugala

Member – Amit Kasturia

Member – Michaela Rousseau

1. STRATA MANAGER & GARDENER

- **The Strata Manager** company is NSW Strata Management and the manager responsible for Castel Estate is currently Charles Sammut. He can be contacted on (02) 9890 1841 and should be contacted for any queries about strata legislation, strata levies and their payment or about insurance matters to do with common property.
- **The Gardener:** An on-site gardener carries out work in the common areas usually on a Thursday and Friday.

2. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Every strata scheme in NSW has an Owners Corporation which is comprised of the owners of the units that make up the Strata Plan. The Owners Corporation is required to have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once per year and under certain conditions can have other general meetings to which all owners must be invited. Castel Estate's AGM is usually held at the beginning of September every year. If the By-Laws (ie, the rules under which the Castel Estate complex is run) of the strata plan are to be changed, this must be done at a General Meeting, not by the Owners Corporation Executive.

At the AGM, which is usually chaired by the Strata Manager, as well as considering the financial position of the Strata Plan and other matters, the AGM elects a Secretary and a Treasurer and other members of the Executive Committee. Those persons then elect a Chair from amongst those on the Committee. Notice of the AGM is provided by the Strata manager and an owner can nominate themselves or another owner to be on that Executive Committee. Those attending the AGM then vote to appoint the Executive. That Executive holds meetings throughout the year and the agendas for meetings as well as the minutes of those meetings are displayed at Castel Estate's club house.

The Executive Committee makes decisions on behalf of all owners and effectively runs the Strata Plan within the legislation governing strata plans. The Committee appoints a Strata Management company which, amongst other things ensures that legal requirements are met. Both the Strata Manager and the Committee members work within relevant legislation and on the matters determined by the Committee. The Owners Corporation directly appoints and supervises the contractor that looks after the lawns and gardens.

The Committee considers proposals from owners for improvements to the outside presentation, eg, fences, gardens, etc and determines the budgets for the annual expenses of running the common areas of Castel Estate and the sinking fund which is a fund that is accumulated for larger expenses that are incurred from time to time, eg, external painting, security system, common parking areas. The quarterly strata levies that are paid by owners of the houses in Castel Estate are derived from these approved budget amounts. The bulk of routine annual expenditure is taken up with paying the Strata Management company, insurances and maintaining the property.

Whilst owners have the direct financial responsibility for the Castel Estate, the Executive Committee recognises the priority of promoting a healthy sense of community amongst all Castel Estate residents.

3. CASTEL ESTATE COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Club House**

The clubhouse is located in the centre of the estate. It is available for hire by all residents of a lot within the complex.

To hire the club house you will need to contact **Ken Steen 0412 289 213 or Neil McTavish 02 9634 2480** to organise the date and time. You will need to fill the booking form and pay a hiring or booking fee of \$50 and a bond of \$100. The bond is refundable if the clubhouse is left clean & in good order.

Please refer to the booking form in the SOCIAL page of this web site for further details.

If you have any ideas for other Castel Estate Community Activities please contact the Secretary of the Executive Committee with your ideas.

4. PETS

Despite the fact that Castel Estate By-Laws (see below) set out the rules for pets in Castel Estate this is one of the issues that can be quite concerning for residents.

Obviously residents must always clean up after their dog and no dog is to be on common property unless it is on a lead.

By far the most common complaint has to do with barking. It is quite unreasonable to expect your neighbours to put up with your dog barking when you are away. **It is suggested as a sign of goodwill, that if you have a dog, you provide your neighbours with your mobile phone number so that if your dog is barking they can contact you directly so you can fix the problem.**

If there are repeated problems with a barking dog the Owners Corporation may obtain an order to require you to remove the dog. Nobody wants to do this but it is the owner's responsibility to ensure their dog does not annoy neighbours. So often a dog owner will not believe that it is their dog actually causing a problem when they are away from their property.

If residents are unable to work out the barking problems with each other, the Executive Committee Secretary should be contacted.

BY LAW 33 KEEPING AN ANIMAL

33.1 The owner or occupier of a Lot may not keep any animal on a Lot except for a cat or dog, fish in an aquarium or bird in a cage except where the Community association has granted written approval for the keeping of more than one specified animal.

33.2 The owner of a pet allowed by By-Law 33.1 must ensure that the pet remains on the Lot and does not enter onto any part of the Community Scheme or Community Property except where the pet allowed by By-Law 33.1 is on a leash.

33.3 A completely or partially blind owner or occupier of a Lot may keep a guide dog on a Lot.

33.4 A completely or partially blind person may use a guide dog on a Lot or any other part of the Community Scheme or Community Property.

5. INSURANCE

Whilst the Owners Corporation of the Castel Estate organises and pays for insurances for the common areas of the estate (including the Clubhouse) it is important that owners and residents are aware that it is their responsibility to arrange for the appropriate insurances for their property. This might include buildings, contents, public liability and any other insurance that individuals consider appropriate for their particular circumstances.

6. CAR PARKING AND COMMON AREAS

All parking spaces around Castel Estate are provided for visitors and residents only. Residents are allowed to use the visitors spots for short periods for their convenience, but leaving the car there for days on end is very inconsiderate of other residents and should be avoided. All residents are provided with 4 parking spaces, 2 in their garage and 2 in their driveway and should avoid using visitors spaces wherever possible.

Important: Parking on the **nature strip** and **footpaths** is totally **prohibited**. Any owners / tenants disregarding this will be responsible for the cost of any damages caused to common property.

There is to be **no** unauthorised use of the visitors car park spaces. They are only for the use of Castel Estate visitors & residents.

Unauthorised vehicles may be **TOWED AWAY** at the Owner's expense and owners risk notification to police.

Speed

- It is **IMPORTANT** to drive slowly, all streets within the Estate are limited to **25km/hr**.

Security

- Keep cars locked at all times in parking areas and driveways, ensuring there are no keys or other valuables visible in your vehicle;
- Do **NOT** leave any items in the parking or common areas (including on the nature strip). All items will be removed at the owner or tenants expense.

7. GARBAGE & RECYCLING

The Hills Shire council offers a number of services related to waste and recycling, including Kerbside Cleanup (twice a year “free of charge”).

General waste services include:

- Request additional bin or new services (fees apply)
- Report a missed bin collection
- Report a Lost or Stolen Bin
- Nearest Tip
- Which bin do I put out
- Report a Damaged Bin
- More....

Please refer to council’s website for up-to-date information and details.

<http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Services/For-Residents/Waste-Recycling>

Quick reference

Red Lid: Garbage is collected early Tuesday morning.

Yellow Lid: Recycling items - is collected alternative Tuesday.

Green Lid: Garden waste - is collected alternative Tuesday to yellow bins.

How to Request a Kerbside Clean up Service.

To make a kerbside cleanup booking (or for more information) contact **Council's Waste Hotline** on **[1800 623 895](tel:1800623895)** or email **thehillsshire@cleanaway.com.au**

8. SECURITY TIPS

There are numerous references to security throughout this document. Besides these, there are a few great tips which local Police have brought to our attention.

- Clear your mailbox daily. If you are away, ask a neighbour to collect mail or ask the Post Office to hold it until you return;
- When bank credit or debit cards are being replaced, arrange with your bank to pick them up at the branch rather than use the mail;
- Don't give keys / garage remote control to anyone that you do not know well and trust completely. Never give keys to tradespeople;
- Try to get to know the people who live in the Castel Estate complex as well as the cars they drive. If you see strange people or cars around, talk to one of the Executive Committee members or report it to Castle Hill Police on 9680 5399;
- Don't leave any message on a phone answering machine that suggests you live alone. Always say "**WE** can't take your call ... " rather than "**I** can't take your call ...";
- Don't be complacent about sliding door security. Make sure they are always closed and locked when you are away or upstairs;
- When you move in, it is worth installing new locks as you never know who might have had keys from the previous owner/tenants;
- Ensure the internal door that leads into the house from the garage is locked at all times.

9. SMOKING AND BARBECUES

Both cigarette smoking and the smoke from barbeques can be a nuisance to other residents in Castel Estate. Like everything else in this document, if everyone shows consideration for others there are likely to be fewer problems!

There is definitely no smoking allowed in common areas of Castel Estate. There are few smokers in the whole complex so the presence of cigarette smoke is very noticeable and of course can be a health hazard to those who have to endure passive smoking.

Like cigarette smoke, the smoke and odours from barbecues and outdoor cooking tend to rise and this means those who live near you are affected by your cooking and smoking. So please avoid outdoor cooking and smoking between the hours of 9pm and 9am.

Like the occasional noise from parties, some advance notice to your neighbours if you are going to occasionally barbecue outside these hours will do wonders for everyone getting along together.

10. OTHER DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF CASTEL ESTATE

There are a number of features of Castel Estate which the Strata Committee believes assists us to keep Castel Estate as one of the premier complexes on the Hills districts. The superior resale values of houses in Castel Estate reflect these features:

- **Good maintenance of Common Areas.** The Executive Committee has a planned approach to large maintenance items so these things are hopefully addressed before they become a problem;
- **Quality Gardens and Landscapes.** We put money into regular maintenance of gardens (even in the winter months) so visitors to Castel Estate are always met with lawns and gardens that look as if we care about them.
- **No Washing Visible on Balconies.** Our By-Laws are quite strict about this feature. We go to a lot of trouble to keep the exterior of our complex looking uniformly good and we do not want this spoilt by having unsightly washing visible to passers-by or to other residents.
- **Exterior walls / fences for Houses.** We want to keep the same paint colours of the exterior walls and fences for all the properties in Castel Estate.
- **The colour scheme for your property is listed under the LEGAL section of this web site.**

11. ACCESS TO MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings are posted on the glass side doors of the clubhouse.

APPENDIX

- A. Trades and Services
- B. Strata Plan By-laws of Castel Estate
- C. Community Clubhouse booking procedures

A. TRADES AND SERVICES

Many of us have found after we moved into our properties that there were various jobs **that are our responsibility** and we need to get done. As the properties get older there will be other maintenance tasks that need to be done. Sometimes it's possible, even where it's the owner's responsibility, to get jobs done at the same time, which reduces the cost to individual owners; eg, fences, exterior walls and driveways.

There are a number of contractors who have done work in the estate and have been found to be reliable and do a good job. If you are looking for a contractor recommendation you may want to contact either NSW Strata or an Executive Committee member who may be able to help you.

B. STRATA PLAN BY-LAWS OF CASTEL ESTATE

The by-laws are available separately. There is a copy on the Castel web site.

C. COMMUNITY CLUBHOUSE BOOKING PROCEDURES

1. Check preliminary availability on the notice board inside the clubhouse front door (can be viewed from outside). Please note this is indicative only and is constantly updated. For more accurate availability information, please search the calendar located with the booking form. It can be found on the SOCIAL page of this web site.
2. If available on the proposed date of your function, please use the booking form to arrange your booking.
3. Please ensure you have read and understood the **Conditions of Use** on the Community Clubhouse Booking Form and, if your function requires prior written approval from the Executive Committee, please ensure you allow at least one week prior to your function for this consideration.
4. Please note bookings are based on a first in first processed basis and you will be notified promptly if your requested function date is not available.
5. Keys are to be collected from the nominated Executive Committee member and your deposit bond paid, at least 24 hours before the function.
6. The Clubhouse may be booked for a function on the day following your function, so it is important that cleaning and tidying is completed as soon as possible after completion of your function.

Executive Committee Contacts

Ken Steen Ph: 9894 4932

Neil McTavish Ph: 9634 2480