



RAMA

newsletter

QUEENSLAND RESIDENT ACCOMMODATION MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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New Bill Recognises 21st Century Challenges

The amendments to the BCCM Act introduced in the last week of State Parliament in 2002 herald a new and more positive era for resident accommodation managers in Queensland, Kim Cox, State President of QRAMA said in a media statement.

"In the past we have been seen as caretakers and booking agents by the majority of people, but this legislation further cements our role in both permanent and holiday accommodation," Mr Cox said.

"With this legislation and the preceding PAMDA legislation, resident managers are seen as an integral part of the success and acceptance of a strata title and community titled property, along with the body corporate and the owners.

"The State Government may have taken a long time in reviewing its milestone 1997 legislation, but the outcomes that have been presented are progressive and worthwhile.

"There is still an amount of detail to be achieved in the implementation of the regulations, but in principle, the new legislation clearly recognises the mammoth lifestyle changes that have been undertaken in Queensland during the past decade and the huge economic driver the community and strata title residential and holiday market industry has become.

"They have designed legislation to ensure that the created wealth is not diminished in the day to day management of property affairs, and I believe that this has been acknowledged by all parties.

"The future challenges are that all sectors, managers, members of the body corporate committee and owners, have to ensure that we are skilled and educated to ensure that we have the ability to operate an increasingly sophisticated business and investment," Mr Cox said.

Further details of the Bill are on pages 4 and 5.

Brisbane Branch gets overwhelming support

More than 150 resident managers supported the reformation of a Brisbane Branch of QRAMA following a meeting arranged at the Brisbane Broncos Club on Tuesday, 26th November, 2002.

As a result of the meeting and an interim committee meeting, the following office bearers were elected:

- Neil Henderson President
- John Ferrier Vice President
- Brydon Halliday Secretary
- Trish Glover Treasurer

QRAMA State President Kim Cox said that ongoing work on new State Government legislation was of vital importance to the resident management industry throughout Queensland.

He also mentioned that the issues of Brisbane managers needed to be addressed by QRAMA in its development of industry submissions.

"The industry is no longer focusing on holiday management issues, and the industry needs a strong input from the representatives of the diversity of residential managers based in Brisbane, in the CBD, and the buildings and centres throughout the metropolitan area," Mr Cox said.

The meeting was addressed by Mr Cox, State Secretary John Anderson, QRAMA advisory lawyer Alan McKernan and Brisbane resident manager Geoff Allen.

"I remind members that QRAMA is an association of resident managers working together on issues that are important for the Branch and they control the Branch and its activities at all levels," Mr Anderson said.

A follow-up meeting of the interim committee endorsed the formation of the new Brisbane Branch, and established protocols and an initial agenda for the 2003 activities.

Meet the Brisbane Branch Interim Committee on page 3.

contents

Brisbane Branch Interim Committee	page 2
Schoolies Week.....	page 2
Office of Fair Trading Fee Increase.....	page 3
Public Liability Insurance.....	page 4
BCCM Act – Body Corporate Laws.....	page 4
BCCM Act Second Reading.....	page 5
New Health & Safety Laws	page 6
Tourism Crisis Management	page 6
Gold Coast Meeting	page 7
Members' Questionnaire.....	page 7
RTA Approved Forms	page 7
Enquiring about the Web.....	page 8
Your Representatives	page 8

Brisbane Branch

Brisbane Branch Interim Committee

The following members have formed the first Interim Committee of the Brisbane Branch of QRAMA after our call to action at the Brisbane meeting on 26 November (see summary on page 1). The range of skills and experiences that these people bring to the industry are most encouraging as QRAMA develops a presence in Brisbane.

Geoff Allen, River Plaza

Geoff has been with River Plaza since February 2002 and it is his first complex. He has previously held management roles in building materials, heavy engineering and transport in Australia, Pacific, Middle East and Europe. Geoff's main interest in the industry is to ensure it retains the best representation possible.

Tony Williams, Buena Vista

Tony has been with Buena Vista for three years and prior to that was with Central Heights for three years. He has been CEO in breweries overseas. Tony wants to ensure that resident managers are well represented and protected from minority groups.

David Mills, Carindale Links

David describes himself as a Kiwi with 35 years experience in Radio Broadcasting who moved to Australia in December 2000 and took over Carindale Links in January 2001.

Brydon Halliday, Carindale Gardens

Brydon has been in the resident unit managers industry for just over a year. Previously the General Manager of Golf Clubs and 4 Star Hotels, he is keen to be involved in the future of the industry.

Robert Schut, Maisons de Bordeaux

Robert has been in the industry since 1995, and this is his second term in management rights. In the past, he has been a REIQ RUM chapter committee member, and was previously employed as the General Manager of a large public company. He is interested in developing better relationships between Investors, on-site Managers and Real Estate Agents.

Alan McKernan, Mahoney Lawyers

Alan has worked in property law since 1987 and is the founding Partner of Mahoney Lawyers with John Mahoney. He has significant management rights experience and worked almost exclusively in management rights since 1998. Alan has acted in a variety of management rights transactions including inner city permanent, Gold Coast holiday, existing complexes and off-the-plan transactions.

Trish Glover, Epala Villas

This is the first time that Trish has been a resident manager and she believes it is imperative that the permanent resident manager industry has a "voice". Trish has had previous experience in the Supermarket and Hotel Industries.

John Ferrier, The Links

John has been in the industry for more than four years and this is his second complex. He was instrumental in setting up and organising Guest Speakers for "Bay RUMS" monthly meetings. John was previously self-employed in a trucking business and was involved with a student exchange program since 1983. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees for Youth For Understanding Australia/USA for nine years.

Warren Guppy, Riverstead Apartments

Warren has been in the industry for more than two years and this is his second complex. Prior to resident management, he has run his own consultancy business and was formerly a Technical Officer with Telstra for 32 years. Warren is interested in the education of property managers and the standardisation and benchmarking of practices within the industry.

Graham Harrison, Miles Villas

Graham has been in the industry for four years and managed a holiday complex on the Sunshine Coast for three years. He has been in Brisbane for almost one year. Graham previously owned and operated a newsagency for eight years after having worked for Westpac for 20 years.

Ren Hinton, Amity - Myora

Ren has been with Amity - Myora for two years and prior to that was a private consultant for a small business and the Defence Force. Ren is interested in legislation and the protection of resident managers' investment.

Neil Henderson, Signature Park

Neil has been in the industry for five years and Signature Park is his third complex. He was previously in the military and State Government involved in security. Neil is currently involved in training resident managers in trust accounting and general management training.

Schoolies Week 2002 - State Government Concerns

QRAMA will be circulating an email questionnaire to members on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast to survey their Schoolies Week experiences this year. QRAMA would like responses by 7 February so we can complete the report on time.

"The Premier, Mr Beattie has announced that the Government would be holding an inquiry into this year's Schoolies Week incidents and behavior, and we will be seeking information from members so that we can consider being a part of the inquiry," QRAMA President Kim Cox said.

"The Premier and the Minister for Tourism and Racing and the Minister for Fair Trading Merri Rose has indicated that they will be holding a post-Schoolies summit to discuss fair trading related issues which have emerged during Schoolies 2002," Mr Cox said.

The Premier said that six Government departments would be preparing a report which he would take to Cabinet in March. He said that he was extremely concerned about the hooliganism and inappropriate behaviour not just of Schoolies, but the hanger-ons who preyed on Schoolies.

"We need to consider issues such as people's rights, accommodation contracts, dispute resolution and codes of conduct for tenants and accommodation providers," Ms Rose told State Parliament.

She detailed problems and actions against Schoolies and persons supplying them with the provision of alcohol.

Ms Rose said that she was also concerned by reports of business practices adopted by some people on the Gold Coast.

"I have reminded accommodation providers and other businesses of requirements to be fair to Schoolies.

On the other hand, Schoolies also have to do the right thing. Accommodation providers have a responsibility to unit owners to ensure that the property is not damaged.

The conditions they impose on tenants are aligned not just to their duty of care but also to ensuring the safety of tenants.

However, some managers have gone way over the top and their jackboot approach seems to be a massive overreaction.

If reports I have heard are accurate, some accommodation providers have acted like stormtroopers, bursting into units and behaving in an outrageously invasive and unlawful way.

I ask these people to be fair in the dealings with tenants and to give them the chance to put their side of the story in the event of a dispute," she said.

The member for Surfers Paradise Lex Bell said the Surfers Paradise Community Association would be convening a workshop on the matter.

State Government announces more fee increases

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has announced new licence fee rates for NEW licences for restricted letting agents (and others) and has increased the application fees for a new licence.

Both the application fee and the cost of the licence for the first year have been doubled and are effective from 1 January 2003.

The application fee has increased from \$51 to \$102.

The corporate licence has increased from \$196 to \$392 for the first year of a one-year licence and from \$589 to \$785 for a new three-year corporate licence.

The personal licence issue fee has risen from \$382 to \$764 for the first year of a one-year licence and from \$1145 to \$1527 for a new three-year personal licence.

These increases are part of a wider increase of initial licence fees for many licences in Queensland, including all categories covered by the Property Agents & Motor Dealers Act 2000, the Security Providers Act 1993, the Second-Hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984, the Pawnbrokers Act 1984, and the Travel Agents Act 1988.

The increases do not involve existing licence holders.

The Office of Fair Trading has announced that the additional income from the fee increases will enable the Office to provide a greater level of protection to consumers by:

- “Educating new industry entrants on the law and how to comply,
- Educating consumers on their rights and responsibilities in the market place,
- Identifying, investigating and prosecuting non compliant operators, and
- Developing and improving legislation to meet changing marketplace demand.”

QRAMA is most concerned not only by the action taken by the OFT but also by the process. The OFT has lost credibility in the industry by its failure to consult other than lodge statements in the The Courier Mail, the Government Gazette and on the OFT website.

This can hardly be accepted as meaningful consultation by a government that claims to consult and be inclusive. Restricted Letting Agents should be shown more respect than this type of ‘consultation’ if OFT expects RLA’s to work with them.

The OFT indicates that their action could not be defended in meaningful negotiations.

All QRAMA members are well aware that the interest from trust accounts is denied to RLA’s to offset other bank costs but is taken by the OFT, supposedly for the same purposes that have been used to ‘explain’ the increase.

Previous announcements on the use of these funds have provided less than adequate explanation of the effective use of money collected from trust account interest. QRAMA raised this issue again in its 30 September 2002 submission, but has so far received no response.

The more than 100% increase is particularly unsatisfactory, in that the question of which RLA’s should be licenced has not been adequately addressed.

This matter has been raised personally by QRAMA with the Commissioner who advised that it should be included in our 30 September 2002 submission (which it was). This and other items in our submission have not yet been addressed.

Different officers still give varying decisions on who should be licenced. QRAMA has submitted that only one personal licence should be necessary at each building and the one licence must be held by the person who signs Form 20a.

Appointments and authorises disbursements from the trust account. We contend that other tasks do not need to be carried out by a licenced person.

The OFT Statement refers to the rights of consumers. The OFT has consistently denied that a holiday guest has any rights to a holiday. The OFT has refused to protect guests who have paid a deposit against an owner who demands that the guest’s holiday be cancelled.

The OFT has refused protection for holiday guests against real estate agents who believe that holidays should be interrupted so that a selling agent can gain some commission. The only protection that holiday guests receive is from alert managers.

It is most disturbing that the OFT believes that it has acted reasonably in enacting the Fair Trading (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002 while still leaving unanswered key questions that QRAMA included in its 30 September 2002 submission.

The OFT continues to avoid meaningful discussions with the industry.

Irrespective of the unfair and illogical nature of the OFT actions, there will be financial resources available for more field checks by OFT inspectors.

BCCM Act Body Corporate Laws – Minister

The reform of the Body Corporate laws is to provide a greater balance between the rights of home unit owners and those providing the services to community title schemes, Stephen Robertson, Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines said when he introduced the legislation into Parliament.

Debate on the amendment Bill will take place in the next session of Parliament, which commences on 25 February 2003.

Detailing the Bill Mr Robertson said:

“With over 250,000 unit owners in Queensland, it is essential that the proper mechanisms are in place to protect people’s rights and ensure that community title schemes operate effectively and fairly,” he said.

“The area of community titles continues to grow in popularity as a lifestyle and investment option for many Queenslanders. It is also developing as an important part of our economy, creating jobs and attracting commercial and tourism investment to the State,” Mr Robertson said.

Mr Robertson said the amending legislation provides a more flexible framework for the establishment and operation of community title schemes; establishes a code of conduct for body corporate managers, resident caretakers and letting agents; and gives unit owners greater consumer protection against poorly-performing or unscrupulous managers.

“Under the legislation, bodies corporate will have the power to terminate resident managers and letting agents who breach the code of conduct and make them sell or transfer their management rights,” Mr Robertson said.

“Sellers will also be required to disclose more detailed information to prospective buyers about a unit lot and community title scheme.”

“Dispute resolution processes will be further enhanced to provide more opportunity for “face-to-face” conciliation and resolution of disputes,” he said.

The new legislation also clarifies the roles of bodies corporate and resident managers, letting agents and service contractors entering into management rights and service agreements; adjusts provisions relating to lot entitlements; and allows, for the first time, bodies corporate to purchase a lot, provided that unit becomes “common property” and is used for letting purposes.

Mr Robertson said the new legislation also amends approval provisions relating to staged developments to provide greater investment certainty for developers of complex unit developments staged over a number of years.

Mr Robertson said that when a unit development is to be undertaken in stages, the proposal for the entire development is submitted for local government consent.

A Community Management Statement (CMS) is also prepared setting out the developer’s intention and concept for the community title scheme.

“After developing the first stage, if the developer wishes to make changes to subsequent stages, some bodies corporate have sought to prevent changes, even if they affected the viability of the overall scheme,” he said.

Mr Robertson said the amendments address this issue and clarify the roles of both the developer and the body corporate as each stage progresses.

“For example, if a developer wants to change the order of the stages, but otherwise remain within the original development consent, the body corporate will be required to consent to the revised CMS showing the re-ordering,” he said.

“If the developer proposes to make more substantial changes and a new development application is required, then the body corporate may make submissions to the local council as part of the normal objection process.”

“If local government consent is given to the proposal, the body corporate must consent to the CMS,” he said.

Some local councils have, as part of the development approval process, required changes to the CMS on matters that are not relevant to the local government’s jurisdiction. Councils will not be permitted to require such changes under the new legislation.

Continued page 5



Public Liability Insurance Crisis Law Reforms

The Queensland Government has tabled in Parliament the second stage of law reforms to address the public liability insurance crisis.

The main purpose of the draft Bill (the Civil Liability Bill 2002) is to further facilitate the ongoing affordability of insurance through appropriate and sustainable awards of damages for personal injury.

The Bill includes several proposals that have potentially significant implications for tourism operators and visitors, including removal of liability for failure to warn of obvious risks, removal of liability for injuries arising from obvious risks in the case of recreational activities and restricted claims where a person’s intoxication contributed to their personal injury.

Operators can review the consultation draft of the proposal (available at <http://justice.qld.gov.au/ourlaws/public.htm#civil>).

Comments can be submitted via this website by the closing date of Friday, 24 January 2003.

BCCM Act Introduction *(Second Reading State Parliament)*

The unit and apartment sector of the real estate market is becoming increasingly important to Queensland. More and more Queenslanders are choosing unit living to suit their lifestyles, Minister Stephen Robertson told State Parliament.

The proposed amendments to the Act which, as a consequence of the review, also amend the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, the Land Act 1994, the Land Title Act 1994 and the Integrated Planning Act 1988.

The provisions of the BCCM Act that deal with the creation of titles in community title schemes will be transferred to the Land Titles Act.

This will allow more consistent dealing with title issues and facilitate the future transfer of responsibility of the BCCM Act to another agency.

Management Rights

The Natural Resources Minister said the issues that have generated most discussion relate to management rights — where a resident manager provides caretaking services for a scheme and acts as a letting agent for owners who wish to use that service. A scheme's success, and the success of related investments, relies on a strong working relationship between the resident manager, the body corporate and individual owners.

Unfortunately, this does not always happen. With two distinct owner types — those who live in their properties, and those who use them as investments — tensions can arise because of their different priorities, especially if one group feels the resident manager is concentrating on the needs of the other.

Investor owners can feel disillusioned if their returns do not meet their expectations, especially if they are paying an increasing amount for resident management services. Bodies corporate can feel trapped in long-term agreements that fail to meet their needs.

This Bill seeks to bring balance to the management rights issue, proposing new codes of conduct to govern the activities of letting agents and service contractors like resident managers. Where there is a breach of this code of conduct, bodies corporate will have the power to require the transfer of the management rights business within a maximum period of eleven months.

To prevent undue influence being exerted over owners when a body corporate is considering using those powers, this decision must be made by secret ballot with an independent returning officer. The time frame for the sale allows the rights to be sold at market rates meaning that management operators will not be unfairly disadvantaged.

The effectiveness of these transfer provisions relies on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 3 December 2002 being applied to existing schemes. It is essential that no one waits up to 25 years for a management rights term to expire before these situations can be addressed.

Many developers establish management rights agreements when they create a new scheme, agreements that are not always appropriate.

These amendments will force developers to act in the interests of the future body corporate when entering agreements and also give bodies corporate and contractors a chance to review the contractor's duties and remuneration within three years of the agreement's establishment.

This review will be by negotiation and will not afford an opportunity to either terminate the agreement or change its length.

Agreements

Another area needing some balance is the issue of term limitations on agreements. With increased control over management rights, bodies corporate shouldn't be prevented from extending agreements to the balance of the term to the term's limitation. To this end, the term limit provisions will be clarified in the regulations.

Under these amendments, bodies corporate will be allowed to buy areas used for caretaking and letting duties, including the unit occupied by the resident manager. This lot will become common property, and must be leased for the purpose of conducting a letting business.

The Act already contains provisions about adjusting lot entitlements, and these amendments will clarify and extend those provisions. Under the Act, there are two lot entitlement schedules:

- 1) The interest schedule defines relative ownership of common property in a scheme and is used to set contributions for matters related to individual lot value, like insurance and rates.
- 2) The contribution schedule is used to set contributions to the day-to-day operation of the scheme that should be shared by all lots, like maintenance of common areas.

Balance

This Bill will achieve a number of things. It will balance the competing interests of unit owners, the development industry and the management rights industry. It will improve the dispute resolution service underpinning this legislation. It recognises and supports the changing nature of the community titles industry with its increasing number of investment and multiple use projects.

Mr Speaker, this legislation is recognised, both interstate and internationally, as a strong model for establishing and administering community titles schemes. These amendments build on this strong foundation and I am pleased to commend the Bill to the House.

2003 Program

The second reading debate will be on the notice paper for the first day of the resumption of State Parliament on Tuesday, 25 February 2003.

Members will be able to speak on all matters related to the administration of the legislation and at the conclusion of the debate, the House will move into committee to review the Bill clause by clause, which may include amendments, before voting on the legislation and its acceptance.

It will then be formally read a third time and again voted.

The Bill will then be formally proclaimed by the Governor and become an Act. The development of regulations for the new Act will then be concluded.

New Health and Safety Laws before Parliament

Fines will be increased and loopholes resulting from new and alternative employment arrangements have been included in the new Workplace Health and Safety Act amendments introduced into State Parliament for debate next year.

Among the major changes announced, building owners or people in control of a building will have new obligations to ensure a building and adjacent areas like car parks, meet safety standards.

For example, in the event of a health risk posed by an air conditioning system, the owner of the building, not just the employer and/or lessee can be held responsible.

Building designers will be held responsible for ensuring the building design as mentioned by the Industrial Relations Minister Gordon Nuttall in his introductory second reading speech.

"The new laws when passed would respond to emerging hazards in Queensland's changing labour market where 30% of all workers are casual," said Mr Nuttall.

Mr Nuttall said that one in five employees worked more than 50 hours a week and three in 10 worked in industries which did not exist a decade ago.

In the new legislation, a person conducting a business will be responsible for each worker at the workplace, regardless of their employment status, for example contract, labour hire or direct employment people.

"The proposed laws will close the loophole where some people conducting business have changed the status of employees 'overnight' to avoid their legal obligations for health and safety as the employer," Mr Nuttall said.

"Under these new laws, any person conducting business will be responsible for each worker at the workplace," he said.

QRAMA president Kim Cox said that the Association would be studying the debate when it proceeded in the Parliament and would seek to be

active in the consultation process during the development of the regulations.

"There has been significant consultation with industry and employer groups during this major review of the Act which was first introduced in 1989 when the duty of care regulations replaced the previous prescriptive legislation.

"Members of QRAMA understand their duty of care obligations and this review and update will be important for members and their day-to-day duties and responsibilities.

"We will be monitoring the legislative process to ensure members understand the new requirements that will flow," he said.

In his introductory speech, Mr Nuttall outlined the new and increased penalties proposed in the Act. A breach of the Act causing death or grievous bodily harm will impose a maximum penalty of \$350,000 for a company, increased from \$300,000.

More extensive legal obligations in the workplace will also be imposed on suppliers of equipment, not just manufacturers and designers, who will be required to ensure equipment is safe when provided to the buyer. This will include providing information on the safe use of equipment.

Mr Nuttall said he expected the new laws would come into effect in the first half of 2003. He said that extensive education programs on the reforms would be run throughout Queensland by the Department of Industrial Relations.

He said that health and safety representatives in the workplace will have access to accredited training. Workplace Health and Safety Officers will be required to conduct at least one assessment of health and safety in the workplace per year.

Employers will be prohibited from victimising any employee who reports or makes a complaint about anything believed to be unsafe in the workplace.

Mr Nuttall said the social and economic cost of workplace accidents in Queensland was estimated at \$3.5 billion annually.

Tourism Crisis Management — what to do now

The Government's Tourism and Related Industries Immediate Response Group (TRIIRG), the Tourism Industry Consultative Forum and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) have identified the need for government agencies and industries to work together to develop a crisis management plan for the tourism industry.

The impact of September 11, the Ansett Collapse, the Bali Bombing, the war threats against Iraq, and the ongoing risks from terrorism threats and natural disasters such as bushfires and cyclones, all highlight the need for a plan and the likelihood that we may soon face some other crisis.

Travellers are not concerned with a business collapse. They are concerned with SAFETY, their personal safety.

As an industry, we each have a need to work through the issues and develop a plan for our own business and our guests, should a crisis strike our property. There is not much planning time when the crisis occurs.

Remember that guests are out of their environment and will look to you for leadership and a decisive response. This problem is greater for overseas visitors who are not familiar with risks such as bushfires and cyclones.

Last summer, of the 17 people who drowned on Queensland beaches, 11 were from overseas. Overseas visitors need extra advice on such risks.

While the above groups continue to work on the 'macro' issues, each QRAMA member should be working on a local contingency plan. What would happen to your business if your office is wiped out tomorrow?

What instructions will guests need in the event of a fire, cyclone or explosion? Do you have an evacuation plan in place in the event of a fire? Are the battery back-ups on the exit lights tested regularly and the dates and details of the tests recorded? Will they operate when needed?

If overseas visitors are in the building at the time of the crisis, do they have special needs due to their probable lack of appreciation of such problems?

If a cyclone took out communication systems, can you advise families of guests that you are all coping with the problem?

Are duplicate records held off site? Are the records sufficient to advise present and future guests of changes to their holiday plans? Who do you contact in an emergency? You are required to back up your computer system at least once a month and store a copy of your trust account records off-site (PAMDA Regulation 57). This requirement does not need to be complicated – it may be as simple as swapping disks with a manager in another location. Should this practice be extended to include other records as part of your crisis management plan?

Is the database of previous guests secure? Remember that the database is a significant asset of the business. Are your website details and register key secured?

Is the contact list of key suppliers and tradesmen current and secure? Do you have a list of industry contacts held off site in the event of that disaster?

Are your off-site records sufficient to rebuild the necessary records for the ATO and others or will you have to accept a blanket assessment?

Many of these issues come back to 'best practice':

- Written policies and procedures
- Staff training
- Good signage
- Visitor and guest briefing
- Monitor industry standards.

Is your business ready to face such a challenge?

QRAMA will be involved in discussions within the industry and will provide further guidelines as they are developed. In the meantime, each member can start their preparations NOW by considering the above issues.

Gold Coast Members urged to do Training

QRAMA members should ensure that they are fully aware of the working arrangements of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act (BCCM Act) as mentioned by committee member Tom Taggart at a meeting of prospective Gold Coast members held in December.

"Many managers do the courses to gain their restricted real estate licence under PAMDA but neglect to do the study on the Act that really controls the success of their business," Mr Taggart said.

"Whilst it is important that managers understand their letting rights and RTA obligations, it represents only half of the business and if you do not understand the BCCM Act and its detail about how you should run and care for your business, then you can suffer accordingly."

"The BCCM Act details what you should be doing and a full knowledge and understanding of the Act is vital for more than 50% of your business activities and means you are in control of your destiny," he said.

Mr Taggart said that the obligations under the amendments would make it extremely important for managers to commit to an education program.

"I have been alarmed that many managers have not been prepared to fully understand the implications of the BCCM Act on the daily running of their business."

He urged members to take advantage of the QRAMA supported TAFE courses detailing and explaining the Act.

"Make the time available to understand and learn about the implications of the legislation, as it will improve your professionalism as a manager and give you the knowledge and confidence to effectively manage issues within your building without costly reference and time consuming follow-up," he said.

State Secretary John Anderson briefed the meeting on progress of BCCM Act submissions and meetings.

Members' Questionnaire

The results of our members' questionnaire sent in the last issue of this newsletter showed members are supportive of QRAMA's strategic plans. The response to the questionnaire showed that 25% of members wanted input on how to increase the awareness of QRAMA and expand its membership base.

With the majority of participants from the Sunshine Coast, all branches were represented in the final results. Out of the total participants, 85% of managers provided holiday accommodation and 64% of managers have been involved with management rights for less than five years.

Privacy and workplace health and safety were considered very important by 30% and 36% respectively.

One survey showed that 86% of participants perceive QRAMA as positive, and 74% believe that others have positive perceptions of QRAMA. Over 93% would support an active membership drive. Participants agreed that both associates/staff within the industry and interstate owners/operators should be permitted to join QRAMA with 66% and 59% respectively in agreement. However, over 59% disagreed with allowing owner clients of units and strata title to become members.

Also 88% of participants would support a CPE Program, and a further 72% would support a QRAMA conference. More than 43% would prefer Sunshine Coast as the location of the conference, with 23% of participants rating their preference as North Queensland. However, the majority of respondents were from these locations.

Further, 83% would support a regional visit by the State Secretary, and over 97% would support the development of educational aids and manuals to assist strata title managers.

CHANGES TO RTA APPROVED FORMS

The Residential Tenancies Authority has advised that it will be replacing its multiple copy coloured-coded approved forms with single copy black and white forms.

This will replace the forms that are supplied by the RTA that previously were in colour-coded triplicate.

QRAMA's supplier, ADL Software has added the forms to its CD package of forms that are supplied at a reduced rate to members.

Members may subscribe to ADL's software for \$99 per year as opposed to non-members who pay \$121.

The new printing arrangements announced by RTA General Manager Carolyn Mason, will see a change to the following forms:

Form 1a-Entry Condition report (general tenancies)	Form 6-Change of Shared Bond arrangement.
Form 1b-Entry Condition report (moveable dwellings)	Form 7-Part payment of rental bond
Form 2-Bond Lodgment	Form 14a- Exit Condition report (General Tenancies)
Form 3-Transfer of Bond	Form 14b- Exit Condition report (moveable dwellings)
Form 4- Refund of Rental Bond	Form 16-Dispute Resolution request
Form 5-Change of Lessor or Lessor's agent.	

The RTA reminds that lessors must provide tenants with a copy of the Entry Condition Report (Form 1a) and a General Tenancy Agreement (Form 18a).

A penalty is attached to the non-provision of Form 1a. No other RTA forms are required to be copied.

The cost of copying forms should be considered as a tax-deductible business expense.

For more information regarding ADL software, members can view the website; www.adlsoftware.com

Enquiring about the Web

The web has rapidly entered our business world and is here to stay. However, it can be confusing and our expectations have changed from the initial vision of 'how it will revolutionise our business'.

We are frequently asked for assistance in evaluating web offers. Below are a series of questions to assist you.

Ask the following to determine if it is for you:

1. Who owns the website and how long has it been going?
2. How is it marketed to the users and what are the traffic levels on the site?
3. What search engines does the site work with? There are hundreds but only a handful account for the majority of traffic.
4. How will your property be listed? What section? What ranking on the page? Can I improve my ranking?
5. What are the costs and for how long is it listed? Are commissions charged?
6. Can I receive enquiries/bookings directly from the customer?
7. Can my listing be updated? How? Frequency?
8. Do I receive statistics on site visits and visits to my listing?
9. Is my listing distributed to other sites and if so, how is it maintained to keep information current?

Being on the web does not guarantee you business. It is just like an advertisement in a print guide where the customer will be drawn to a well-presented property and critically, great photos.

The web is building on two fronts:

- as a way people can research where to stay for their holiday, and
- the slowly increasing online business of receiving bookings.

It is important the site generates leads for you in the first instance, and in evaluating the values, cost per click, (how many people click on your listing to view your property) is a good guide.

If Jasons can assist, please call us on 07 3221 3810.

Disclaimer

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Jasons Queensland AND NORTHERN TERRITORY accommodation guide 2003

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