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Victoria Review Targets Strata Management Concerns

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The Victorian Government has launched a wide-ranging review into owners' corporations and strata management, aiming to address widespread concerns from apartment owners across the state.

The public and industry groups have until September 2 to provide feedback on issues including hardship payment arrangements, dispute resolution, and breaches of owners'

corporation laws. The review also covers the effectiveness of 2019 changes to short-stay accommodation laws, targeting rogue operators in the rental sector.

The government estimates that one in four Victorians live in homes governed by owners' corporations, and many have raised issues of poor governance, financial mismanagement, and lack of accountability.

Apartment Advocacy Australia boss Sam Reece welcomed the review but criticised the limited consultation window, saying more time was needed for meaningful public input.

In a formal submission, Ms Reece is calling for the creation of a Strata Commissioner—a dedicated authority to oversee the sector and enforce compliance. She highlighted troubling examples of managers allegedly colluding with developers and choosing insurance providers based on commission kickbacks rather than affordability for owners.

“There are good operators out there, but at the moment we need to get rid of the bad apples,” she said, urging apartment owners to participate in the consultation.

According to Reece, the actions of some owners' corporation managers have resulted in owners being overcharged by thousands of dollars, undermining trust and transparency in the sector. She warned that without significant reforms, confidence in apartment living could erode further, ultimately undermining the government's broader goal of increasing urban housing supply.

“It will have a long-lasting legacy, especially if you don't get it right and provide the right protections now,” she said.

The review is chaired by former Consumer Affairs Minister Marsha Thomson, with economist Karen Chester and strata law expert David McKenzie also on the panel. They will evaluate existing policies and examine new proposals, including the potential introduction of a statewide register of short-stay landlords, a move supported by major platforms such as Airbnb.

Victorian Consumer Affairs Minister Nick Staikos said the panel's goal is to understand the lived experience of those involved in strata housing.

“This public consultation will provide valuable insights into the experience, issues, and concerns of Victorians who are involved with owners' corporations,” Mr Staikos said.

