Strata Title: Towards a research agenda for informed planning practice

Key words
Strata title, condominium, unit title, commonhold, copropriété, urban and region planning

Abstract
The form of property ownership known as strata title in Australia, and as condominiums in the USA, has flourished in many countries for half a century. In Australia, strata title developments, especially large scale, higher density, mixed use inner city development are thought to be an important approach contributing to the future efficiency and sustainability of metropolitan areas. Yet research into the planning implications of strata title is piecemeal, leading to a situation where future potential issues and problems are being ignored within current metropolitan planning. Informed by a critical evaluation of the Australian situation, we present a research agenda for generating explanatory, normative and procedural knowledge on strata title for planning.

Introduction
Although it was developed and has been implemented for over 150 years in France (Webster & le Goix 2005, p. 20), it was not until the early 1960s that a ‘new’ concept in property ownership, strata title, began to take off in a small number of western countries with strong market based land and property economies. In the USA and in most Canadian provinces it became known as the condominium form of ownership, while in Australia and the Canadian province of British Columbia, it has become known as strata title. Elsewhere it is known by several other names including unit titles in New Zealand, copropriété in France, and commonhold in Britain. Strata title gives an owner legal tenure over a share of common property and private property in a building and/or land. The legal structures established to manage common interests are known as ‘homeowners associations’ in north American systems and by the more generic term ‘body corporate’ in various Australian states.

There is considerable consensus nowadays in Australia that medium and high-density development will provide the major source of urban housing in the future and is a key response to urban planning challenges in most capital cities (Randolph & Easthorpe, 2007).
These challenges include reduced availability of land, the need to accommodate growing urban populations and the need to improve economic viability of public transport systems and other community infrastructure. In essence, increasing density through the adoption of medium and high density residential development is thought to improve the efficiency of urban settlement patterns and achieve more sustainable urban forms (Australian Government 2008; Randolph, 2006).

Strata title provides a key property rights mechanism to deliver medium and high-density development. However, despite the growing importance of strata title in meeting future housing demand and in achieving the above planning objectives, research into strata issues tends to be fragmented and focused on specific issues such as management of the bodies corporate (e.g., Guilding & Whiteoak, 2008; Warnken & Guilding 2009). In a context where this form of tenure is being adopted in various guises around the world, significant questions remain about strata title and its impact on city form and function, its impact on notions of community, and how it fits into governance of the cityscape over the long term. Further research is needed to inform planning practice, but it should be strategically targeted on the knowledge needs of planners in various stages of the planning process. In this context, the aims of this paper are to provide an overview of strata title research as it relates to the practice of planning, to identify gaps in the research, and to highlight further research opportunities.

In order to address these aims, the paper is divided into five sections. The first section sets out the nature and background to strata titles. The second section examines strata title in the Australian planning context. The third section examines the nature of planning practice and how research is used and in what contexts in planning practice. The fourth section examines current planning research in strata title, revealing a very fragmented and issue specific landscape. This context provides an insight into how planners work, opportunities for knowledge uptake in planning, and why strata title research is needed. The fifth section identifies gaps in knowledge and opportunities for further research. The conclusions summarise future research opportunities and draw attention to the need for greater responsibility to be demonstrated by government and the development sector in the uptake of strata title as a tool to achieve urban planning objectives.

**Strata schemes and titles: background and nature**
A strata scheme is a building or collection of buildings where individuals have title to, or can own, a small portion known as a ‘lot’, and share access to and responsibility for the maintenance of common property (NSW Department of Fair Trading, 2009). In an apartment building for example, a buyer purchasing a unit would receive title to a ‘lot’ comprising a private apartment and a share in the common property which includes areas such as lifts, stairwells, access lanes, visitor carparks, and recreation facilities such as cinema rooms, pools or tennis courts. Prior to strata title, the most common way of buying into an apartment building was to through company title wherein individuals would buy shares in the company that owned the building; these shares in turn gave the right to occupy one or more units. Over time however, company title proved to be problematic as discussed below, and strata title has evolved to address concerns over the rights of ‘shareholders’ and other management issues.

The increasing popularity of strata title has been driven by two main factors: conversion of existing buildings in single ownership to strata title and through new development. Enabling strata title ownership of existing developments, especially apartment buildings, by dividing the development into smaller units, reinvigorates local property markets by making the apartments more tradeable, consumable and accessible to a broader and larger market. The use of strata title in medium and high development in countries like Australia has been driven largely by an embedded cultural drive for home ownership (Australian Government, 2008). For example, for Australia households, home ownership has hovered around 70% since the 1960s (Kryger, 2009). This driving force, when combined with decreasing affordability especially over the last decade, has meant that apartment living has become an important entry point into the housing market for many Australians and an option for older Australians looking to downsize (Australian Government, 2008).

In other countries, other factors at play including large populations, limited land availability and affordability issues have lead to different housing profiles where apartment living in buildings in single ownership is not uncommon. However, it is important to note that as housing and property have become increasingly market driven, privatized and individualized, strata title or condominium type developments that incorporate a combination of private title and common property have been adopted around the world including in developing countries like socialist Vietnam (Huong & Sajor, 2010); in developed countries like England and Wales as recently as in 2004 (Webster & le Goix, 2005); and in former socialist nations undergoing privatisation such as central and eastern Europe (Banks, O’Leary & Rabenhorst, 1996).
Over time tenure instruments that attempt to combine private ownership and shared common property (i.e., termed ‘strata title’ for the purposes of this paper) have evolved in two ways. The first is through recurring revision and refinement of strata title and condominium legislation in response to emerging problems associated with this form of tenure: a form described by Lee and Webster as ‘inherently unstable’ (2006). The other is through the evolution into new forms of tenure that have allowed new and larger scale developments. These have generally related to broadhectare developments rather than apartments and may involve nested hierarchies of commonly owned property and management structures (e.g., Townshend, 2006). For example, developments established in stages may require different bodies corporate to manage the facilities associated with each stage of the development such as golf courses, retail space and residential components of a development.

To demonstrate, take for example a relatively simple two-tiered community titled development which has a smaller development (B) which is nested within a larger development (A). The larger development contains common property - such as roads and common open space and recreation facilities - which is owned by and accessible to all the owners in the development and managed by one body corporate. The owners in the smaller development (B) share in the larger development’s common property but also have some second tier common property which is shared exclusively amongst themselves. The smaller nested development (B) might, for example, comprise a block of apartments with common stairwells, lifts, hallways as well as a swimming pool and gym. There are two bodies corporate, one for the whole development (A) and one solely for the smaller development (B). Outside of Australia, such developments are often very large with units numbering in the tens of thousands in the USA and even hundreds of thousands in China (Webster & Le Goix 2005, p.19). The growing scale and complexity of bodies corporate has accompanied the emergence of such developments. These developments are the dominant form of new housing in the USA and a growing feature of many countries and have generated some attention from urban and planning researchers interested in matters such as the privatisation of open space and the gating with which they are often, but not always, associated (e.g., see GeoJournal 66(1-2)). In Australia, however, in part due to the significant and established role that local government plays in service provision, large master planned communities are generally not under community title and strata title legislation has not yet been extensively used for such developments.
However, our interest here is not with the expanded form of community titles / common interest development but with the relatively long established strata title / condominium form of ownership. The Australian experience with strata title has influenced the development of common property legislation in a number of different countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, South Africa and Singapore (Everton-Moore, Ardill, Guilding & Warnken, 2006) As other countries embrace this form development, the Australian experience shows that strata title is not without its planning issues but little attention has been placed on exploring or addressing these challenges in the literature. It therefore timely to engage in open debate about its implications for planning.

Strata title type legislation was adopted in the various State jurisdictions in Australia in the early to mid 1960s, around the same time it was adopted in the USA. The first was in the State of New South Wales in 1961 when strata title replaced an earlier mechanism, company title. Under company title, shares were issued in a company which owned an apartment building; the purchase of shares in turn endowed ownership of a unit or units. Over time this mechanism proved unsatisfactory because of its complexity. Most notably, company title did not give any rights to the real estate and other shareholders, through company law, could vet potential purchasers or forfeit a shareholder’s right to occupy an apartment. As a result of this lack of security, financiers were less willing to lend to buyers (see for example McRobbie, 1966).  Strata titling’s early implementation by property developers was perhaps most enthusiastic on the Gold Coast, a rapidly growing tourist city in the State of Queensland, Australia. The growth of the Gold Coast (as in parts of southern Florida) was founded on speculative real estate development: developers there used strata title extensively to promote property investment particularly targeted at purchasers from the southern capital cities (Coiacetto, 2009). Apartments could be sold in smaller, more easily tradeable units, thus opening up opportunities for marketing to numerous small investors. These second homes and investment properties generated opportunities for owners to sublet their properties to tourists visiting the Gold Coast (e.g., McRobbie, 1966), and this soon became the dominant form of tourist accommodation, outstripping demand for other accommodation types such as motels and hotels (Guilding et al, 2005; Warnken et al., 2003). Strata title schemes spread quickly because they were affordable and gave more security of tenure, and now underpin the provision of new medium and higher density housing in many capital cities and other locations subject to tourism and lifestyle migration. While predominantly applied to medium
and high density residential accommodation, strata title has been applied to other land uses such as industrial and commercial buildings. Community titles legislation, which applies to master planned communities, has been introduced in most Australian States since the 1990s, and there have been some hybrid forms of community-strata title, but its adoption has not so far been as widespread as strata title.

**Strata title: The Australian planning context**

That Australia is one of the most highly urbanised countries in the world is without question (Forster, 2004). Since the mid twentieth century, global economic restructuring together with Australia’s unique geography and environmental conditions have promoted concentrated growth in key metropolitan areas relative to rural and regional areas. The great Australian dream of a single family detached dwelling played out across the nation in the post-war economic boom, creating a very suburban, car-dependent nation (Forster, 2006; Freestone, 2007). Since the 1990s a variety of factors have transformed the urban landscape into a post-suburban one characterised by poly-nucleated urban sprawl (Essex and Brown, 1997; Forster, 2006). Dispersion of employment nodes, the growing complexity of urban lifestyles and by corollary, transport patterns and flows, have contributed to a breakdown in neighbourhood structures and community cohesion (Troy 2002). It is a settlement pattern that lends itself to the increasing uptake of strata title developments for four key reasons identified in literature.

First, in Australia’s metropolitan regions, pressure continues to mount for smarter, greener forms of urban development; an urban revolution is in the making (Forster, 2006). Increasing public awareness and concern over sustainability and related issues of climate change and rising oil prices have prompted urban planners and policy makers to pursue smart growth strategies within metropolitan and local area plans. These include strategies for urban containment; initiatives to increase densities and create compact mixed-use developments; a move to reduce car dependency by encouraging public transit-oriented developments; and associated efforts to improve financial feasibility of public transport systems (O'Toole, 2001).

Second, changing demographic and social profiles of urban populations have influenced demand for a diversity of housing types. Decreasing household size, pressures associated with an influx of interstate and international migration and a buoyant investor market attracted to a relatively stable and prosperous Australian housing sector are driving growth in demand for
housing. These changes are driving demand for alternative housing stock to the traditional single-family dwelling on a quarter acre block (Forster, 2004).

Third, the increasing scarcity of available green field sites has contributed to burgeoning house prices and housing shortages in many capital cities. Aging housing stock in older urban areas is now reaching the end of its economic life, opening up prospects for urban renewal and regeneration (Randolph, 2006). Moreover, due to the increasing range of constraints on available infill sites, construction and development costs have increased which has in turn placed pressure on developers to maximise unit yield. These economies of scale pressures signal much larger developments that maximise yield (Bugden, 2005).

Fourth, for time-poor urban inhabitants, apartment living on the rise because it offers the promise of a low maintenance lifestyle (Randolph 2006). Strata title developments that incorporate leisure and recreation facilities offer the promise of lifestyle change. However, the internalised nature of strata title developments, with privatised common property facilities replaces visits to neighbourhood parks and recreation facilities, reduces the level of strata title residents’ engagement in local social life. Considerable social, economic and environmental challenges for planners and policy makers may well emerge over time as local social life becomes privatised and more cloistered (Randolph, 2006).

The increasing significance of strata title development is illustrated by the fact that over $AUD500 billion worth of property is now estimated to be managed under such schemes, with 3.5 million people working or living in strata title schemes (Institute of Body Corporate Managers (Victoria) Inc., 2007). In the future, it is estimated that medium and high density development will account for 67% of housing stock in the SEQ metropolitan area; 50% in Melbourne and 45% in Sydney metropolitan regions (Randolph, 2006). According to Forster (2006), if contemporary metropolitan planning visions come to fruition, then ‘our major cities will become characterised by limited urban expansion, a strong multi-nuclear structure with high density housing around centres and transport corridors, and infill and densification throughout the current inner and middle suburbs” (p.180) However, whilst many of the arguments upon which these strategies are based are well rehearsed, oft-cited and convincing, there is little research that verifies such objectives will be achieved (O'Toole, 2001; Self, 1995).
So what do these trends and the increasing uptake of strata title as a key property rights mechanism mean for urban planning? There is a growing body of planning research that examines medium and high-density housing issues in an urban context, but this research focuses on the impacts of density change and not the property rights mechanisms that are used. The planning issues around strata title are derived from overlaying facets of strata (e.g. property rights, common property, asset management, governance arrangements, etc.) on broader questions about the future structure and function of urban and rural regions. As a result, significant questions remain about:

- **The impact of strata title on city form and function at site, neighbourhood and city scales.** For example, as the balance tips from a couple of strata developments within a neighbourhood to a majority of strata title developments, what will be the impact on neighbourhood connectivity, the provision of and access to community facilities and the privatisation of public space in strata title affect the social life of streets?

- **The impact of strata title on community cohesion, integration, diversity and belonging.** Related to the above, strata title is likely to attract relatively homogenous socio-economic groups. Busy urban lifestyles work and the internalisation of life within the home and strata title development work against residents being involved in neighbourhood civics and the public domain and reinforce a disconnection with community (see Putnam 2000).

- **The roles and responsibilities of property managers in the governance of community assets.** Bodies corporate have significant responsibilities in the provision and maintenance of community facilities and have even been characterised as a fourth tier of urban governance in Australia (Easthorpe, 2009). These bodies corporate are accountable only to their members and they can raise revenues and manage community property. While they must operate within the boundaries of legislation, the power of these bodies corporate can sometime rival that of local government (Randolph, 2006). The impact of these shifts towards communities that are privately managed through bodies corporate has not been explored in any detail.

- **The participation of strata title occupants, investors and managers in wider community building initiatives.** Related to the above points, the impact over time of this privatisation, and the shift in power away from local government, has potentially significant implications for the planning and management of local communities.
(Australian Government, 2008). For example, a decline in participation in community consultation initiatives associated with the preparation of a local planning scheme could be unexpected.

**The use of strata title research in planning practice**

Planning systems provide the framework to manage change. Planning systems comprise three key dimensions: (1) policies that set out broad values and directions (2) strategic plans and issue specific directives which provide a framework for the future development of an area; and (3) a development assessment process into which proposals are submitted and assessed in the context of the first two points. Despite the growing complexity of planning frameworks, there is generally limited capacity to anticipate and proactively address potential environmental, social or economic problems. This is because planning frameworks are generally geared towards assessing new development proposals, in preventing inappropriate proposals, or in modifying proposals that may be acceptable (Gurran, Blakely & Squires, 2007). Moreover, new issues need to be framed in such a way that they are of legitimate interest to the majority, they need to be important enough for government to want to do something, and there needs to be a potential solution or measure available. Here, the role of research is important in developing understandings about strata title, its potential problems and solutions.

However, we must also recognise the boundaries of planning practice in addressing issues related to strata title. Planning systems generally only have influence over the initial planning stages and may have little control over many elements of strata title including the ongoing management of strata property, governance arrangements and community management plans. The operation of these elements over time has resulted in impacts on, for example, neighbourhoods, communities and patterns of travel. Moreover, planning systems generally have little capacity to address cumulative impacts over time, and they cannot retrofit conditions unless a proposed change triggers a new development application. Even then, only conditions relevant to the proposed change may be applied.

How planners use research and knowledge and whether the use of such information leads to better planning decisions raises complicated and controversial considerations. Such discussions are outside the scope of this paper, but a key point in these debates is that planning practice is influenced by a range of political and bureaucratic factors and is informed
by both research and practical experience in a reiterative process (see Schon, 1983; Flyvbjerg, 2004). Planners work to tight deadlines and budgets and they seldom if ever have the skills or resources to collect and analyse unlimited data (Stephenson, 2000). As a result, planning involves an intuitive satisficing approach whereby the research undertaken about a particular planning issue is bounded by the resource and skill limitations in that moment. However, knowledge and research is important to inform and drive evidence-based planning; in its absence, planning risks being driven by ideology and powerful interests. And, whilst knowledge is not always a match for such interests, the quality of debate should nevertheless be improved (Naess & Saglie, 2000).

Two points are important to acknowledge in this discussion about the role of research in planning practice. First, it is important that, to make a difference, planning research be targeted to the problems and issues identified, and that practicing planners are informed of the research and have opportunities to have input along the way. The second point is that at the same time, however, research is needed that goes beyond the specific utilitarian research often undertaken by planning consultants in support of development applications. In a revealing discussion about the value of research to planning practice, Thompson (2000) laments that both researchers and practitioners work in environments that are not necessarily conducive to interaction and knowledge sharing. Practitioners are increasingly operating in a performance culture that emphasises outputs (e.g. development assessment clearance rates, attraction of external funding, timelines for plan production or number of consultation events). As a result, practitioners are relying less on research and relying more on practical wisdom, experience, day-to-day observation and on information supplied by outside agencies, politicians and the public (Stephenson, 2000, p.102) Academics work in another performance culture that measures publications, teaching evaluations and committee work. They aspire to producing publications in highly ranked theoretical journals and conference proceedings at the expense of dissemination in practitioner forums. As a result, practitioners assert academics are ‘out of touch’, with much research being ‘indigestible’ (Thompson, 2006, p.132), and academics claim that practitioners are not sufficiently versed in important drivers of change including housing markets, labour markets, land economics and political science, for example.

The tensions between planning practice and research are well illustrated in the observations of Forster (2006), who observes that in Australia, practitioners have produced metropolitan planning strategies that are based on a particular vision of the future urban structure and adopt
strategies such as urban containment, consolidation and activity centres to achieve this vision. Urban researchers have labelled such visions as ‘wishful thinking’, arguing that such strategies do not reflect the realities of housing markets, journey to work patterns or labour force pressures (e.g. Searle, 2004; Stimpson, 2001). Moreover, there is no clear evidence that these strategies will improve environmental, social or economic sustainability (e.g. Recsei, 2005). There are arguably tensions in planning between public interest and particular interests (particularly economic development interests) and between short and long term interests. The development industry relies heavily upon planning consultants for the preparation of development applications and submissions that seek to influence plan-making and planning system reform. Yet the depth, breadth, quality and rigour of this work are affected by tight budgets and deadlines. Whilst not seeking to generalise, our own experience as practicing planners is that research in this environment is utilitarian, focusing on small issues and directly related to clients’ interests. Little emphasis is placed on addressing broader issues and bigger picture questions such as the most desirable form of urban and regional development, the cumulative and unintended impacts of different forms of housing.

So what research is needed relating to strata title? Scanning the planning research landscape, three key areas of research activity are identified that inform planning. First, research that examines how things really are is known as explanatory research. This type of research examines trends, identifies problems, analyses different approaches and provides information that informs broad policy directions (Naess & Saglie, 2000). Second, normative research tells us how things ought to be. This research helps planners distinguish between what is good/desirable and what is not. This type of research is often prescriptive and ideological in nature such as urban design principles or good governance guidelines. Third, procedural or decision-centred research examines how planning is done, by whom decisions are made, what values and interests are being promoted, and how such processes can be improved upon or otherwise changed. This research informs the design of planning systems and operational processes such as development assessment. These categories help to structure the analysis of the existing research in strata title that follows and aids in the identification of future research opportunities later in this paper.

**Current planning research in strata title: Where are we?**

*Existing research in strata title – a planning perspective*
Since colonial times, the creation and trade in property rights has played a key role in stimulating the property development and construction industries in Australia. The introduction of strata title from the 1960s further stimulated the development urban land markets. More recently, property rights, of which strata and community title is one scheme, have been mooted as useful in facilitating the achievement of a broad range of planning, economic development and sustainability objectives (Williamson, 2001). However, the achievement of planning goals, economic development and sustainability objectives require a system of property rights that minimises risk and uncertainty, and clearly articulates responsibilities with respect to land use and management (Grant, Williamson & Ting, 2000). As detailed below, the research so far tends to focus on the rights, responsibilities and relationships between owner-occupiers, short-term tenants, investors, body corporate and property managers in different landscapes (tourist destinations, residential housing, rural landscapes). There is a lack of research on the planning issues that emerge at different scales as a result of these relationships.

Table 1 summarises existing research into strata title (and condominiums) and its implications for planning. In this table, the available published research is categorised according to whether it addresses issues associated with governance, socio-cultural, economic and environmental characteristics of development. These four broad categories reflect the core foci of sustainable development (i.e. balancing social, economic, environmental and governance dimensions) that underpin contemporary planning practice. While not necessarily comprehensive, its value is to establish a framework through which we can evaluate the current depth and breadth of research. The research directly relating to strata title and its impact and relevance to planning is quite limited. To this extent, we have also drawn upon research indirectly related to strata title planning because it deals with aspects such as the densification of housing and impacts on urban governance.

Gaps in strata title research
A large proportion of research deals indirectly with the nature of strata title, such as densification, mixed use development, urban infill and regeneration, housing diversity and mix, rather than directly with the impact of property rights, asset management or governance.
structures on urban planning. From this process of organising and evaluating this research, four key observations are made:

1) The balance of research focuses on macro-level issues such as urban management, suburbanisation and densification or micro-level property management issues. Current research outlines isolated examples or is narrowly focused on particular issues. There is a dearth of research that explores how strata title fits within and impacts upon neighbourhood level form and function and the impacts of strata title on local social life.

2) Australia is one of the most heavily suburbanised countries in the world and is moving into a new phase of urban development principally as a result of financial and infrastructure related pressures, and to a lesser extend, environmental and social issues. Yet we are moving in this direction based on the ideological and intuitive influence of planning practitioners, and without a clear understanding where it is taking us. More research that examines the relationships between urban labour markets, housing location, household lifecycle, demographic change and choice would provide insights into future housing needs and allow more informed planning of strata title developments, planning schemes and development assessment processes. Better understandings of the demand for strata title in relation to demographic change and housing lifecycles would also be useful.

3) Existing strata title research has focused on property rights and the way these rights are valued and acted upon by different stakeholder groups (e.g. owner occupiers, investors, renters and property managers). What is missing from this research is the consideration of the impacts upon groups indirectly affected by strata title, such as the broader non-resident community adjacent to strata developments and intergenerational interests.

4) Strata title can also represent a retreat from citizenship and active engagement in the public domain. Ironically the exercise of that choice also reflects the realisation of that citizenship (Allon, 2006). More research is needed that examines the implications of strata titling on the formation and maintenance of ‘community’ and aspects such as participation, cohesion, belongingness and inclusion.

**Need for future research**

Despite the growing importance of strata title in meeting future housing demand and in achieving planning objectives, research into strata issues tends to be fragmented and issue specific. In a context where similar forms of tenure are being adopted around the world, significant questions remain about strata title and its impact on city form and function, its impact on notions of community, and how it fits into governance of the cityscape over the
long term. Further research is needed to inform planning practice. However, in the context of
the previous discussion on the nature of planning research and its use in practice, it should be
strategically targeted on what, where and how knowledge is used.

Building upon the need to bridge the gap between planning practice and research in strata
title, and move towards a more informed and reflective response to emerging and potential
issues, an framework for strata title planning related research is set out in Table 2. This
approach seeks to address aspects of strata title that affect the social, economic,
environmental and governance objectives that underpin planning. It also seeks to address the
three types of research and knowledge that are needed in planning: policy, plan-making and
development assessment.

<Insert TABLE 2 about here>

Conclusions
The aims of this paper were to provide an overview of strata title and its relationship and
potential implications for planning practice, to evaluate the current strata title research and
identify gaps in knowledge, and to highlight future research opportunities. In addressing these
aims, this paper found that, while strata title is heavily implicated in the planning frameworks
and growth management solutions adopted in many metropolitan regions, the impacts of
strata title on planning have received only limited, piecemeal research attention. This situation
has lead to what could be described as reflexive, ad hoc and ideological response to the need
for medium and higher density residential development rather than an informed response.

Strata title developments, especially large scale, high density, mixed use inner city
developments are supposedly contributing to the future efficiency and sustainability of our
metropolitan areas. This paper has identified a number of emerging planning issues in strata
title development, particularly in relation to governance and community issues, which are
likely to affect the form and function of Australian cities and other cities where this form of
ownership is adopted. For example, strata title property development may inadvertently create
segregated communities and promote a retreat from active citizenship. The private provision
and management of community facilities can lead to decay in the social and political life of
cities, parks and neighbourhoods. Local governments may experience a decline in active
community engagement and belonging, and consultative plan making will become more
difficult. The traditional role of local government in servicing local communities, and in providing community and recreation infrastructure could be usurped as property managers become responsible for the provision and management of more and more community infrastructure. To date the existing research is not conclusive and it pertains more often to the related area of common interest development (e.g., Townshend, 2006; Gordon, 2003) rather than to the broader and more pervasive impacts of strata title on urban planning and the community life of our cities.

Strata title developers and planners have a long-term interest in securing vibrant, lively and well-maintained neighbourhoods and metropolitan areas. There is a strong corporate social responsibility argument for developers and strata title managers to proactively immerse themselves in understanding and addressing these issues. The development industry has benefited from the progressive breakdown of highly prescriptive modernist planning systems since the 1980s, yet the industry invests remarkably little in research and development. What little investment there is in research tends to be ad hoc, issue specific and utilitarian. There is a need to address, at a more strategic level, the issues identified in this paper and to commit to a research agenda that examines key issues concerning strata title. However, research and development must take place in partnership with planning agencies. Surely there is also a public interest argument for government investment in research that seeks to better understand and identify ways of protecting the future vibrancy and social cohesion of our cities?

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Relationship Between Policies, Building Activities and Socio-economic Development in

Company.


### Table 1. Existing planning research in strata title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Goals</th>
<th>Focus of planning research and relationship to strata title</th>
<th>Example of research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Consumer protection, clarification of responsibilities and disclosure rules</td>
<td>(Bugden, 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Security and certainty of tenure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Management of rental pools and the impacts between short term rentals (tourists), investors and owner occupiers</td>
<td>(Bugden, 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relationships between unit owners and community facilities management</td>
<td>(Blandy, Dixon &amp; Dupuis, 2006; Cassidy, Guilding &amp; Warnken, 2008; Guilding &amp; Whiteoak, 2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relationships between local government roles and responsibilities and strata title managers in servicing of local communities with community, recreation infrastructure</td>
<td>(Randolph &amp; Easthope, 2007; Sherry, 2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality of management</td>
<td>(Hsieh, 2009 for Taiwan; Major, 1992)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participation of non-resident owners, property managers in essence of local community</td>
<td>(Allon, 2006)</td>
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<td>Socio-cultural</td>
<td>Demand for increased housing choice that responds to demographic and lifecycle change, e.g. decreasing household size, aging population</td>
<td>(Hansen &amp; Gottschalk, 2006)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Site design to minimise causes of neighbourhood nuisance in medium and high density living</td>
<td>(Churchman, 1999)</td>
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<td>Integration of strata development into neighbourhood and surrounding urban fabric and the impacts of housing segregation and ‘gatedness’</td>
<td>(Costley, 2006; Dixon, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impacts and implications of strata title on diversity, cohesion, social capital and belongingness</td>
<td>(Webster &amp; LeGoix, 2005)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social structure of condominiums, submarket groups, implications for the social structure of cities and for gentrification,</td>
<td>(Lehrer &amp; Wieditz, 2009; Skaburskis, 1988)</td>
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<td>Impacts on and implications of condominium ownership for (gender related) perceptions of public-private space.</td>
<td>(Kern, 2007)</td>
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<td>Understanding and managing the different aspiration of different stakeholder groups (e.g. home owners, renters, investors)</td>
<td>(Guilding, Warnken, Ardill &amp; Fredline, 2005; Warnken, Russell &amp; Faulkner, 2003)</td>
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<td>Economic</td>
<td>Redevelopment of old strata-title stock that has reached the end of its economic life</td>
<td>(Bugden, 2005; Easthope &amp; Randolph, 2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitating urban renewal and regeneration</td>
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<td>Market demand for strata title choice and flexibility and facilitating the match between supply and demand</td>
<td>(Warnken &amp; Guilding, 2009)</td>
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<td>Community facilities and asset management</td>
<td>(Warnken, Russell et al., 2003)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Maintaining aesthetic appearance and character of neighbourhoods</td>
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<td>Implants on surrounding communities and property values</td>
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<td>Comparative resource and land use efficiency of private communities compared to others. (Ben-Joseph, 2004)</td>
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<td>Relationship between tenure form and housing choice/affordability (Preston, 1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asset management of tourism related (condominium) development so that it contributes to overall development and maintenance of destination image and community (Warnken &amp; Guilding, 2009)</td>
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<td>Building standards, site design and construction (Warnken &amp; Guilding, 2009)</td>
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<td>Differential design standards between private communities and public domain and the implications for public planning and design standards (Ben-Joseph, 2004).</td>
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<td>Environmental performance aspects of strata title development and impacts on metropolitan sustainability (Buxton &amp; Tieman, 2005; Churchman, 1999; Randolph, 2006)</td>
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<td>Maintenance of internal environment and facilities and quality of activities (Hsieh 2009 for Taiwan; Major, 1992)</td>
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<td>Role of property rights in land use, zoning and environmental incentives (Ho, 2006; Turnbull, 2007; Van Den Brink, Van Der Valk &amp; Van Dijk, 2006)</td>
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<td>Relationship between the planning systems and the local manifestation of this form of ownership (Cruz &amp; Pinho, 2009 for Portugal; Pow, 2009 for Singapore)</td>
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<td>Planning Goals</td>
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