



Community Brief

Winter 2025 Edition

Dear Valued Clients,

As the ACT settles into the heart of winter, we at LJ Hooker Strata ACT extend our warmest regards. This season brings unique challenges and opportunities for strata communities, and we're here to help you navigate them with confidence.

In this edition, we share essential winter maintenance advice, highlight key legislative trends, and offer insights to support your property's wellbeing and your community's cohesion.

Winter Maintenance Essentials: Protecting Your Property

1. Heating System Servicing

Ensure all common area heating systems are inspected and serviced. For unit owners, now is the time to clean filters, check thermostats, and schedule professional servicing of any systems dedicated to your unit. Efficient systems reduce energy costs and prevent mid-winter breakdowns.

2. Pipe Insulation & Leak Prevention

Frozen pipes are a common winter hazard. Insulate exposed pipes in basements, garages, and external walls. Report any signs of leaks or water pressure drops to your strata manager immediately to prevent costly damage.

3. Roof & Gutter Checks

Winter storms can worsen existing roof issues. Arrange inspections for cracked tiles, loose flashing, and blocked gutters. Overflowing gutters can lead to internal water damage and mould growth.

4. Common Area Safety

Ensure pathways, stairwells, and entryways are well-lit and free from hazards. Anti-slip mats and regular cleaning help prevent accidents in wet or icy conditions.

Strata Law Trends: What's Happening Nationally

While the ACT has not yet introduced major reforms, significant changes in NSW strata law from 1 July 2025 are setting a precedent that could influence future ACT legislation:

Sustainability Mandates: Strata schemes must now consider sustainability infrastructure (e.g., solar panels, EV chargers) at AGMs. Appearance alone can no longer be used to reject such proposals. This is already in place as part of the Default Rules in the Unit Titles (Management) Regulations 2011.

Accessibility Upgrades: Lower voting thresholds make it easier to approve upgrades like ramps and lifts.

Fairer Contracts: New rules ban unfair terms in service contracts and embedded network agreements.

Committee Accountability: Strata committee members must act with honesty and fairness, with clearer duties and responsibilities.

We recommend ACT owners corporations begin reviewing their rules and governance practices in anticipation of similar reforms.



V3 App Update: Streamlining Your Strata Experience

We're continuing to enhance the LJ Hooker Strata V3 App based on your feedback. Recent improvements include:

- Real-time maintenance tracking with status updates
- Push notifications for urgent notices and meeting reminders
- Document access for committee members, including agendas and minutes
- Improved user interface for easier navigation

If you haven't yet downloaded the app, now is the perfect time to explore its features and simplify your strata interactions. As a unit owner, you can request an invitation from your Strata Manager to log into the App. The app is available on iOS and Android. Non-Owner residents will need a "site code" in order to register on the app:



*Download via
the*
Apple App Store



Download via the
Android Play Store

Sustainability in Strata: Winter Energy Efficiency

Winter is a high-demand season for energy. Here are some practical steps your community can take:

- Install weather seals on doors and windows to reduce heat loss.
- Switch to LED lighting in common areas to cut electricity use.
- Review your energy provider for competitive rates or green energy options.
- Discuss solar feasibility and battery storage at your next AGM.

Sustainability upgrades not only reduce costs but also increase property value and appeal.

Strengthening Community Engagement

A well-functioning Owners Corporation and Executive Committee are essential for a thriving strata community. We encourage:

- Regular meetings to address maintenance, budgeting, and resident concerns.
- Clear communication between committee members and your strata manager.
- Inclusive decision-making, ensuring all voices are heard and respected.

If you're interested in joining your committee or learning more about its role, reach out to your strata manager for guidance.



Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Winter is a peak season for fire-related incidents. Ensure your building is prepared:

- Test smoke alarms in common areas and encourage owners to do the same in their units.
- Check fire extinguishers and emergency lighting.
- Review evacuation plans and ensure signage is visible and up to date.

Winter Gardening in Strata: Keeping Green Spaces Thriving

Even in the colder months, your strata's gardens and green areas can remain healthy and attractive with a few seasonal strategies:

1. Prune and Prepare

Winter is the ideal time to prune deciduous trees and shrubs. This encourages healthy spring growth and helps maintain tidy common areas. Be sure to remove dead or diseased branches to prevent hazards.

2. Mulch for Moisture and Warmth

Apply a thick layer of mulch to garden beds to insulate roots, retain moisture, and suppress weeds. Organic mulches like bark chips or straw also improve soil quality over time.

3. Plant Winter-Friendly Species

Consider hardy, low-maintenance plants that thrive in Canberra's winter climate, such as:

- Camellias, for winter blooms
- Hellebores, also known as winter roses
- Violas and pansies, for colour in pots and borders
- Herbs like rosemary and thyme, which tolerate cold well

4. Maintain Irrigation Systems

Check that irrigation systems are functioning and adjust timers to suit reduced water needs. Drain and protect exposed pipes to prevent freezing.

5. Engage Residents

Encourage residents to participate in garden care or join a gardening subcommittee. Shared green spaces can foster community spirit and improve wellbeing.



Winter Community Events: Stay Connected This Season

Winter is a wonderful time to bring neighbours together and strengthen community bonds. Here are a few ideas and upcoming opportunities for strata communities to consider:

1. Winter Warmer Morning Tea

Host a casual morning tea in your building's common area or courtyard. Provide hot drinks, pastries, and a warm space for residents to connect. It's a great way to welcome new neighbours and build rapport.

2. Fire Pit or Outdoor Movie Night

If your property has a suitable outdoor space, consider a winter movie night with blankets, popcorn, and a fire pit (where permitted). It's a fun, low-cost way to create shared memories.

3. Community Clean-Up Day

Organise a winter tidy-up of gardens, storage areas, or shared spaces. Offer a sausage sizzle or coffee cart as a thank-you to volunteers.

4. Local Events in Canberra

Encourage residents to attend local winter events such as:

- The Truffle Festival – Canberra Region (June–August)
- Wintervention in Civic (July) – featuring an ice rink, food stalls, and entertainment
- Canberra District Wine Harvest Celebrations

5. Charity Drives

Winter is a time of need for many. Consider organising a blanket or food drive in partnership with local charities like Vinnies or Communities@Work.

If your Owners Corporation or Executive Committee would like help coordinating a community event, your LJ Hooker Strata Manager can assist with planning, approvals, and communications.

We're Here for You

Whether it's a burst pipe, a governance question, or a maintenance request, your LJ Hooker Strata Manager is here to help. We're committed to supporting your property's needs and enhancing your strata experience.

Wishing you a warm, safe, and connected winter season.

Warm regards,
The Team at LJ Hooker Strata ACT