

## HOW ARE BY-LAWS PROTECTIVE IN RENOVATIONS?

How are we protected by a by-law from something which is unlikely to happen? The owners of No. 1 do not want to devalue their house and the strata manager has a record of the work to be done after consulting everybody about it.

The owners of No. 1 bought their place on the assumption that they would be able to renovate, I assume, and one also assumes the place will be better rather than worse after they do so.

If anybody doesn't like what has happened for any reason, they should draw their problem to our attention and that of the strata [manager.as](#) early as possible to come to a fair resolution on a matter we have been collectively informed about.

A by-law is just a time-wasting and money wasting stupid expense which is easily forgotten and overturned by action in future.

Its only 'protective' purpose is based on the assumption that we will end up in court over a matter rather than settling it in a more generally informed, cheaper, and fairer way than is possible under the conditions of any legal suit.

A law without a clear aim is like a by-law without a clear aim. It is a pointless collection of prohibitions which appear to have the main purpose of driving everybody nuts while trying to understand what anybody wants and why..

Cheers Carol

Hi Maureen

Thanks very much for your paper. I wrote the response below and am sending related files again. Cheers Carol

### **SAY BYE-BYE TO BY-LAWS AND THE CORPORATE SEAL OF THE CROWN! THIS IS LOGICALLY EXTINGUISHED BY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION (I SUDDENLY SEE AT AGE 74)**

I apologize for my past subconscious and confusing compulsion to often write '*by-law*' as '*bi-law*'. One assumes it was God or the Devil at work and so I feel foolish. Perhaps they think they are funny.

However, on reading your clear and informative notes entitled *By-Law on the Responsibility for Fences at 11 Rosebank Street, Glebe*, and doing further personal research into our recent history on by-laws considered relevant at St James Court by Sally, the strata manager, the NSW government or others, my attention has also been newly drawn to the antiquated nature of the **Common Seal**.

I now see the original intent of anti-discrimination legislation rendered the Common Seal of the Crown, which appears on by-laws, as outdated. The global logic of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, led to formation of the United Nations and adoption of anti-discrimination legislation in NSW, nationally and globally.

Key problems with by-laws were outlined earlier to our committee (Strata plan 10775). I repeat some later below and in related files attached which were also addressed to current and former NSW inquiries to deal with red tape. In this context I draw your attention to key points below. **Point 3 recommends a solution for going forward.**

I raise all these matters because I think the treatment of this plot has been administratively poor and expensive and that broader and greater, general and holistic understanding of maintenance and renovation on building and grounds would lead to its improvement.

If a medical doctor is administering the normal treatment for a particular diagnosis to a particular patient, for example, he or she stops if the patient appears to be responding poorly or dying. Lawyers usually see no such hindrance to their money-making schemes which create a lot of expensive confusion.

In regard to matters under your heading **Need for a By-law on Fences** I make points below and attached.

### **1. A LAW (AND HENCE A BY-LAW) REQUIRES AN AIM OR PURPOSE IN ORDER TO BE SENSIBLY MADE**

When any sensible or morally democratic person is first made aware of any parental or social prohibition like the law constraining their more thoughtlessly automatic behaviour, for example, they often first ask, 'Why is it so?'. This means that in many parts of NSW government, a law (**and one thus assumes a by-law**), must start with defining its **aim or purpose**.

The democratic logic is that it is the desired **outcome of the law** that matters. If the intention of law **does not appear to achieve the desired outcome comparatively inclusively**, it may increasingly be rejected in certain communities. Disorder which often increases inequality may more easily result.

Among the masses of stuff on our already passed by-laws or related documents I have in my possession, is a document entitled **Annexure to Change of By-law, Lot 11 works**. It is undated but claims to be **Limited Liability approved under Professional Standards Legislation**. It appears to be made under the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and so one assumes it applies generally to strata across the state. (Glory be, it has a purpose, which I have summed up shortly as: **to allow the owner to carry out certain works on their lot**. From its contents it seems this mainly covers building **renovations**, under another name. On the basis of anti-discrimination treatment, one can only guess the federal law takes precedence over state law and that state law precedes over by-law treatment.

Note that this Annexure to Change of By-Law refers to ground or yard maintenance hardly at all, with the exception of giving a legal duty (l) to:

***Relay the paving stones in the front yard of the lot including levelling the soil in front areas (Huh?)***

This document concentrates in a very partial and limited way on making strata building prescriptions, neglecting the yard and its maintenance otherwise almost entirely.

Was this document **without the Common Seal**, perhaps an annexure to the **Annexure to Change of By-law number 2 on Tree and Plant Maintenance, which has the Common Seal, affixed on 23.2.16?**

The latter document is signed by Deanne Hinton, the person authorised by **section 238 of the Strata Schemes Management Act 1996**. It has no clear or apparent purpose, and I have always rejected it. This is because its first statement under the heading **SCOPE OF BY-LAW is that: Owners must not permit any Plants in their Courtyard to exceed the height or depth boundary of that Courtyard**.

This is an example of an authoritarian and unreasonable prohibition and I would guess that the large majority of town-houses at St James Court are already in breach of the by-law. If you are looking for trouble you will find it and lawyers are always looking for trouble because dealing in trouble is how

they make their living with many professionally interested others. I prefer open advice from the self-interested as more in keeping with good management of individually owned and commonly owned buildings and grounds. On strata plan 10775 they appear to be the strata committee or all owners and tenants at St James Court. Left to either group, noxious handling is more likely.

## **2. CREATING A BY-LAW ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR FENCES IS INVITING MORE COSTLY AND CONFUSING TROUBLE FOR STRATA PLAN 10775 AND FOR OWNERS AND TENANTS AT ST JAMES COURT**

Notes entitled **By-Law on Responsibility for Fences at 11 Rosebank Street, Glebe**, already point out that our current strata manager thinks the idea that fences and gates are all common property costs is probably incorrect, possibly based on **LP1 Memorandum AG 600000**. (God knows what that is and what else like or unlike it exists.)

Apparently, Rosemary Hall, the lawyer who spent so much of our strata committee free time and strata plan money to eventually come up with **By-law number 2 on Tree and Plant Maintenance** disagrees informally with this but recommends a by-law on the topic to clarify matters. It seems likely to complicate them instead by falling between many related professional stools, compared with more common-sense open and place-based approaches designed to gain more accountable management behaviour to achieve clear common aims.

Sensible maintenance has been woefully absent at St James Court prior to the arrival of Matt Kelton as the strata plumber, which was painfully achieved after many years. Dealing with the mountains of rubbish left in private/public spaces like outside St James Court front doors, garages and spilling into the surrounding roadways has long been a problem of unknown making. This has improved in recent years, since No. 2 Rosebank Street got a long gate, and the City of Sydney changed its rubbish contractors in 2019, and the corona-virus occurred in 2020 for example. We may rejoice in this except for the fact we can no longer travel and the guys would like to do a lot more renovations which the strata plan pays for. **I would generally prefer to pay for regular tree and vegetation pruning.**

## **3. SUGGESTED AIM AND WORDING FOR A POLICY ON GATES, FENCES AND BRICK WALLS WHICH ALSO SERVE AS FENCES (BY-LAW PROPOSALS ARE TOO NARROW. THEY TREAT THE LOT WRONGLY AND UNFAIRLY. THEY ARE EXPENSIVE OF STRATA TIME AND MONEY.)**

One assumes, for example, that our current strata planning aim for the document entitled **By-Law on the Responsibility for Fences at 11 Rosebank Street, Glebe**, is actually:

- *to assert strata plan responsibility in regard to gates, fences, and brick walls which also serve as fences, in order to bring about their continuing maintenance, removal, reconstruction or related variation through the strata committee.*

I suggest the following and related wording as reasonable strata plan policy, as distinct from law. This is because I hate by-laws.

- *All gates, wood fences, and brick walls which also serve as fences, are the responsibility of the strata plan in regard to their continuing maintenance, removal or reconstruction. Planned variations to normal architect or other legal and professional expectations must be brought to the attention of the strata committee for prior consideration.*

We cannot anticipate every problem which may arise related to St James Court and then make a blanket by-law before the event. This is impossibly expensive and constricting for owners and

tenants as well as free time consuming. I don't want our decisions to be constricted by by-laws. I want more sensibly inclusive behaviour which sees the need for good maintenance on the total plot. This must be open to particular variation, perhaps appealing to the general strata plan by email.

**4. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GROUND AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE, RENOVATION AND RECONSTRUCTION SHOULD BE TREATED TOGETHER IN RELATION TO THE PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICULAR GROUND AND BUILDING. CURRENTLY THEY ARE TREATED WITH NEGLECT OR CONFUSING OVER-REGULATION WHICH ARE VERY COSTLY**

Besides the **By-law number 2 on Tree and Plant Maintenance** devised by Rosemary Hall, which I have always rejected, and the **Annexure to Change of Bi-law, Lot 11 works**, which may or may not refer to it, I draw your attention to the unnamed **Change of By-Law applying to Strata Plan 10775**, which nevertheless had the corporate seal attached in 1985.

It is wordy and incomprehensible but appears to imply that ***any alteration made to common property or any fixture or fitting attached to common property by the owner or occupier of a lot shall require approval of the Body Corporate.*** It appears to me to be very unclear who is expected to be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of any related structure, whether it was brought before and approved by the body corporate or not.

The general building tendency, however, appears to be to transfer more responsibility for the upkeep of property to the individual owner, away from the original strata managers. (See current inquiry into strata building in NSW for related discussion, as attached.)

I raise all the above matters because I think the treatment of this plot has been administratively poor and expensive and that greater general and holistic understanding would lead to its improvement.

Cheers

Carol (No. 10).

Hi Sally and Richard et al.

We will owe Rosemary Hall squillions for all these by-laws by the time you are finished with them, Sally. You may be a retired architect but you sound more like a member of the Gestapo in the desire to eradicate lattice and screens. To phase them out, as Richard suggests, is merely to invite continuing trouble, in my opinion.

People have a perfect right to screens and lattice, in my opinion, although the strata committee might point out something really nasty to them in a very nice way and offer to help them get something better. (Owners and tenants' interests should be managed together and all have a right to involvement in the management of their own affairs in my opinion.)

If you want to eradicate lattice and screens and you win the by-law vote, on the other hand, I guess you should knock on their doors, search the place, and drag them all out fast, so nobody gets confused about their status now or in future. I won't be coming with you.

Although a lawyer, Richard appears the comparative soul of reason, as usual. In my view the hugely stressful paid and free work which is done by so many people is particularly

demanding in mid-life and I am sure that we all understand that. I just find being on the committee is a lot of fun, like crosswords only different, but then I don't get out much anymore, particularly at night and I hardly have any friends. Do my views seem too odd to read to you? I feel like that about a lot of yours, Sally, but at least we are unlikely to be surprised by each other.

Cheers  
Carol

## **2021 AUSTRALIA DAY ADDRESS (LAND, HOUSING AND LEGAL MATTERS)**

You can bet there was vegetation and no concrete anywhere when it was aboriginal land. See below and attached for related place management propositions which also relate to housing as a key foundation of healthier lifestyle. How do you feel about **by-laws**, as discussed below and attached, for example, and about **the training that group housing managers ought to receive? Owners and tenants in property appear to be key stakeholders in land and housing** whose disputes internally and with neighbours appear best handled outside court to reach and generate broader understanding. Key matters are discussed below and attached.

Digitization ideally represents a countervailing international force against NSW lawyers, their traditional secret commercial alliances and related professional assumptions about what may or may not be said or written outside of court. Law remains based, however, on original feudal and secret colonial links, topped by state Constitutions. Their forces continually broaden into the present day with expensively opaque consequences for fair and effective treatment of children or anyone else.

What can be done about these problems? I focus on our state concerns in housing.

As an old woman and former teacher, anything I write is my intellectual property and I will give it to anybody I like. This is the logic of the position held in the major study by the Australian Law Reform Commission, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Health Ethics Committee in their 2003 report entitled **Essentially Yours: The Protection of Human Genetic Information in Australia. Owners and tenants of property are the key stakeholders in group and other housing in NSW.** Their affairs are more effectively managed together more openly by group housing committees and by contracted managers of their financial and related affairs. This is best carried out under the Department of Fair Trading rather than the Professional Services Council for reasons of obtaining better quality, more accessible, fairer and cheaper services.

As I pointed out in my Australia Day Speech at Callan Park, attached, I thank Legal Aid NSW for their free **2021 Legal Topics for Older People Calendar** but write to correct them on key associated matters for those of us closer to death every day. Under **Helping Out Your Family** advice in October 2021, the Legal Aid publication sensibly states:

**If you don't have a written agreement it can be hard to get your money or home back.**

Too right. You will forget what you said or thought before and argue about it a lot later if time and circumstances change anybody's mind, as they may always do. Honestly open writing is the best policy because others may then check it and offer potential corrections to it for consideration. The free Calendar wrongly states, however:

**'Independent' means you do not use the same financial adviser or lawyer as your child.**

(Check the dictionary to see that this is another self-serving, expensive load of lawyers' rubbish.)

The 2021 Legal Aid NSW Legal Calendar accepts and reflects old professional interests designed to gain more money and prestige for professions through secret legal associations following courts. They are designed in professional interests in more medico-legal research and enclosures based on the wrong assumption that we all want everlasting life. We may want state help to die when we want instead, as in my case. I don't see myself as part of medical experiments and am old enough to decide for myself. My daughter may seek medical guidance but she is my named enduring guardian. My trust is in her.

**Owners and Tenants in dispute should get better and cheaper help to resolve matters through NSW Fair Trading rather than be referred back to lawyers and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, as the 2021 NSW Legal Aid Calendar on Legal Topic for Older People expects.**

**You and your child or anyone else may prefer to make many open and dated agreements, using the same lawyer, or another person who can write as well or better, in a manner which is also open to understanding through broader understanding, scrutiny and witness. This is otherwise pointless, multiple secret handling of multiple matters where lawyers take expensive control.**

Check out the related NSW Marine Estate Management Plan and Projects and consider their free and informative newsletter on related regional approaches. See other discussions at St James Court below and submissions made to NSW government inquiries into housing and related regional place management matters attached.

Cheers

Carol O'Donnell

St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney 2037 [www.Carolodonnell.com.au](http://www.Carolodonnell.com.au)

Thanks for sending this work order Elizabeth as the responsibility for repairs after water damage has been an ongoing sore at this place. Water damage here traditionally comes from the following sources in my experience:

**roof leaks; leaks from pipes in shared walls; leaks from hot water systems which fail in around ten years and flood floors and carpets; leaks from water entering housing from balconies during very heavy downpours when water cannot be taken away quickly enough by pipes.**

My personal feeling is that people should substantially bear the cost of their own renovations after water damage, as I have done, but I have absolutely no idea of what is expected to be normal practice because things have been so much done on the hush hush that nobody had the least understanding of anybody else's problems other than their own or a friend's that they noticed.

I would be keen to hear any views because one assumes they would also relate to Jo's concern about the costs of reconstituting her back yard if the back brick wall from 7-11 is pulled down and rebuilt, as some appear to have planned, whether those apparently affected by the plan agree with it or not.

I would guess that Matt Kelton, the strata plumber is the best person to go to for guidance in many water related situations. This has certainly been so in my experience. He has worked in the industry for many years so understands its practice better than most and he has done substantial plumbing all over St James

Court when others have repeatedly and expensively failed to fix plumbing problems in my experience. Anyhow, what would I know? Like Jo and perhaps Lili I can't even tell you about the future of my own back-yard.

Cheers  
Carol (No. 10)

---

Hi Jo

**I have no idea what you envisage in your back yard or how much it will cost or why you are undertaking any activity there at all. Until I have some idea of all the above, I could not support strata payment of funds to support any of it for the following reasons:**

There does not appear to be anything wrong with your wall at the back, from the Glebe Pt Road side of the St James Court perimeter wall between 7 and 11. What do you propose in your back-yard and why? Is this to be the full extent of your proposed renovations?

From my ignorant perception the tasteful grey tiles you put in at great expense years ago in your back yard have had outstanding longevity, with no raised surfaces. This is highly unusual, especially because of the fact that there is solid bamboo underneath the tiles. All anyone has to do is sweep and clean these tiles occasionally and they will perfectly complement my garden next door.

On the other hand, if you get rid of these expensively and effectively laid grey tiles, bamboo will start springing up everywhere. It seems to me you will have bought yourself an unnecessary problem and possibly increased mine. (I weed my garden of bamboo.)

In my view you have a beautiful old twisted lattice with bougainvillea growing beautifully through it and a huge but beautifully weathered wooden pergola which would be very difficult, heavy and expensive to move. God knows how or why you would do it. In the highly unlikely event that any part of it fell, it certainly would not do it all of a sudden. The danger to human life is nil, in my estimation and it superficially looks steady as rock.

The thing that makes your back yard so potentially fabulous, however, is not the useful low grey stone table you have installed there, but the wonderful Italian marble graveyard sculptures you brought back from Europe before Aran was born. The sheer beauty and irony of these figures at the back wall, on either side of a space, like a tomb without Jesus, is fabulous. The total effect is practical, beautiful, peaceful and apparently very solid. It just needs to be swept, cleaned and pruned occasionally. Even Aran could do it all except pruning.

On the other hand, in my view, you could easily desecrate the huge potential beauty, stability and related financial value of your back yard at great expense in order to

provide yourself with something comparatively new, frail, cheap, destabilising and nasty.

This is naturally my ignorant neighbour's view, also wondering what I am going to be subjected to in building noise and disruption over the next few months, let alone costs, while you continue living somewhere else. (I am also irritable because my neighbour on the other side at No. 11, did his renos in early 2020, and we are still in covid lockdown so I can't get away.)

I am sure you will enlighten us all about your intentions regarding all your renovations in the fullness of time, but there superficially seems to be a huge amount of potential work and expense in your back-yard reconstruction with likely loss to you and neighbours. What other renovations are you planning?

God knows we all see things differently and No. 9 is your place. However, I see no reason to support your efforts with strata funds. Why should we?

Cheers  
Carol (No. 10)

Hi Jo et al.

In the spirit of my general risk management motto, which is that men may be nasty and women may be stupid, or the reverse, but less often, I wish to discuss my history of bamboo and number 11.

Long story short, there is a long history of bamboo all over St James Court and don't try to pin the bamboo now in the back yard of No. 11 on bamboo travelling from my place. (God knows who might want to do this.)

I write this primarily because I love my back garden, including its manicured bamboo, and it superficially seems to me that the brick wall on top of the foundations at the back (nos. 8-10) are by far the most expensive and stable walls (ie fences) that exist across St James Court perimeter. People want to break these walls down, for reasons unknown to me, but which I guess are industrial, posing wrongly as safety.

To break down a brick wall is comparatively easy compared to getting a new one to replace it at a reasonable price and within a reasonable time frame. We are in an era when good old ozzie bricklayers, a likely dying race, probably have their pick of many projects due to the current government mania to provide jobs, jobs, jobs, higher wages and more super. There has been a shortage of trades like bricklayers for years I guess, with cheaper overseas skilled labour often used wherever possible. That source has dried up due to covid, making rental cheaper. Owner investors living off piste may be hurting in spite of flat interest rates making more borrowing easier?

The owner of No. 11 has always rented out his place. As the owner of No. 10, living on the plot as well as investing in it, I don't relish being caught as the meat in this sandwich which appears to be some unknown persons' desire to pull down the back brick wall (Nos. 8-10).



I just thought I'd make this clear before somebody suggests lawyers. As a member of the strata committee, as distinct from as the owner of No. 10, it appears to me a highly inequitable treatment of perimeter fences at St James Court if brick is pulled down and then put back the same, with brick.

This is a brick wall on top of high foundation walls, you will recall, so to put a less expensive and more rapidly completed fence up instead of brick, in my ignorant view, would be to run the risk of destabilization of something which appears more sound to me.

I am not an engineer, an expert in construction and related investment, a strata manager, or an architect, but I have spent over a year not understanding what they want to do and why they want to do it.

This fact does not instil confidence in me, especially under circumstances where I know others will be voting on matters of which they have little or no knowledge, because they are not normally allowed into others back yards and do not want to go there to find anything out. On the other hand, I always offer to let any interested people inspect my back-yard and hear my story. They don't appear to want to know.

I can't understand why anybody except an investor living off-piste would want to derange the lives of Nos. 8-10 by demanding the full replacement of the brick wall at the back. I would feel insecure with any lesser medium and I have absolutely no confidence that these guys will not stuff my life up expensively for years and walk away whenever they like without any compunction because they know how to make money in these times and their mates have got a better offer somewhere else. That's business and we're the girls at the bottom.

For the related record, when the owner of unit 11 had all the dirt removed from his back-yard in 2019/20, a number of small bits of bamboo were left remaining, one of them in the corner beside where my bamboo in No. 9 begins.

At the time (2020), I pointed out to the guy doing this work of dirt removal in 11, that these small bits of remaining bamboo would soon reproduce themselves again. I have heard it is considered good horticultural practice to leave a single specimen of whatever infestation was removed, in case you ever need to know the plant specimen again. I think that it is dangerous that the remaining piece of bamboo in No. 11 is beside the fence and bamboo in my garden, which I weed assiduously. Why was it left in that spot? To argue it came from my garden?

With time we learn, especially if we are on the spot. For example, I saw the dead tree that was leaning against the back wall in No. 11 and warned that it was dangerous because it was leaning against the back brick wall, which men have now broken down further and left. The dead tree leaning against that wall was eventually removed by the strata manager, Verdun Walsh.

I discovered there was bamboo in my back-yard (no. 10) around 1994, when, to my enduring shame, I had a small native tree chopped down which was the only tree in my paved back yard. Chris in No. 7 was very angry with me and bamboo also sprung up in its place. (This was before I retired in 2007. I did not then understand the beauty of the place and the importance of trees and vegetation. I was keen on getting rid of all the garbage piling up all over Rosebank Street and environs, wondering where the hell the constant mountains around

public spaces were coming from besides No. 2 Rosebank St and probably the motel round the corner, also owned by Vince Perry.

I gave myself a garden at the back of No. 10 because water which could not escape fast enough was turning it into a tiled swimming pool. With every major downpour, water threatened to come inside my house from the tiled back-yard. Lord Mayor Clover Moore was talking about the importance of rain gardens at the time and I was actually in New York when a huge flood occurred and I saw what water could do, racing through concrete canyons. I am very happy I have a garden and want it to remain.

Before Matt Kelton became our plumber, the sheer idiocy of the plumbing activity in relation to leaking roofs and underground or in wall pipes at St James Court had to be seen to be believed.

Leaks in roofs and shit coming up plug holes in laundries was a continuing drama for many years because a different guy would turn up to every emergency and palm the problem off to a forthcoming mate who would repeat the process of inspection but never fix the repeating problem. There was no effective understanding or caring about proper maintenance at this place. The result was horrible to live in and unnecessarily expensive.

I own my own house without any mortgage. I don't want expensive chaos forced upon me by pulling down the back brick wall (8-11). Without more information I can only conclude that this action is convenient for unknown others, probably living off piste, who would like to have a lot more money than they do already by threatening me with lawyers or something like that. I hope I have made myself clear about this as it concerns me greatly and I have never liked being pushed around by men behind my back.

Cheers  
Carol

Hi Joanne Sally, Lili, Elizabeth et al.

I am happy to wait to discuss these matters further and I can see that major improvements to St James Court have been made by the efforts of the strata committee and others comparatively well and rapidly in recent years. I am naturally very grateful for all that uphill work.

I just did not want anyone to be ignorant or under any illusion about how I feel about these matters of brick wall destruction, bamboo, and plumbing underground or elsewhere, both as the owner of No. 10 and as a member of the strata committee.

Re issues I raise above, I am reminded that a key reason I got my water tank to water my garden in No. 10 was because somebody's attempt to slash down bamboo in No. 11, also slashed through a water pipe coming into my back garden from a pipe along the ground from No. 11. When my hose did not work, the leak was found in the No. 11 pipe and the water was turned off at the side of No. 11.

My solution, (paid for by myself), to the problem that my back yard water tap was gone was to happily get a water tank, so I could be independent with my use of

water. (I have a horror of neighbours wasting water in droughts through long daily showers, daily hair wash and daily clothes wash, for example, although I am sure it makes many feel clean and useful. (No prizes for guessing who.)

In miraculous double benefit, my getting the water tank for the back of No. 10 showed that I had been paying Jo's winter heating bills in No. 9 for a great many years because the electrician putting in the water tank, found our places were wrongly connected, with her heating costs being offloaded onto me in the lounge room. (For years I had been wondering why my heating costs went through the roof in winter, when I used little or no electricity to heat or cool my house in summer or winter. I could never find the answer until I had to get myself a water tank.

These happy accidents may illustrate the Buddhist view that apparently good or bad fortunes may be easily reversed by time. I didn't think it was worth troubling anybody for costs. I'm always happy to consider reasonable tree pruning costs related to trees at the front or back of places. Should I assume individual owners have paid for their own scorched earth bamboo removal? If so, I'm naturally grateful.

Cheers  
Carol