

A family of four which accused a Management Corporation Strata Title of lacking transparency in handling matters and demanded an apology were refused and ordered to pay S\$20,000



The Strata Titles Board rejected several claims from the four co-owners of a La Fiesta unit in Sengkang Square, emphasizing that it had no authority to issue orders for a mandatory apology or a promise not to repeat the offense, and ordered the four co-owners to pay \$20,000 in legal costs. (Photo by Tang Jiahong)

A family of four living in the same unit in Sengkang, dissatisfied with the management corporation's lack of transparency in handling routine matters such as garbage collection and tree pruning, as well as information disclosure, filed several claims with the Strata Titles Board (STB). They even demanded that the chairman of the management corporation and the managing agent publicly apologize to all owners and sign an undertaking that the same mistakes would not be repeated. The STB ultimately rejected all their claims and ordered the family to pay \$20,000 in legal costs.

According to the decision, the STB reviewed the allegations regarding the sinking fund, management decisions and transparency. It ruled that the management corporation

had not wrongfully concealed information or made improper decisions, and emphasized that the STB had no authority to order a mandatory apology, promises not to repeat the same offences, or orders that "disparage" one party.

The decision stated that this dispute could have been avoided if both parties had communicated and participated more effectively.

The La Fiesta development involved in the case comprises 810 units, and the managing agent is Ocean IFM. The Applicants, Tian Yuming, Tian Yuchang, Tian Guichun, and Tian Guoying, are co-owners (subsidiary proprietors), but their relationship is unclear. The respondent is the 9<sup>th</sup> management council, with its term commencing in April 2025, represented by Harry Elias Partnership; Tian Yuming appeared in court representing the Applicants.



La Fiesta condominium in Sengkang Square comprises 810 units and is located next to Sengkang MRT station and Compass One shopping mall. (Photo by Tang Jiahong)

The two parties attempted mediation, but it failed.

Mediation between the two parties failed. The Applicants filed the lawsuit in October 2025, with the core allegation that the management corporation failed to provide sufficient information on several issues, resulting in a lack of "openness, transparency, and honesty" in its management practices.

They also questioned several expenditures and management decisions, including why the sinking fund was used instead of the management fund to pay for the bin chute and incense burner (S\$10,600), fire protection system (S\$1,365), and tree pruning (S\$22,900). They requested an explanation of the cost of removing a dead olive tree and replacing it with a Podocarpus tree, and why over S\$15,000 in related expenses were incurred despite a landscaping contract already including free tree pruning.

Regarding facilities management, the Applicants questioned the lack of prior notice or owner approval for the approximately S\$230,000 iCondo access control system purchase, and the failure to comply with the requirement of obtaining three quotations for purchases exceeding S\$150,000. They also requested an explanation of the "frequent malfunctions" of the old Cistronic system and supply of parts issues. Other complaints included water feature leaks affecting the green wall and the closing timings of the bin collection centre.

### **The Strata Titles Board: No Intervention Unless "Clearly Unreasonable"**

The Strata Titles Board held that it should not intervene unless the management corporation's decision is "clearly unreasonable." Since the relevant decisions are not clearly unreasonable, the Applicants have no right to request further details.

In fact, the management corporation had responded to some of the issues via email and repeatedly invited the applicant to attend meetings for direct communication, but these invitations were declined. The STB held that the Applicants' insistence on written communication to be provided is insufficient to prove that the management corporation "erroneously" withheld information or failed to provide the Applicants with relevant information.

The Strata Titles Board pointed out that most issues had already been clarified during the mediation phase or in written submissions. For example, the iCondo procurement process was determined to be an ordinary resolution, and the provisions regarding the three requisite offers would not automatically continue to apply; the cost of removing

the dead olive tree was zero, while the cost of replacing the Podocarpus tree was S\$3,150; the bin centre closing timings had been adjusted; and a contractor had been arranged to inspect and assess the waterproofing work for the leakage issue.

The Respondent pointed out that the Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act aims to resolve disputes, not to demean one party through orders to apologize or admit wrongdoing. The Strata Titles Board agrees with the Respondent MCST's point of view, emphasizing that the Act does not empower the Strata Titles Board to order parties to apologize, admit wrongdoing, or sign undertakings.

"Such orders do not substantively resolve disputes; instead, they demean one party and exacerbate tensions, which is detrimental to both parties continuing to live together in the community."

According to other sources, in 2017, Tian Yuming led 200 homeowners in a protest against a developer's construction of excessively large air conditioner shelves, but they did not receive compensation. (Names are transliterated)