

# Tower owners call time on party

THOMAS MORGAN

LONG-time residents of Brisbane unit towers have been driven to the brink by unofficial hotels popping up in residential towers, hosting loud parties and creating disturbances in the middle of the night.

The Unit Owners Association of Queensland is urging Brisbane City Council to crack down on the issue.

The Sunday Mail has spoken to apartment owners in the CBD, South Brisbane and South Bank who claim their buildings are being turned into pop-up hotels through AirBNBs.

One extraordinary photo shows hotel cleaners going floor to floor in a building supposedly meant for long-term residents.

A resident, who wanted to remain anonymous to protect the value of his property, said people attending AirBNB parties would buzz on his intercom or knock at his door at "strange hours" of the night, asking for directions to a certain apartment.

Residents in the 30-storey tower 212 Margaret St in Brisbane's CBD are among those sounding the alarm, bringing in an independent town planner last year to urge council to crack down on "unlawful" use.

Stephen Kidd said he was shocked at the number of strangers who frequented the hallways. Mr Kidd said the

building was used as hotel and that his daughter felt "unsafe".

"My daughter has very strong recollections of the place being full of drunks on different occasions, and even one guy was passed out in the lift from alcohol," he said.

"Being a woman, she was always concerned about all the strangers in the building all the time."

Mr Kidd was worried an insurer would walk away from the building because it was not being used lawfully.

UOAQ vice-president Wayne Stevens said the council must crack down on long-term owner-occupier buildings being used as hotels.

He said council needed to ensure residents were notified through a development application that a building's use would change from long to short-term accommodation.

"The big problem is because the body corporate is not complying with the law, insurers would be able to walk away from a claim in a catastrophic situation," he said.

"(These towers) were built for people to live in; it was supposed to be a home, a house, a domicile."

But a letter from council's Compliance and Regulatory Services department says BCC "has no power to stop the owners of apartments who are using them for short-term accommodation from continuing to do so".