

STRATA COMMUNITY LIVING



The hub for strata information

Spring 2022

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHANGING STRATA MANAGERS

Selecting a strata manager is crucial to the efficient running of your property. To help you make this decision we have swept through best industry practice and advice to unpack the top six considerations when engaging a strata management service.

Experience and professionalism

Of all the qualities needed in a manager, broad experience and a professional attitude are paramount.

All Owners Corporations have unique needs, so it's important to have comprehensive knowledge of different types of properties. Look for membership with Strata Community Association, or in NSW, compliance with the SCA (NSW) Professional Standards Scheme.

Qualifications

Ask the right questions to ascertain skills and establish credentials. A qualified strata manager will be well versed in finance, commerce, residential and commercial, liability, leasing and more. They will have appropriate educational and professional backgrounds and be members of the relevant industry bodies. There are 3 licence levels in NSW, the minimum being a Certificate of Registration (Class 3 agent), then managers progress towards a Class 2 licence, business leaders then require a Class 1 licence.

Industry legislation knowledge

Your candidate should possess strong industry knowledge, especially around legislation. It is an advantage to your property that they have detailed understanding of state regulations, as well as a sense of current issues. This makes a significant difference with

efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Service: responsiveness and availability

Service is an expected but often underappreciated quality, and critical in ensuring your property's integrity and security. From being responsive to emails and phone calls, to providing assistance in a timely manner, it is important to document service levels in your agreement. This may include responding to maintenance requests swiftly, efficient communications, cleanliness and maintenance, insurances and other statutory obligations.

Administration and reporting

Regular reporting is essential in making informed decisions, so it is important to understand your potential manager's capabilities. Reports establish an efficient system to understand complex information, analyse trends, maintain meeting records, and meet maintenance requirements. A good strata service will utilise comprehensive reports and take the time to support you to understand the information.

Communication - transparency and expectation management

The most common conflict in building management arises from poor communication. The terms and conditions when engaging a strata manager should be clear on both sides to ensure there are no grey areas. Setting clear expectations helps give both sides certainty and efficiency. The ideal strata manager should be approachable and transparent, with effective communication and people skills. They should also have a genuine interest in contributing positively to the industry.

What are energy efficient windows?

Everything you need to know about energy efficient windows

With rising energy prices, unpredictable weather patterns and growing environmental awareness, making the switch to energy efficient windows can be a simple yet highly effective way to improve the efficiency and sustainability of your home or building.

And for buildings with a high ratio of glass, the impact can be significant: up to 87% of a building's heat is gained through its windows, so making a change to smarter, greener window options can lead to considerable savings.

But how exactly do energy efficient windows work? Let's unpack everything you need to know before making a decision on what's best for your building.

Keeping your cool

Our Australian summers are known for their extreme highs, and if your windows aren't helping keep the heat out, the cost of keeping your cool is going to become increasingly painful, with predictions that energy costs could go up by 35% in 2023 alone. Ideally you also want windows that help your home or building maximise the impact of warming winter sun, and to keep your interiors at a pleasant temperature year round.

So before you reach for the air conditioner controls, consider the benefit of choosing energy efficient glass, which can act as an extra layer of insulation and help regulate indoor temperatures, at any time of year.

Measuring the impact

The Australian Glass and Windows Association has developed a rating system to help you make an informed decision about the energy efficiency of your windows - looking at how readily heat from sunlight flows in through windows, the light transmittance they let in, and the way they conduct heat.

Unfortunately, poorly placed windows without any capacity for energy efficiency can mean an excess amount of heat into your home during summer, and inefficiencies in warming your home during winter.

Consider all of your options - for example, are you retrofitting existing windows or building from scratch? The condition of your frames and fittings is also going to play a part - if they're letting in drafts during the winter, then energy efficient glass alone aren't going to cut it. Choosing different window options depending on whether they're facing north, south, east or west, can also be part of your approach.

Taking steps to get your windows right will be a long-term investment that helps your home or building maintain its temperatures year around. Better for the planet, and better for your bank account.

Tints and coatings

Glass tinting uses tinted glass or coatings to block radiant heat from the sun, and generally the darker the tint, the more direct heat you can block. However, it's important to remember that going too dark can be counterproductive - if your tint is so dark that you need your lights on during the day, you've lost all of the energy efficiencies you were hoping to gain by reducing your home cooling requirements.



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Another option for single-glazed windows is to opt for glass which has been treated with a low emissivity (low-e) coating. This is a thin, transparent coating sprayed onto glass during the manufacturing process to prevent non-sun heat transfer through glass - reducing heat loss and heat gain. Low transmission low-e glass is ideal for the Australian climate - it reduces the amount of solar heat gain, while also maintaining good levels of visible light transmission, so your home feels bright and light during the day.

Amazing glazing

Insulated double and triple glazing is another great option for improving the energy efficiency of windows. It uses an air gap between window panes to reduce heat transfer into and out from the building, and some modern solutions also use gas trapped between window glass panes for even more effective insulation properties.

Combining double glazing with low-e glass means highly effective insulation for your building, as both energy efficiency aspects work hand-in-hand to reduce heat loss and heat gain.

Insulated Glass Units (IGU's) window options also come with the added benefits of dramatically reducing external noise from traffic, trains, animals and other sources, and improving the security of your building, as the extra glass layers provide redundancy in the event of breakage.

Smart choices for a sustainable future

The windows and glass in your building can make a significant difference to the long-term sustainability and efficiency of your property, providing a long term return on investment in reducing your energy costs and your carbon footprint.

Ready to find out more?

<https://www.expressglass.com.au/contact-us>



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The quarterly outlook from Macquarie Business Banking

The team at Macquarie share their insights and outlook for the October-December quarter, on the markets and economic themes that matter for Australian businesses.

As we move into the final quarter of 2022, shifts in the Australian economy remain a headline issue for business leaders. With the cash rate continuing to rise, property prices falling and the all-important labour market remaining tight, we know businesses are still carefully managing through change, risk and challenge.

Macquarie share their insights and expertise on five key themes that are important for you and your business. Senior Australian Economist at Macquarie Group, Justin Fabo, explains both the state of play and what to expect in the coming months.

You can read the article, watch the video, and learn more on our website: <https://www.macquarie.com.au/business-banking/a-quarterly-outlook-from-macquarie-business-banking.html>

At Macquarie Business Banking, we'd welcome the opportunity to speak with you as you navigate this shifting environment.

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Continuing the strata industries high performance and why contractors need to keep up.

The construction industry, booming housing market and changing workplace environments are leading to millennial and gen x dominated strata schemes with different needs and requirements. How can the strata industry react to these changes and what do they need from their contractors to offer the best service possible and drive continued growth?

As COVID-19 restrictions have started to ease, companies and organisations are beginning to reopen and bring people back to work. However, this is still very much a transitional period, with every business facing unique circumstances. Nonetheless, businesses are having to consider everything from the health and safety of their employees and their mental wellbeing to existing facilities, operating rhythms, and communication. Ultimately, this still means a permanent evolution in the workplace to varying degrees. In addition to this, the construction industry has been booming. According to the 'HIA-AIG Performance of Construction Index', an improvement of 7.5 points to 53.4 points is "indicating a recovery in activity across the construction sector after a sharp fall over the summer holiday period." This echoes the position of Gareth Aird, Commonwealth Banks Head of Australian Economics, who suggested the boom would continue through 2022 on the back of low interest rates, the HomeBuilder scheme and rising dwelling prices despite concerns such as land shortages and delays of supplies.

The results of these factors are an increased number of young Australians and young Australian families living in apartments and residing within Strata schemes and lots. According to 'Australasian Strata Insights 2020', published by The University of New South Wales, half of all apartment residents Australia-wide are aged between 20 and 39. In conjunction with this, 24% of residents were couples

without children and 13% with. The result of these trends is a change in the wants and needs of those occupying these strata schemes and lots. Greener buildings and maintenance programs, shared communal spaces, storage for prams or alternate transportation, more family friendly apartments and an insistence on technology based solutions are some of the expected requirements. This change comes in sync with growing margin pressures on strata management companies as they scale. The 'Macquarie 2019 Strata management benchmarking report' outlines these pressures while also offering key findings that will shape the industries future. One of these findings was a "Technological transformation" to "expand capabilities", "solve unmet needs" and "create a better client experience at scale".

For Strata management companies to make these adaptations and offer the services and solutions their clients need; it is imperative that contractors view these trends and demands with equal significance. An increase in green practices and alternatives, investment in technology such as online service hubs, information systems and cloud platforms to improve the customer experience and increase staff efficiency, and a broader scope of potential services will be key to those contractors that also need to profitably scale alongside the increasing demands within the Strata management industry.

AGC have consistently invested considerable resources in the last few years to upgrade and streamline their internal CRM system to meet our clients demands and improve our service and communication efficiency. In addition to this, we are exploring a variety of technologies and their potential for greener practices within the roofing industry with the ambition of offering alternate options to our clients soon.

We believe it is our responsibility to remain informed on the changing needs of our clients so that we may adapt to those changes and ensure we fulfill their needs and those of their own.



Is Replacing External Waterproofing Exempt Development?

Replacing an external above ground waterproofing Individual buildings will need to obtain specialist advice to determine if these works are exempt development, but some of the reasons why it may not be exempt include (not exhaustively):

1. If there is no current Annual Fire Safety Statement or Fire Safety Certificate lodged with either the Council and/or the Fire Brigade the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 does not apply. This is due to 1.16(2) of Part 2 Division 1 of SEPP 8, which requires:
 - a) the building has a current fire safety certificate or fire safety statement, or
 - b) no fire safety measures are currently implemented, required or proposed for the building.
2. Part 59 of Ordinance 70 issued under the Local Government Act 1919 (NSW) does not require buildings with council approval prior to 1 July 1988 (pre-1988 building) to submit annual fire safety statements. This applies to schemes SP1 to approximately 33,200.
3. Local environmental plans for the relevant Council which predate September 2005 may specify that the proposed works are complying development which would override the SEPP.
4. But even if the scheme can meet that requirement, the proposed works need to comply with the deemed to satisfy conditions currently in place and many buildings will not have waterproofing measures that would comply with "Waterproofing membranes for external above ground works use must comply with AS 4654.1 and AS 4654.2 which requires amongst other things:
 - a. Inadequate or non-existence balcony drainage to terminate the membrane into.

- b. Inadequate step down height to terminate the waterproofing under the door sills.
- c. No adequate fall to the substrate.
- d. No existing drainage flanges to the drainage points.
- e. Existing drainage to planter boxes is non-compliant.
- f. Some roofs are required to be non-combustible and if the waterproofing to the roof is exposed than a fire engineered solution is required.



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So the upshot is, the scheme will be looking to see what type of approval is required, if any. It's also likely that these works are not excluded from compliance with the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020. For more information, check out our article [Existing Construction Projects: Do they Need to comply with the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020?](#)

We can assist with advice, applications and town planning certificates to support relevant applications.

Why is it important to get planning approval? There's many reasons, including to avoid:

- Substantial penalties and stop work, removal or remediation orders can be issued under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1989;
- Stop work, removal or remediation orders under the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 can be imposed on the building practitioner;
- The likely contractual ability of a contractor to terminate the contract; and
- Exclusion from insurance in respect of the illegal works.

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All members of our Strata Manager Chapter are 'PROFESSIONAL Strata Managers'. SCA (NSW) strives to ensure that all strata manager members are able to deliver services to the public that are of the highest professional and ethical standard.