

How To Implement Retrofits on Private Lots

Getting Private Lot Sustainable Retrofits Approved

Make sure you have all necessary approvals before you start any works on your apartment or lot. If you haven't been approved, you could be fined and/or asked to return your apartment or lot to its original state before the work started, at cost to you.

The following tips on getting approval will be broken up into the three stages of any approval process; planning, obtaining approval, implementing changes.

Planning

Have a clear idea of what will be involved in implementing the retrofits. This can include:

- How the retrofits will change the functionality or aesthetics of your lot e.g. need more effective noise-proofing or waterproofing
- Whether implementing the retrofits will affect neighbours or common property, even if only temporarily e.g. noise, damage, obstruction of access, dust
- Whether the retrofits will be affected by the strata scheme's by-laws
- What approvals you are likely to need (landlord, strata committee, owners corporation, local council)
- What approval conditions are likely to be put in place? (e.g. noise limits, licenses of builders required, work hour limits)

If possible, check you're your building or strata manager for their advice before you begin.

Obtaining Approval

After considering the approvals you need, begin the application process. Approval may be required from the owners corporation or the local council.

Hire an expert

If you are undertaking extensive works, hiring an expert can enhance your chance of approval, or might be necessary in some cases. A relevant expert will have the necessary experience to foresee roadblocks, and should have the necessary certifications to

complete the work and put the approving body at ease. To save money, you might only need to show a rough draft of the proposed works to the strata committee first, to get an idea on whether the owners corporation likely to approve the retrofits. You can then pay for a more detailed draft for the formal approval process.

Familiarise yourself with the law

Familiarise yourself with the legislation and by-laws relevant to your proposed retrofits, and make sure you can field questions regarding these laws.

Draft the details

Draft specific details for project. The greater detail you can provide, the more likely your chances of approval. These details might be more extensive for proposed retrofits that require council approval, but for the strata committee or owners corporation, you will need to provide details on:

- The type and duration of works;
- If they affect common property;
- If the common areas will be used during the works.

Communicate with owners and residents

Communicate with potentially affected residents and owners in nearby lots. This will help you to answer any questions early on and flag any potential concerns. Also, if your works need to go to a formal vote by owners, talking to the owners and residents likely to be most affected and addressing their concerns increases your chances of these residents voting in your favour.

Be patient

Getting approval can be a slow process, depending on the extent of the works and how many other people the works are likely to affect. Make sure you allow an appropriate timeframe, which can be months for council or owners corporation approval.

Implementing Changes

There are a few things to remember after you have obtained approval, and when you begin to implement retrofits.

- Regardless of whether approval is formal or informal, you should ask for the approval and any approval requirements in writing in case the approval is questioned later down the track.
- Ensure you abide by any approval conditions and by-laws. If you do not abide by the conditions, you can be fined.

After you have obtained approval from all the necessary people and organisations (e.g. landlords, strata committee, owners corporation, local council), you can begin works. The following are tips for beginning works on private lots:

Approvals and Starting Works

- If you are making major or minor renovations, you must notify the strata committee two weeks before you begin that you are commencing works.
- Ensure you abide by any approval conditions and by-laws. If you do not abide by the conditions, you can be fined.
- If the work plans change, be sure to notify any approval body that approved the original work plan, and check with your strata manager and strata committee if the changes require further approval.

The following are other How to Guides in this series that will help you to implement retrofits in your lot:

- [Hiring Experts](#)
- [By-Laws That Affect Retrofits](#)

Communication

- Be considerate of your neighbours and other building residents. Even if you did not require approval and the works do not seem invasive or likely to affect other residents, notify them of your plans and make sure they are aware of what is going on. Try to organise your work schedule around what is less disruptive to your neighbours if possible.
- Enhance communication between your builder and other contract workers and make sure that they abide by the by-laws of the building, such as not obstructing common property and appropriate parking and waste disposal. Make sure the builders are also considerate of the neighbours, and introduce other residents to the builders so they know who to contact if they have any concerns.

The following are other How to Guides in this series that will help you to communicate with stakeholders to implement retrofits in your lot:

- [Working with Building Professionals](#)
- [Communicating with Stakeholders](#)

Additional Resources:

- [By-laws in Your Strata Scheme, NSW Fair Trading](#)
- [What You Need To Know About Strata Approval for Renovations, Finder.com.au](#)
- [Your Home, Australian Government](#)



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