

# Getting Involved With The Strata Committee

## Joining the Strata Committee

The strata committee is made up of elected representatives of the owners corporation. The strata committee has decision-making and day-to-day managerial functions, such as organising work that needs to be done in the building, managing strata levies, making minor decisions on behalf of the owners corporation, and facilitating voting among all owners on major decisions.

## Who Makes Up the Strata Committee?

The strata committee is made up of 1-9 members, with schemes of over 100 lots requiring at least 3 members. Any owner can nominate themselves for election to the strata committee. Of these strata committee members, there are three office-bearing positions; chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

### Chairperson

The chairperson is responsible for chairing strata committee meetings. They must preside over the meetings if they are in attendance, and decide on issues relating to voting and meeting procedure.

### Secretary

The secretary holds the administrative role, which includes:

- Preparing minutes
- Giving notices and answering correspondence between owners corporation and other committee members
- Keeping the strata roll
- Convening meetings of the owners corporation and strata committee
- Attend to matters of an administrative or secretarial nature

### Treasurer

The treasurer handles the finances of the strata committee. This role includes:

- Giving receipts and notice of levies
- Preparing strata information certificates
- Keeping accounting records and financial statements

Owners that are considering nominating themselves for these positions should consider which role(s) might best suit their skillset. Alternatively, a strata managing agent or building manager can be nominated to carry out some, or all, of the responsibilities of the strata committee.

## **Tenant Representative on the Strata Committee**

In NSW, in strata schemes where at least half of the lots are rented, tenants have the right to nominate a tenant representative to the strata committee.

### **Tenant representative**

The tenant representative is entitled to receive a copy of the agenda and minutes and attend and speak at strata committee meetings. However, they can be asked to leave the meeting if financial issues are discussed. They do not have a vote and they cannot make up the quorum of a meeting.

In order for a tenant representative to be elected, the strata committee must convene a meeting where tenants can vote on the position of tenant representative. Eligible tenants can nominate themselves or another eligible tenant. The tenant representative is determined by a majority vote of tenants present at the meeting. The tenant representative will then be introduced at the next AGM and will hold office until the following AGM.

## **How to Get Involved in the Strata Committee**

Joining your strata committee is an important means to contribute towards improving your building or scheme, and can be a rewarding experience. By joining your committee, you will come to understand the scheme's decision-making processes, help make changes in the building and can improve the living environment and value of the shared property.

To get involved in strata committee for your scheme, you will need to be nominated at the annual general meeting (AGM). Here are the steps to being nominated:

### **STEP 1 – Consider your nomination into the strata committee**

Consider all the reasons why you would be beneficial as a member of the committee. Also, try to anticipate reasons why members of the owners corporation might be hesitant to have you on the Committee (e.g. inexperienced, new to the building, potential conflicts of interests).

### **STEP 2 – Get to know people in your scheme**

In order for you to be elected, it is best to get to know other owners in your scheme well before the scheduled AGM. If the other owners know you to be an approachable and trustworthy person, you are much more likely to be elected onto the strata committee.

### **STEP 3 – Come prepared to the AGM**

You will need to have another owner or member of the owners corporation second your nomination into election of the strata committee. It is best to establish this support before the meeting, so that your nomination is assured to go to the election. Also go over the

reasons why members of the owners corporation might be hesitant to have you on the committee and address these at the meeting.

#### **STEP 4 – At the AGM**

Nominations will be tabled at the AGM as the first order of business. If your nomination is seconded, you will be included in the vote. A vote will then be cast on the number of strata committee members, and who will fill the roles.

##### **If you are elected:**

You will become a member of the newly formed strata committee and you can nominate yourself for an office-bearing role.

##### **If you aren't elected:**

You can try again at the next AGM, and; you can still be proactive in voting and decision-making via the owners corporation, and take on various other informal roles, like joining a sub-committee.

#### **STEP 5 – Electing office-bearing roles**

The last step in allocating roles of the strata committee is to elect the chairperson, treasurer and secretary. These roles are determined only by the elected strata committee, and not by the owners corporation.

Owners that are considering nominating themselves for these positions should consider which role(s) might best suit their skillset. Alternatively, a strata managing agent or building manager can be nominated to carry out some, or all, of the responsibilities of the strata committee.

If you would like to be considered for one of the office-bearing roles, you should state your case for nomination at the next organized strata committee meeting.

## **What to Consider**

Depending on the nature of the scheme and your personal circumstances, joining the strata committee can be a major decision. There are a few things you should consider before deciding to get involved.

### ***Does your scheme have a strata managing agent?***

Strata schemes with managing agents are much easier for strata committees to manage. While some schemes opt for self-management, this option will require more procedural and legislative knowledge on behalf of the members of the strata committee, and require more time, responsibility and effort.

### ***Do you handle disagreement and confrontation well?***

Discussion about levies, defects, changes to the building and various other agenda items can cause heated disagreements as people discuss the future of their homes and sometimes significant investments. strata committee members can even receive verbal and physical abuse in particularly hostile schemes. In many instances, you will not be able to please all owners. Whether you could handle conflicting interests and potentially uncomfortable situations is important to consider before getting involved.

### ***Can you commit to regular meetings and other time commitments?***

Joining the strata committee can be a time-consuming commitment. Depending on the level of organization in the strata committee, meetings can run overtime. Outside of the strata committee meetings, maintenance and enacting actionable items can require more time than expected.

### ***Will you be paid for your role in the strata committee?***

The owners corporation can pay strata committee members. Paid strata committee members are generally considered where the duties are substantial, and similar to duties that might otherwise have been performed by a strata manager.

If you think that the duties you are likely to perform as part of the strata committee are a substantial time commitment, check whether the role is paid, and if not consider putting forward an agenda item regarding payment at the AGM. Any kind of remuneration must be approved at an AGM.

### ***What are your reasons for wanting to join the strata committee?***

Becoming a member of the Strata Committee means that you are acting as a representative of the owners corporation, and not joining for personal gain. The members of the strata committee should have a common goal to simply improve the management and maintenance of the scheme, and thereby benefitting all owners. Consider whether you have any conflicts of interest to disclose before you nominate yourself as a strata committee member.

### ***Acting as a member if the strata committee***

If you want to experience what it is like to be a member of the strata committee, you can ask a current strata committee member if you can act in their position for a few meetings. In order for you to be appointed as an acting member of the strata committee, the member you are acting for must nominate you to act in their position for a set number of meetings. You must also be an owner of a lot in the strata scheme. The strata committee must pass a motion agreeing to this acting arrangement.

## Joining a Strata Sub-committee

The most common types of working parties that strata committees set-up include:

- By-law committee
- Garden committee
- Renovations committee
- Special Project committee
- Communications committee
- Safety committee
- Recreational/Social committee
- Elections committee

From [Owners Corporation Network](#)

If you do not want to be on the strata committee, but would nevertheless like to be involved, you could consider joining or starting a sub-committee. Sub-committees can be formed by people that show interest in a specific issue, such as landscaping, sustainability or social events. A sub-committee is less formal than the strata committee, and doesn't carry the same decision-making role. The sub-committee can have an advisory function, gathering information and data, chasing specialist advice and organising the work on behalf of the strata committee

### Starting a Sub-committee

A sub-committee can be formed by the owners corporation, and can include residents and owners. However, it is advisable to have one strata committee member in the sub-committee(s) to provide feedback and disseminate information at strata committee meetings or AGMs where necessary. Sub-committees provide a means to bring enthusiastic residents and owners together on a specific issue, and to ease the burden of strata committees in managing numerous issues.

If you are interested in creating a sub-committee, first talk to the strata committee about which sub-committees are already created. You should decide whether the sub-committee will be an ongoing group, or tasked with a short-term project. If there is a potential need to create a sub-committee for the specific area you are interested in, [contact other owners or residents](#) to scope out who else might be interested in joining. Provide the owners with an explanation of how sub-committees work, and what might be involved. The Owners Corporation Network provides a sample [Statement of Purpose](#) that can be drafted to provide to the strata committee and other owners with more information about the nature of the sub-committee.

### Joining a Sub-committee

If your strata scheme already has sub-committees, think about which committee(s) you would like to join. Ask for information about the sub-committees directly or through the strata committee. If the sub-committee has a [Statement of Purpose](#), ask to view it to get an idea of the responsibilities and possible commitment to joining the group. Ask current members of the sub-committee what work is involved, and where you might be able to help. Consider what skills or benefit you can bring to the group. Also consider your current commitments, and how much time you can dedicate to the sub-committee.

Some sub-committees might have a capped number of members, and have filled all their positions. If this is the case, the sub-committee will have a review period specified in their statement of purpose, and you might be able to join the sub-committee after the review. If the sub-committee is only temporary, you might be able to help informally.

## Additional Resources:

- [A Guide to Serving on a Strata Committee, Netstrata](#)
- [The Strata Committee in a Strata Scheme, Strataman](#)
- [Strata Committee, NSW Fair Trading](#)
- [Executive Committees and How They Should Function, Owners Corporation Network](#)
- [Working parties or sub-committees, Owners Corporation Network](#)
- [Sub-Committees, Strata Community Australia](#)



The City Futures Research Centre at the University of New South Wales is Australia's leading urban policy research centre. Spanning the interrelated areas of urban planning, housing, design, development and social policy, our work aims to advance the understanding of Australia's cities, their people, the policies that manage their growth, and their impacts on our environment and economy. Our research can be viewed at [\*\*www.cityfutures.net.au\*\*](http://www.cityfutures.net.au).

*Research supported under the Australian Research Council's Future Fellowship funding scheme [FT130100511]*