

Proposing Retrofits to Stakeholders

Key Stakeholders for Retrofits

There are key stakeholder groups that you will need to make aware of the proposed retrofits, and get support or approval from.

Owners

You will need to get support from the owners (owners corporation). Making owners aware of the proposed retrofits is important, and through this you can gauge their interest in sustainability issues, cost savings and potential retrofits.

Managing the owner's diverse opinions and getting their support is important, as their vote will decide whether the retrofits go ahead. All owners have a right to a vote.

Communicating with as many of the owners as possible before formal action will provide them an opportunity to raise initial concerns about the proposed retrofits. This will save time in passing a motion at the general meeting.

Residents

Residents can be owners or tenants. You only need the formal support of residents that are also owners, however informal support from all residents will make the process of implementing retrofits smoother.

Residents may be impacted by works if the retrofits are major, and they require ongoing communication of the progress and expected impact of works.

It is a good idea to have support from tenants, as tenants might be inclined to leave the building if the works are disruptive, or if communication is poor and they are unaware of the changes that are happening. Lot owners might not support the proposal if they think the project will cause their tenants to leave.

Strata Committee

The strata committee is an elected group of owners or representatives of owners that make the administrative decisions on behalf of the owners corporation. You will need to work closely with the strata committee on your project to:

- List the proposed retrofit on the agenda of the general meeting
- Undertake a building sustainability audit
- Obtain copies of the building audit report

- Obtain copies of the strata scheme's by-laws
- Obtain financial reports such as yearly water and energy bills

Strata Managing Agent

For buildings with professional management, the strata managing agent can be a key ally in getting retrofits implemented.

Strata managers can give professional advice on legislative requirements, by-laws and procedures relating to retrofits. Many strata managers are responsible for organising general meetings and preparing the list of items and motions placed on meeting agendas. Good communication with the strata manager is recommended at all stages of retrofitting.

Some strata managers are experienced with building retrofits, and encourage sustainable retrofits as part to their business ethic. A strata manager can also provide advice on the feasibility of retrofits.

Strata managers also have access to energy and water bills, and have usage data that could be useful to track your usage or savings from retrofits.

Facilities or Building Manager

You should seek support from the facilities or building manager to do a building audit or commence retrofit works.

The building managers maintain and manage common property, and so their support will ensure that all works involved with the potential retrofits will run smoothly.

Building managers also have access to energy and water bills, and have usage data that could be useful to track your usage or savings from retrofits.

Proposing Retrofits to Stakeholders

Below are some steps to follow for proposing retrofits to your building's stakeholders.

STEP 1 - Seek advice on retrofits

A good way to approach stakeholders of the building about retrofits, is to first contact the strata managing agent and the building manager for their advice. Their knowledge of the building, potential previous experience of retrofits and knowledge of procedures could help flag issues with the proposed retrofits from the outset, or help you plan a business case for introducing your ideas to the strata committee and owners corporation.

Other options are to contact external sustainable retrofit professionals and organisations for their advice on potential retrofits. It is often advised to start with smaller retrofits first if considering multiple projects, as that will give you an idea on how bigger project proposals

might be received and undertaken by the different stakeholders. For ideas on what the potential benefits and challenges there might be, look at other case studies for common retrofits (energy, water, or facilities and services) in strata buildings.

STEP 2 - Establish interested residents and owners

The project idea could be:

- raised at a meeting, if there are regular formal or informal meetings of owners and residents, or;
- posted to the noticeboard, or;
- emailed around if there is a contact list of owners or residents, or;
- posted on the building's social media page, or;
- drafted on a flyer and letter-box dropped.

Before going straight to the strata committee with your proposal for retrofits, it is worthwhile to find out who might be interested or opposed to the idea. This can save time by raising concerns before the item comes up for a formal vote. This will give residents and owners time to voice their initial reservations, or

support, and give you time to prepare a business case that will allow for different interests when trying to get your proposal approved.

STEP 3 - Draft a statement of intent

Draft a statement of intent based on internal and external stakeholder advice.

This is a brief that will present the possibility of retrofits and examples to the owners of the building. This document should make it clear what retrofits ideas you have, and how they might benefit the building and its residents.

The statement should alert the strata committee to the future motion on the meeting agenda, or could be used to ask for pre-approval at an annual general meeting.

STEP 4 - Circulate the statement of intent

To circulate the statement of intent, consider the ways in which communication is currently and most effectively achieved between owners and the strata committee. This might be through post, or by emailing the Secretary. If you are on the committee, circulate the statement to other members. This begins the process of getting a motion drafted and approved by the strata committee or owners corporation.