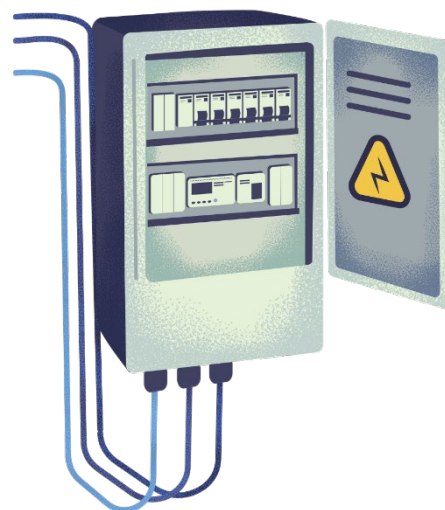


ELECTRIFICATION AND ENERGY TRANSITION IN APARTMENTS

Prepared with the valued expertise and generous contribution of:

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1. Overview

What this guide covers

Apartment buildings across Victoria are entering a period of significant change.

As ageing gas infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life, electricity networks continue to evolve and new technologies become more widely available, many Owners Corporations will need to make decisions about how their buildings are powered into the future.

Electrification is no longer simply an environmental consideration. It is becoming an important asset planning, infrastructure and financial issue for apartment buildings.

This guide provides practical industry guidance to help Strata Managers, Committees, Building Managers and Owners Corporations understand electrification and the broader energy transition within a strata environment.

Rather than promoting a single approach, the guide explains the practical considerations involved in planning and managing the transition from traditional energy systems to modern electric alternatives. It explores how electrification can be integrated with long-term asset planning, capital works and future building improvements.

Why it matters to Owners Corporations

Many apartment buildings rely on infrastructure that was designed when gas was the preferred energy source for heating, cooking and hot water.

As these systems age, Owners Corporations will increasingly need to decide whether to replace them with similar equipment or transition to modern electric alternatives.

These decisions may influence:

- long-term operating costs
- maintenance requirements
- capital expenditure
- electrical infrastructure
- resident expectations
- future building value
- sustainability outcomes
- the ability to incorporate future technologies

Planning ahead allows Owners Corporations to make informed decisions that align with the building's maintenance cycle, rather than being forced into reactive decisions when major equipment fails.

Understanding electrification

Electrification refers to replacing equipment powered by fossil fuels, particularly natural gas, with efficient electric alternatives.

Examples include replacing:

Existing system	Electric alternative
Gas hot water	Heat pump hot water systems
Gas space heating	Reverse-cycle air conditioning
Gas cooking	Induction cooktops
Gas boilers	Electric central plant
Fossil fuel energy supply	Renewable electricity supported by battery storage where appropriate

Electrification is often considered alongside other building improvements such as rooftop solar, battery storage, EV charging and smart energy management systems.

Together, these initiatives can improve building efficiency while helping Owners Corporations prepare for changing energy requirements.

Why planning ahead is important

Energy transition is most successful when it forms part of a long-term building strategy.

Waiting until major equipment fails can limit available options, increase costs and create unnecessary disruption.

Early planning allows an Owners Corporation to better understand:

- the condition of existing infrastructure
- future capital expenditure
- electrical capacity
- opportunities to coordinate upgrades
- potential funding requirements
- operational impacts
- future resident expectations

Importantly, planning ahead does not require immediate replacement of existing infrastructure.

Instead, it provides a framework for making better decisions as equipment naturally reaches the end of its service life.

Where this commonly applies

Electrification planning may be relevant to:

- apartment buildings with ageing gas infrastructure
- mixed-use developments
- buildings planning major capital works
- buildings considering rooftop solar
- Owners Corporations investigating battery storage
- buildings planning EV charging infrastructure
- developments with central plant approaching end of life
- buildings reviewing long-term maintenance plans

While every building is different, understanding future energy requirements is becoming increasingly important across the strata sector.

Who should read this guide

This guide is intended for:

- Strata Managers
- Owners Corporation Committees
- Building Managers
- Facilities Managers
- lot owners involved in major building decisions
- asset managers
- consultants supporting Owners Corporations

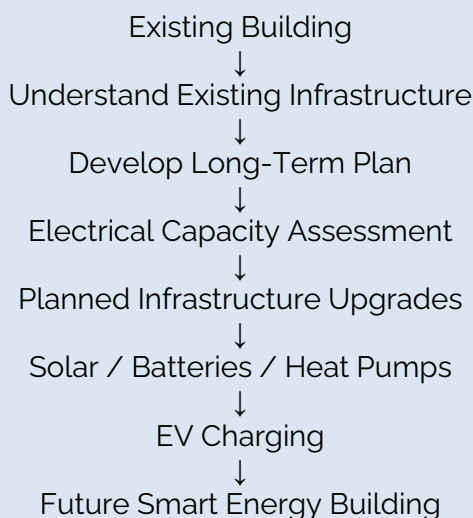
Electrification is a journey

Very few apartment buildings transition to all-electric infrastructure through a single project.

Most buildings will adopt a staged approach over many years as infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life and opportunities arise through planned maintenance or capital works.

The most successful Owners Corporations are those that understand where their building sits today, identify future opportunities and make decisions that support long-term flexibility rather than short-term fixes.

Roadmap: The Apartment Energy Transition



Scope of this guide

This guide focuses on electrification and energy transition in Victorian apartment buildings and is intended as a practical industry resource.

It explains the opportunities, challenges and planning considerations associated with transitioning building infrastructure to electric systems.

It does not provide detailed engineering, legal or financial advice. Owners Corporations should obtain appropriately qualified specialist advice before making decisions affecting their particular building.

2. Legislative Framework

Electrification projects can involve a range of legislative, regulatory and technical considerations.

While the legal framework establishes the obligations that Owners Corporations must meet, every building presents different infrastructure, financial and operational circumstances. Decisions should therefore be based on the specific characteristics of the building and supported by appropriately qualified professional advice where required.

This section provides a high-level overview only and is not intended to be legal, engineering or electrical advice.

Victorian legislative framework

Depending on the nature of the project, electrification may involve consideration of several Victorian Acts and Regulations. These may include:

- Owners Corporations Act 2006 (Vic)
- Owners Corporations Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Building Act 1993 (Vic)
- Building Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Electricity Safety Act 1998 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Planning and environmental legislation where applicable

The legislation that applies will depend on the scope of the proposed works, the type of building and the infrastructure being installed or modified.

Australian Standards

Electrical infrastructure should always be designed, installed and maintained in accordance with the applicable Australian Standards and electrical safety requirements.

Relevant standards may include those relating to:

- electrical installations
- switchboards
- electrical wiring
- solar photovoltaic systems
- battery storage
- electric vehicle charging
- electrical testing and commissioning
- electrical safety

Owners Corporations should always rely on the current versions of applicable standards and engage appropriately qualified professionals to undertake any electrical work.

Governance considerations

Electrification projects are often more than simple equipment replacement.

They may involve decisions relating to:

- common property
- capital expenditure
- maintenance planning
- contractor engagement
- energy infrastructure
- funding arrangements
- future building improvements
- long-term asset management

Projects should be considered within the broader context of the Owners Corporation's governance responsibilities and long-term maintenance planning.

Appropriate governance supports transparent decision-making, effective procurement and well-documented project outcomes.

Asset management and long-term planning

Many electrification projects coincide with the replacement of ageing building infrastructure.

Integrating electrification into existing maintenance and asset planning processes may assist an Owners Corporation to:

- reduce duplicated works
- coordinate infrastructure upgrades
- improve budget forecasting
- minimise disruption to residents
- improve long-term asset performance

Rather than viewing electrification as a standalone project, it should be considered alongside other major building renewal activities where appropriate.

Safety and compliance

Safety remains a fundamental consideration throughout every stage of an electrification project. Owners Corporations should ensure that:

- electrical work is undertaken by appropriately licensed contractors
- equipment is suitable for its intended application
- installations comply with applicable standards
- commissioning is completed before systems become operational
- maintenance responsibilities are clearly documented
- future modifications are appropriately recorded

Buildings should also consider how new electrical infrastructure interacts with existing building systems to ensure ongoing safe operation.

Roles and responsibilities

Successful electrification projects typically involve collaboration between several different professionals. Depending on the project, these may include:

- Owners Corporation
- Committee
- Strata Manager
- Building Manager
- Facilities Manager
- electrical engineer
- licensed electrical contractor
- energy consultant
- solar specialist
- battery storage provider
- legal adviser
- insurance adviser

Each professional contributes different expertise.

Clearly defining responsibilities early in the project helps improve communication, reduce duplication and support better project outcomes.

Future-ready planning

Electrification is not usually a single project completed in isolation.

Many Owners Corporations will transition over several years as infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life.

Rather than making decisions only when equipment fails, future-ready planning encourages Owners Corporations to understand:

- the condition of existing assets
- future replacement timeframes
- available electrical capacity
- opportunities to coordinate projects
- likely future energy demand
- long-term financial implications

A staged approach allows infrastructure improvements to be prioritised and integrated into the building's broader maintenance and capital works programme.

Glossary

Battery Storage

Systems that store electrical energy for later use, helping to improve energy efficiency and manage electricity demand.

Building Electrification

The replacement of fossil fuel-powered building systems with electric alternatives.

Demand Management

Strategies that help manage when and how electricity is used to improve efficiency and reduce peak demand.

Electrification

The process of replacing equipment powered by fossil fuels with efficient electric alternatives.

Heat Pump

An energy-efficient system that transfers heat rather than generating it directly, commonly used for water heating and space heating.

Renewable Energy

Energy generated from naturally replenishing sources such as solar or wind.

Smart Energy Management

Technology that monitors, controls and optimises how energy is generated, stored and consumed within a building.

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System

A system that converts sunlight directly into electricity using solar panels.

Planning for Building Electrification

Existing Asset	End of Life?	Opportunity to Consider
Central hot water	✓	Heat pump system
Gas heating	✓	Reverse-cycle heating
Electrical upgrade	✓	Increase future capacity
Roof works	✓	Solar PV installation
Car park works	✓	Future EV charging infrastructure
Major capital works	✓	Coordinate multiple upgrades

3. Common Issues

Every apartment building is different, and there is no single pathway to electrification.

The opportunities, constraints and priorities will vary depending on the age of the building, its existing infrastructure, available electrical capacity and the expectations of owners and residents.

Understanding the common issues associated with electrification can help Owners Corporations plan ahead, reduce risk and make more informed long-term decisions.

Ageing building infrastructure

Many apartment buildings were designed around gas appliances and infrastructure that may now be approaching the end of its service life.

Common examples include:

- central gas hot water systems
- gas boilers
- gas heating systems
- gas cooktops
- ageing switchboards
- outdated electrical distribution systems

Replacing ageing infrastructure provides an opportunity to consider whether modern electric alternatives may deliver better long-term outcomes.

Rather than replacing ageing assets on a like-for-like basis, Owners Corporations may benefit from considering how replacement projects fit within the building's broader asset management strategy.

Limited electrical capacity

One of the most common challenges associated with electrification is the available electrical capacity within an existing building.

Potential constraints may include:

- limited incoming electrical supply
- ageing switchboards
- insufficient spare circuits
- increasing demand from existing building services
- limited capacity for future technologies

Where additional electrical demand is anticipated, an assessment by an appropriately qualified professional can help determine the building's current capability and identify opportunities for staged upgrades.

Balancing short-term costs with long-term value

Electrification projects often require Owners Corporations to consider more than the initial installation cost.

Important considerations may include:

- future maintenance costs
- equipment lifespan
- operating efficiency
- future energy costs
- replacement cycles
- opportunities to coordinate future works
- long-term building value

A solution with a higher initial cost may deliver greater long-term value through improved efficiency, reduced maintenance or better integration with future technologies.

Coordinating multiple building projects

Electrification rarely occurs in isolation.

Many buildings will also be considering projects such as:

- major plant replacement
- lift modernisation
- roof replacement
- solar installation
- battery storage
- EV charging infrastructure
- lighting upgrades
- building refurbishment

Coordinating these projects can reduce duplicated work, minimise disruption and improve overall project efficiency.

Resident expectations

Owners and residents may have different priorities regarding electrification.

Some may focus on:

- reducing operating costs
 - improving sustainability
 - supporting EV charging
 - increasing property value
 - replacing ageing infrastructure
- Others may have concerns about:
- project costs
 - disruption during installation
 - changing technology
 - return on investment

Providing balanced information and explaining both the opportunities and limitations of electrification can assist Committees when consulting with owners.

Funding major upgrades

Electrification projects can vary significantly in scope.

Potential expenditure may include:

- investigations
- engineering advice
- electrical upgrades
- replacement plant
- installation works
- commissioning
- maintenance
- future expansion

Planning ahead allows Owners Corporations to incorporate future electrification projects into their long-term maintenance and financial planning rather than relying solely on reactive funding decisions.

Integrating new technologies

Electrification increasingly involves multiple technologies working together rather than individual standalone systems.

Examples may include:

- rooftop solar
- battery storage
- heat pumps
- EV charging
- smart metering
- building energy management systems

Considering how these systems interact can improve efficiency and reduce the need for future infrastructure changes.

Procurement and contractor selection

Selecting appropriately qualified contractors and advisers is an important part of any electrification project.

Common procurement challenges include:

- unclear project scope
- inconsistent technical proposals
- differing equipment recommendations
- incomplete quotations
- unrealistic performance claims
- limited ongoing support
- unclear maintenance responsibilities

Evaluation should consider experience, capability, project methodology and long-term support in addition to price.

Managing technology change

Energy technology continues to evolve rapidly.

Owners Corporations may be concerned about investing in systems that could become outdated.

While future technology cannot be predicted with certainty, selecting flexible and scalable solutions can help buildings adapt as technology develops.

This may include considering:

- modular infrastructure
- equipment that supports software updates
- scalable electrical infrastructure
- systems compatible with future technologies

Future-ready planning focuses on maintaining flexibility rather than attempting to predict every future development.

Asset management and maintenance planning

Electrification should be considered as part of the building's broader asset management strategy rather than as a standalone initiative.

Integrating electrification into maintenance planning may help:

- coordinate replacement cycles
- improve budgeting
- reduce duplicated work
- minimise disruption
- improve long-term asset performance
- support future infrastructure planning

Linking electrification with the Owners Corporation's maintenance plan encourages more strategic decision-making over the life of the building.

Communication and decision-making

Electrification projects often involve complex technical information. Committees should ensure owners receive information that is:

- clear
- balanced
- evidence-based
- relevant to the building
- supported by appropriate professional advice

Clear communication helps owners understand the reasons for proposed works, the expected benefits and the implications of different options.

Common misconceptions

Several misconceptions commonly arise when discussing building electrification.

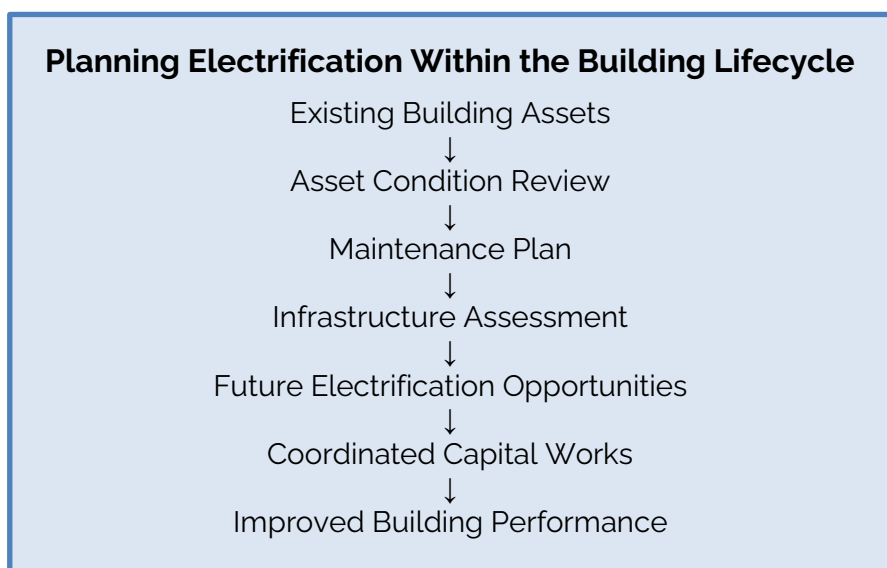
Misconception	Practical reality
Electrification means replacing every gas appliance immediately	Most buildings transition gradually as infrastructure reaches the end of its service life
Every building should follow the same pathway	Each building requires a solution based on its own infrastructure, budget and priorities
Electrification is only about sustainability	Decisions also involve asset management, maintenance, operating costs, resident expectations and long-term planning
Existing infrastructure has no ongoing value	Many buildings will continue using existing infrastructure until replacement is appropriate
Technology should be adopted as soon as it becomes available	Technologies should be assessed based on suitability, lifecycle costs and compatibility with the building

Why strategic planning delivers better outcomes

Owners Corporations that begin planning before major infrastructure reaches the end of its service life are generally better placed to:

- understand their existing assets
- coordinate future upgrades
- improve financial planning
- minimise disruption
- reduce duplicated works
- integrate new technologies more effectively
- make informed long-term decisions

Strategic planning does not require immediate investment. Instead, it provides a framework that allows electrification opportunities to be considered alongside the building's broader maintenance and asset management programme.



4. Best Practice Approach

Successful electrification projects are built on good planning rather than reactive decision-making.

Rather than viewing electrification as a single project or technology upgrade, Owners Corporations should consider how energy infrastructure supports the long-term operation, maintenance and performance of the building.

The most effective projects are those that align technical solutions with the building's asset management strategy, budget and future needs.

Understand the building first

Every electrification project should begin with a clear understanding of the building's existing infrastructure.

This may include reviewing:

- the age and condition of major plant
- electrical capacity
- switchboard condition
- existing energy consumption

- maintenance history
- planned capital works
- opportunities to coordinate future upgrades

Understanding the building's current position provides a stronger foundation for future decision-making.

Take a staged approach

Few apartment buildings transition to all-electric infrastructure through a single project.

A staged approach allows Owners Corporations to replace infrastructure as it reaches the end of its useful life while coordinating future improvements. This may include:

- replacing ageing gas plant with electric alternatives
- upgrading electrical infrastructure
- installing rooftop solar where appropriate
- introducing battery storage
- supporting future EV charging
- improving building energy management

Staged implementation allows investment to occur progressively while reducing unnecessary disruption.

Integrate electrification with asset planning

Electrification should be considered alongside the Owners Corporation's maintenance plan and long-term capital works programme. Opportunities may arise when undertaking:

- roof replacement
- major plumbing works
- switchboard upgrades
- lift modernisation
- central plant replacement
- façade remediation
- basement refurbishment

Coordinating projects can reduce duplication, improve procurement outcomes and minimise disruption to residents.

Select solutions appropriate to the building

There is no single electrification solution suitable for every apartment building. When evaluating options, Owners Corporations should consider:

- building size
- electrical infrastructure
- available space
- resident requirements
- future expansion
- maintenance implications
- lifecycle costs
- compatibility with existing systems

The most appropriate solution is one that aligns with the building's operational requirements and long-term objectives rather than simply adopting the newest technology.

Consider whole-of-life costs

Project decisions should consider more than the initial installation cost.

Whole-of-life considerations may include:

- operating costs
- maintenance requirements
- servicing
- equipment lifespan
- replacement costs
- future upgrades
- energy efficiency
- potential operational savings

Assessing long-term value supports more informed investment decisions and helps Owners Corporations understand the ongoing financial implications of different options.

Procure for quality and long-term performance

Appropriate procurement helps ensure infrastructure performs reliably throughout its expected life.

When selecting consultants, contractors or suppliers, consider:

- experience with apartment buildings
- technical capability
- project methodology
- equipment quality
- ongoing support
- maintenance services
- warranties
- references from comparable projects

Procurement decisions should balance technical capability, long-term performance and value for money.

Obtain appropriate professional advice

Electrification projects often involve several areas of specialist expertise.

Depending on the project, advice may be required from:

- electrical engineers
- licensed electrical contractors
- Building Managers
- Facilities Managers
- energy consultants
- solar specialists
- battery storage specialists
- legal advisers
- insurance advisers

Each professional contributes different expertise, and no single adviser is expected to provide advice across every discipline.

Plan for future technologies

Energy systems continue to evolve.

While future technology cannot be predicted with certainty, Owners Corporations can improve flexibility by selecting infrastructure that can adapt over time.

This may include considering:

- additional electrical capacity where practical
- scalable infrastructure
- modular equipment
- future battery storage
- future EV charging
- smart energy management systems
- renewable energy integration

Planning for flexibility reduces the likelihood of significant rework as technology develops.

Maintain accurate records

Good documentation supports the ongoing management of building infrastructure.

Records may include:

- electrical drawings
- asset registers
- equipment schedules
- commissioning records
- warranties
- maintenance manuals
- operating procedures
- servicing history
- contractor information

Maintaining accurate records assists future Committees, Strata Managers and service providers.

Communicate with owners

Electrification projects often involve significant investment and long-term planning.

Owners should receive information that clearly explains:

- why the project is being considered
- expected benefits
- potential impacts
- project timing
- future opportunities
- limitations of the proposed solution

Providing balanced information helps owners participate in informed decision-making and supports greater confidence in the project.

Review outcomes and continue improving

Following completion of each stage, Owners Corporations should review the project outcomes.

Questions to consider include:

- Did the project achieve its objectives?
- Were any unexpected issues encountered?
- Has building performance improved?
- Are further opportunities now available?
- Should future stages be adjusted?

Regular review supports continuous improvement and assists future Committees when planning subsequent projects.

Practical planning checklist

Before commencing an electrification project, consider the following.

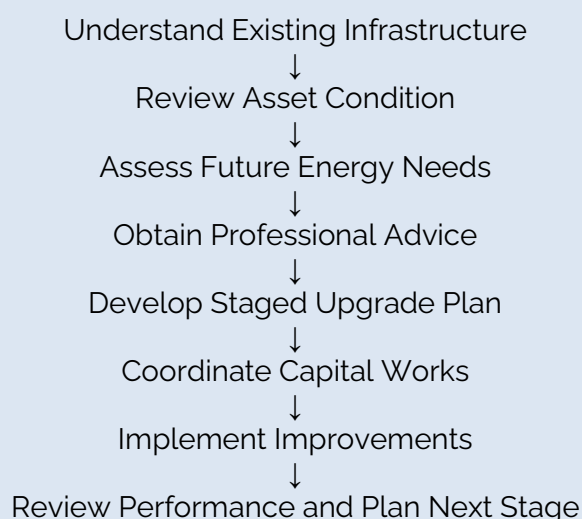
- ☐ Existing building infrastructure has been assessed.
- ☐ Major assets approaching end of life have been identified.
- ☐ Future electrical capacity has been considered.
- ☐ Appropriate specialist advice has been obtained.
- ☐ Long-term maintenance implications have been reviewed.
- ☐ Whole-of-life costs have been considered.
- ☐ Procurement has been undertaken transparently.
- ☐ Owners have received appropriate information.
- ☐ Project documentation has been retained.
- ☐ Future expansion opportunities have been considered.

Good practice principles

While every building is different, successful electrification projects generally share several characteristics. They are:

- planned rather than reactive
- integrated with long-term maintenance planning
- supported by appropriate professional advice
- based on whole-of-life value
- coordinated with other building projects
- appropriately documented
- communicated clearly to owners
- sufficiently flexible to accommodate future technologies

Building Electrification Planning Cycle



5. Manager / Committee Guidance

Electrification projects often involve long-term decisions that extend beyond the replacement of a single piece of equipment.

By understanding the building's current infrastructure, planning ahead and obtaining appropriate professional advice, Owners Corporations can make decisions that support the long-term performance, resilience and value of the building.

This section provides practical guidance for Committees and Strata Managers when considering electrification projects.

Understand the building before making decisions

Before considering electrification opportunities, ensure there is a clear understanding of the building's existing infrastructure and long-term maintenance requirements.

Questions to consider include:

- What major building services are approaching the end of their useful life?
- What electrical capacity is currently available?
- What infrastructure upgrades may be required?
- How does electrification align with the maintenance plan?
- Are there opportunities to coordinate multiple projects?
- What future technologies may be considered?

A thorough understanding of the building provides a stronger foundation for future planning.

Consider the building's long-term objectives

Electrification decisions should support the Owners Corporation's broader goals rather than responding only to immediate issues.

Committees may wish to consider:

- improving building efficiency
- reducing long-term maintenance requirements
- supporting resident expectations
- improving resilience
- preparing for future technologies
- coordinating capital works
- protecting long-term asset value

Establishing clear objectives helps guide future investment decisions.

Obtain appropriate professional advice

Electrification projects often require input from a range of suitably qualified professionals.

Depending on the project, advice may be obtained from:

- electrical engineers
- licensed electrical contractors
- Building Managers
- Facilities Managers
- energy consultants
- sustainability consultants
- solar specialists

- battery storage specialists
- legal advisers
- insurance advisers

Professional advice should be proportionate to the complexity of the proposed works and the characteristics of the building.

Coordinate projects where practical

Major infrastructure upgrades present opportunities to improve overall project efficiency. When planning capital works, consider whether electrification can be coordinated with:

- roof replacement
- plant replacement
- switchboard upgrades
- façade works
- lift modernisation
- common area refurbishment
- EV charging infrastructure
- renewable energy projects

Coordinating projects can reduce duplicated work, improve procurement outcomes and minimise disruption to residents.

Procure appropriately qualified providers

Selecting experienced consultants and contractors is an important part of any electrification project. When evaluating proposals, consider:

- experience with apartment buildings
- technical capability
- project methodology
- quality of proposed equipment
- maintenance arrangements
- ongoing support
- warranties
- previous project experience
- ability to support future expansion

Procurement decisions should consider long-term performance and lifecycle value in addition to initial cost.

Consider whole-of-life value

Major infrastructure decisions should consider the entire lifecycle of the proposed solution. This may include:

- installation costs
- operating costs
- maintenance requirements
- servicing
- equipment lifespan
- replacement costs
- future upgrade opportunities
- operational efficiency

Considering whole-of-life value supports more informed decision-making and may reduce long-term expenditure.

Communicate with owners and residents

Electrification projects often involve significant investment and may affect the daily operation of the building.

Owners and residents should receive information explaining:

- why the project is being considered
- expected benefits
- likely project stages
- anticipated timeframes
- temporary disruption
- future opportunities
- who to contact with questions

Clear communication supports transparency and helps owners understand how the project aligns with the building's long-term planning.

Maintain accurate documentation

Comprehensive records support the ongoing management of building infrastructure.

Documentation may include:

- engineering advice
- electrical drawings
- asset registers
- equipment schedules
- commissioning records
- warranties
- maintenance manuals
- operating procedures
- contractor details
- servicing history

Accurate records assist future Committees, Strata Managers and service providers throughout the life of the infrastructure.

Review outcomes

Following completion of each project stage, Owners Corporations should review whether the intended outcomes have been achieved.

Questions may include:

- Has the project met its objectives?
- Has building performance improved?
- Were any unexpected issues encountered?
- What lessons can be applied to future projects?
- Are additional stages now appropriate?

Regular review supports continuous improvement and more effective long-term planning.

Questions for Committees

Before approving an electrification project, consider:

- Do we understand the condition of our existing infrastructure?
- Have future building requirements been considered?
- Have appropriately qualified advisers been engaged?
- Does the proposal align with our maintenance plan?
- Have whole-of-life costs been considered?
- Can the proposed solution accommodate future technologies?
- Have owners received sufficient information?
- Have risks been appropriately assessed?
- Will the project improve the long-term performance of the building?
- Have all decisions and supporting advice been documented?

Questions for Strata Managers

When coordinating an electrification project, consider:

- Are appropriate specialists engaged?
- Are responsibilities clearly allocated?
- Has the Committee received balanced and objective information?
- Are communications being documented?
- Are project milestones being monitored?
- Have future maintenance requirements been identified?
- Have approvals and project records been retained?
- Are owners receiving consistent updates?
- Have operational risks been escalated where appropriate?
- Has the completed project been documented for future reference?

Practical planning checklist

Before commencing an electrification project, consider the following.

- ☐ Existing infrastructure has been assessed.
- ☐ Major assets approaching replacement have been identified.
- ☐ Electrical capacity has been reviewed.
- ☐ Future building requirements have been considered.
- ☐ Appropriate professional advice has been obtained.
- ☐ Whole-of-life costs have been evaluated.
- ☐ Procurement has been undertaken transparently.
- ☐ Owners have received appropriate information.
- ☐ Project documentation has been retained.
- ☐ Opportunities to coordinate future projects have been identified.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What does building electrification mean?

Building electrification is the process of replacing equipment powered by fossil fuels, particularly natural gas, with efficient electric alternatives as existing infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life.

Q. Does every apartment building need to become fully electric?

No. Every building is different. The most appropriate approach will depend on the age of the infrastructure, available electrical capacity, financial considerations and the Owners Corporation's long-term objectives.

Many buildings will adopt a staged approach over a number of years.

Q. When should an Owners Corporation begin planning?

Planning is generally most effective before major infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life.

Early planning allows Owners Corporations to understand existing infrastructure, investigate future options and coordinate projects as part of their long-term maintenance programme.

Q. Does electrification always involve major building works?

Not necessarily. Some projects involve replacing individual building systems, while others may include broader electrical infrastructure upgrades.

The scope of work will depend on the building and the proposed solution.

Q. Can electrification occur in stages?

Yes. Many Owners Corporations progressively replace infrastructure over time as equipment reaches the end of its service life or as opportunities arise through planned capital works.

A staged approach often provides greater flexibility and reduces disruption.

Q. Why should whole-of-life costs be considered?

The initial installation cost represents only part of the overall investment.

Considering operating costs, maintenance, servicing, equipment lifespan and future upgrades provides a more complete understanding of the long-term value of different options.

Q. How does electrification relate to EV charging?

Electrification and EV charging are closely connected because both increase the building's reliance on electrical infrastructure.

When planning major electrical upgrades, Owners Corporations may benefit from considering future EV charging requirements at the same time, even if installation is not immediately proposed.

Q. What professional advice may be required?

Depending on the project, Owners Corporations may require advice from electrical engineers, licensed electrical contractors, energy consultants, Building Managers, legal advisers, insurance advisers and other appropriately qualified professionals.

7. Emerging Issues

The transition to electrified buildings is continuing to evolve as technology, energy markets and community expectations change.

While every Owners Corporation will progress at its own pace, several emerging trends are likely to influence future building planning and investment decisions.

Remaining informed about these developments can help Owners Corporations make decisions that remain appropriate as technology and industry practices continue to evolve.

Increasing building electrification

Many apartment buildings will gradually replace ageing gas infrastructure with electric alternatives as major plant reaches the end of its useful life.

This transition is likely to include:

- heat pump hot water systems
- electric space heating and cooling
- induction cooking
- improved electrical infrastructure
- rooftop solar
- battery storage
- EV charging

Electrification is expected to become a normal component of long-term asset renewal rather than a standalone sustainability initiative.

Smarter building energy management

Building energy systems are becoming increasingly intelligent.

Modern energy management systems can assist Owners Corporations to better understand and manage electricity consumption across common property and shared infrastructure.

Future capabilities may include:

- real-time energy monitoring
- automated energy optimisation
- demand management
- equipment performance monitoring
- fault identification
- energy reporting
- integration with renewable energy systems

These technologies can improve operational efficiency while providing better information for future planning.

Greater integration of renewable energy

Electrification is increasingly being considered alongside renewable energy generation.

Apartment buildings may progressively integrate:

- rooftop solar
- battery storage
- EV charging

- smart metering
- energy monitoring
- demand management systems

Planning these technologies together may improve overall building performance and reduce future infrastructure duplication.

Battery storage

Battery storage technology continues to develop and may become an increasingly important part of apartment building energy systems.

Potential applications include:

- storing excess solar generation
- reducing peak electricity demand
- improving energy resilience
- supporting common property services
- improving utilisation of renewable energy

The suitability of battery storage will depend on the individual characteristics of each building and should be assessed with appropriate specialist advice.

Dynamic electricity pricing

Electricity pricing structures continue to evolve.

Future pricing models may increasingly encourage electricity consumption during periods of lower demand.

Owners Corporations may benefit from understanding how future pricing structures could influence:

- building operating costs
- EV charging
- battery storage
- energy management systems
- renewable energy use

These developments may create opportunities to optimise building energy consumption over time.

Artificial intelligence and automation

Artificial intelligence is beginning to support building operations through improved monitoring and analysis.

Potential future applications include:

- analysing energy consumption
- identifying abnormal equipment performance
- supporting preventative maintenance
- forecasting energy demand
- improving operational reporting
- assisting asset planning

Artificial intelligence should support informed decision-making rather than replace professional judgement or specialist advice.

Building resilience

Electrification is increasingly being considered alongside broader building resilience.

Future planning may consider how energy infrastructure supports:

- reliable building services
- emergency preparedness
- business continuity
- resilience to changing energy markets
- future technology integration

Buildings that understand their infrastructure and maintain flexibility are generally better positioned to respond to future change.

The evolving role of Strata Managers

As buildings become more technically sophisticated, Strata Managers are increasingly coordinating projects involving multiple specialists and emerging technologies.

Future-ready Strata Managers may benefit from understanding the broad principles of:

- electrification
- renewable energy
- battery storage
- EV charging
- energy management systems
- long-term asset planning

This does not replace the need for specialist advice, but supports more effective project coordination and communication with Committees and owners.

8. Key Takeaways

Electrification is becoming an increasingly important consideration for apartment buildings as infrastructure ages and energy systems continue to evolve.

While every building will have different priorities, long-term planning and informed decision-making can help Owners Corporations manage the transition effectively.

Key principles include:

- Consider electrification as part of long-term asset planning rather than as a standalone project.
- Understand the building's existing infrastructure before making significant decisions.
- Replace ageing infrastructure strategically as opportunities arise.
- Coordinate electrification with other planned capital works where practical.
- Obtain advice from appropriately qualified professionals.
- Consider whole-of-life value rather than initial installation cost alone.
- Select solutions that provide flexibility for future technologies.
- Maintain accurate records throughout the project lifecycle.
- Communicate clearly with owners and residents.
- Review completed projects to support continuous improvement.

9. Further Resources

Readers may find the following resources useful when considering electrification and energy transition projects.

- Consumer Affairs Victoria – Owners Corporations
- Energy Safe Victoria
- Solar Victoria
- Australian Energy Regulator
- Victorian Government information on building electrification and energy transition
- Standards Australia – Relevant electrical installation standards

Appendix A – Typical Building Electrification Journey

Stage	Typical activities
1. Review existing assets	Assess building services and maintenance requirements
2. Assess infrastructure	Review electrical capacity and existing systems
3. Obtain professional advice	Engage appropriate specialists
4. Develop a staged plan	Align projects with maintenance and capital works
5. Procure contractors	Select suitable consultants and contractors
6. Implement projects	Complete staged infrastructure upgrades
7. Commission systems	Test and verify performance
8. Ongoing operation	Monitor performance, maintain assets and review future opportunities

Appendix B – Building Electrification Readiness Checklist

This checklist may assist an Owners Corporation when considering future electrification projects.

Building assessment

- ☐ Major building services have been identified.
- ☐ The condition of existing infrastructure is understood.
- ☐ Future replacement timeframes have been considered.
- ☐ Electrical capacity has been reviewed.
- ☐ Opportunities to coordinate future projects have been identified.

Planning

- ☐ Electrification has been considered as part of the maintenance plan.
- ☐ Future building requirements have been discussed.
- ☐ Long-term objectives have been identified.
- ☐ Potential project staging has been considered.
- ☐ Future technologies have been considered where appropriate.

Professional advice

- ☐ Appropriate technical advice has been obtained.
- ☐ Suitable consultants have been engaged.
- ☐ Governance implications have been considered.
- ☐ Insurance implications have been reviewed where required.
- ☐ Relevant documentation has been retained.

Procurement

- ☐ A clear project scope has been prepared.
- ☐ Providers have appropriate experience.
- ☐ Whole-of-life costs have been evaluated.
- ☐ Long-term maintenance has been considered.
- ☐ Future flexibility has been assessed.

Communication

- ☐ Owners have been informed of the proposal.
- ☐ Expected project stages have been explained.
- ☐ Temporary disruption has been communicated.
- ☐ Long-term benefits have been outlined.
- ☐ Future planning has been discussed.