

KEY ROLES IN STRATA COMMUNITIES

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1. Overview

What this guide covers

Strata communities involve a range of stakeholders with different responsibilities, levels of authority and areas of expertise.

These stakeholders may include:

- owners and Owners Corporation Committees
- Strata Managers
- Building Managers and Facilities Managers
- Property Managers and real estate agents
- residents and occupiers
- consultants and advisers
- contractors and service providers
- insurers and insurance brokers
- developers and builders
- regulators and industry bodies

The roles involved will vary depending on the size, complexity and needs of the Owners Corporation. A smaller development may rely mainly on its Committee and Strata Manager, while a large or mixed-use development may involve Building Management, Facilities Management and a range of specialist consultants and contractors.

This guide explains the main stakeholder groups commonly involved in Victorian strata communities, their general functions and how they interact. It also highlights areas where responsibilities are commonly confused.

A key distinction throughout this guide is that the person who coordinates an issue is not necessarily the person authorised to decide it, and the person who provides advice is not necessarily responsible for carrying out the work.

Why it Matters to Owners Corporations

Confusion about stakeholder roles can result in:

- delays and inefficiencies
- unrealistic expectations
- duplicated work
- misdirected communication
- unclear accountability
- disputes and frustration
- decisions being referred to someone who does not have authority to make them
- technical matters being dealt with without appropriate specialist advice

Clear roles and communication pathways help the Owners Corporation direct issues to the right person, understand who has decision-making authority and know when specialist expertise is required.

The Owners Corporation remains responsible for its decisions. Managers, contractors and advisers may support, administer, coordinate or advise, but their involvement does not automatically transfer the Owners Corporation's decision-making responsibility to them.

Where it Commonly Applies

Understanding roles is relevant to almost every aspect of strata management, including:

- governance and decision-making
- financial management
- maintenance and repairs
- building operations
- insurance
- building defects
- contractor engagement
- resident and tenant matters
- legal and technical advice
- major projects
- emergency response
- communication and complaints

This guide applies to Owners Corporations of all sizes, although not every role described will exist in every building.

Who Should Read this Guide

This guide is intended for:

- Strata Managers
- Owners Corporation Committees
- Lot Owners
- Building Managers
- Facilities Managers
- residents and occupiers
- others working with Owners Corporations

A Simple Way to Understand the Roles

Role	Primary Function
Owners Corporation	Governs and makes decisions about common property and shared responsibilities
Committee	Exercises Owners Corporation functions and powers within its authority
Strata Manager	Supports administration, governance, finance and communication within their appointment and authority
Building Manager	Supports day-to-day building operations within their agreed scope
Facilities Manager	Supports management of building systems, assets and maintenance performance within their agreed scope
Property Manager / Real Estate Agent	Manages an individual owner's rental property and tenant relationship
Consultants / Advisers	Provide specialist professional or technical advice
Contractors	Carry out defined works or services
Insurer / Insurance Broker	Provide insurance cover and insurance-related services within their respective roles

The key distinction: the person who coordinates an issue is not necessarily the person who decides it, and the person who advises on an issue is not necessarily responsible for carrying out the work.

Scope of this Guide

This guide focuses on the key roles commonly encountered in Victorian strata communities and is intended as a practical industry resource. It does not cover every stakeholder, contractual arrangement or specialist discipline.

The precise responsibilities and authority of a particular person or organisation may depend on legislation, Owners Corporation resolutions, contracts, appointments, delegations and the circumstances of the particular building.

2. Legislative Framework

The roles within a strata community are shaped by legislation as well as the contracts, appointments, delegations and decisions applying to the particular Owners Corporation.

This section provides a high-level overview only. More detailed legislative guidance is available through the SCA (Vic) Governance Guide series.

Relevant Victorian Legislation

Key legislation relevant to understanding roles and responsibilities may include:

- Owners Corporations Act 2006 (Vic)
- Owners Corporations Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Subdivision Act 1988 (Vic)
- Building Act 1993 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Estate Agents Act 1980 (Vic)
- Insurance Contracts Act 1984 (Cth)

Not every Act listed above applies to every stakeholder or situation. The relevant requirements depend on the issue being managed.

The Owners Corporations Act 2006 (Vic) remains the central Victorian legislation governing Owners Corporations, while the Subdivision Act 1988 (Vic) is also relevant to the creation of subdivisions and associated property arrangements. Both remain current Victorian legislation.

Roles, Authority and Responsibility

A person's job title alone does not determine what they are authorised or required to do.

Depending on the role, responsibilities may arise from:

- legislation
- the Owners Corporation's decisions
- a contract or appointment
- delegated authority
- an agreed Scope of Services
- professional or licensing requirements

Before assuming that a person is responsible for a particular task or decision, the relevant authority and scope should be checked.

Owners Corporation

The Owners Corporation is the legal entity responsible for the management and administration of the common property and the matters for which the Owners Corporation is responsible.

The Owners Corporation may make decisions through:

- general meetings
- ballots
- its Committee where the Committee has authority
- delegated authority where permitted and appropriately given

Engaging a Strata Manager, Building Manager, contractor or consultant does not mean that person automatically becomes the decision-maker for the Owners Corporation.

Committee

The Committee is elected by the Owners Corporation and performs functions and exercises powers within the authority available to it.

The Committee provides an important link between the Owners Corporation and those engaged to assist it, including the Strata Manager and other service providers.

A Committee should understand:

- what it is authorised to decide
- what must be referred to the Owners Corporation
- what authority has been delegated
- when specialist advice is required
- how decisions should be recorded

Strata Manager

A Strata Manager may be appointed to perform functions on behalf of an Owners Corporation within the scope of the manager's contract and any lawful delegation or authority.

The Strata Manager's role commonly includes administration, financial management, meeting support, record keeping, communication and coordination.

The Strata Manager does not own or control the building and should not be assumed to have authority to make every decision for the Owners Corporation.

The distinction between decision-making, administration, coordination and specialist advice is important when understanding the Strata Manager's role.

Contracts and Delegated Authority

The responsibilities of a Strata Manager, Building Manager, Facilities Manager or other service provider may depend significantly on their contract.

Before assuming that a person is responsible for a particular task, check:

- the relevant contract or appointment
- any Owners Corporation resolution
- any delegated authority
- the agreed Scope of Services
- whether specialist qualifications or licensing are required

A contract may require a service provider to coordinate or administer a matter without giving that provider authority to make the underlying decision.

Glossary of Terms

Owners Corporation

The legal entity responsible for managing common property and carrying out its functions and responsibilities.

Committee

The group elected to exercise Owners Corporation functions and powers within its authority.

Strata Manager

A professional appointed to assist an Owners Corporation with functions such as administration, governance, financial management, records and communication within the scope of their appointment and authority.

Building Manager

A person or organisation engaged to undertake day-to-day operational building functions within an agreed scope.

Facilities Manager

A person or organisation engaged to support the management of building systems, assets, maintenance and operational performance within an agreed scope.

Property Manager / Real Estate Agent

A person or agency engaged by an individual property owner to manage their lot and, where applicable, the tenancy.

Delegated Authority

Authority given to another person or body to exercise particular functions or powers within the limits of that delegation.

Scope of Services

The agreed services and responsibilities to be provided under a contract or engagement.

3. Common Issues

Strata communities involve multiple stakeholders, and their roles can overlap. Problems often arise not because a role is missing, but because it is unclear who is responsible, who has authority to decide, who coordinates the matter and who provides specialist advice.

Unclear Responsibility

One of the most common problems is uncertainty about who is responsible for an issue.

This can occur when:

- contracts are unclear
- responsibilities overlap
- stakeholders make assumptions based on job titles
- an issue involves both common and private property
- several service providers are involved
- decision-making authority is unclear

The first step should be to identify the issue and the required decision. From there, the Owners Corporation can determine who has authority to decide it and who is responsible for coordinating or carrying out the required action.

Confusing Coordination with Decision-Making

A person may coordinate an issue without having authority to decide it.

For example, a Strata Manager, Building Manager or Facilities Manager may:

- obtain quotations
- arrange contractor access
- gather information
- communicate with stakeholders
- follow up approved works
- coordinate implementation

This does not necessarily mean they can approve the works, expenditure or recommended course of action.

The relevant Owners Corporation decision, delegation and contractual authority should be checked.

Overlap Between Strata, Building and Facilities Management

Role overlap can occur where a building has a Strata Manager, Building Manager and Facilities Manager.

Common areas of confusion include:

- maintenance coordination
- contractor management
- compliance activities
- asset planning
- resident communication
- major works
- incident response
- reporting and record keeping

The titles alone do not determine responsibility. Clear Scopes of Services and communication pathways can help prevent duplicated work or matters falling between roles.

Expecting Strata Managers to Provide Technical Advice

Strata Managers work across many aspects of Owners Corporation administration and governance, but they are not automatically technical specialists.

Issues involving areas such as:

- structural defects
- engineering
- fire safety
- electrical systems
- lifts
- waterproofing
- building compliance
- complex insurance matters
- legal interpretation

may require appropriately qualified specialist advice.

The Strata Manager may assist the Owners Corporation to identify, engage or communicate with a specialist without becoming responsible for the specialist advice itself.

Instructions from People Without Authority

Managers and contractors may receive requests from individual owners, residents or Committee members.

A person raising an issue does not necessarily have authority to instruct work or commit Owners Corporation funds.

Before acting on significant instructions, consider:

- who is giving the instruction
- whether that person has authority
- whether an Owners Corporation or Committee decision is required
- whether expenditure has been authorised
- whether the proposed action falls within an existing delegation

Common Property vs Private Property

Confusion can arise where it is unclear whether an issue affects:

- common property
- an individual lot
- services benefiting several lots
- both common and private property

Responsibility should not be assumed simply because an issue is located near or within a particular lot.

The plan of subdivision, relevant legislation and, where required, specialist advice may need to be considered.

Poor Communication Pathways

When residents, owners, contractors, Property Managers, Building Managers, Committees and Strata Managers communicate independently, information can become fragmented.

Problems may include:

- duplicated requests
- conflicting instructions
- missed information
- unclear responsibility
- delays
- frustration

Clear communication and escalation pathways help stakeholders understand where different issues should be directed and who is responsible for progressing them.

Contractors Working Outside Their Scope

A contractor may identify additional issues while carrying out work.

This does not necessarily mean the contractor has authority to:

- expand the scope
- approve additional expenditure
- determine Owners Corporation responsibility
- make governance decisions
- provide advice outside their qualifications

Additional work should be referred through the appropriate approval process unless existing authority clearly permits it.

Building Defects

Building defects can involve multiple stakeholders, including:

- the Owners Corporation
- lot owners
- developers
- builders
- consultants
- insurers
- the Strata Manager
- the Building Manager
- legal and technical advisers

The first priority should be to identify the nature and location of the issue and obtain appropriate technical advice where required.

Responsibility for the defect and any available rights or remedies should then be determined based on the particular circumstances rather than assumed from a stakeholder's title.

4. Best Practice Approach

Good role management starts with understanding the different stakeholders involved and then clearly defining their authority, responsibilities and communication pathways.

Understanding the Key Stakeholder Roles

The following descriptions are general. Actual responsibilities should always be checked against the relevant legislation, appointment, contract, delegation or Scope of Services.

Owners and Owners Corporation

Stakeholder	Typical Role
Lot Owners	Own individual lots, participate in Owners Corporation decisions and meet obligations applying to their ownership and use of the property.
Owners Corporation	Manages and administers common property and carries out its statutory functions and responsibilities.
Committee	Exercises Owners Corporation functions and powers within its authority and supports decision-making between general meetings.
Chairperson	Chairs meetings and performs functions associated with the office within the authority applying to the role.
Secretary	Supports formal administration, records and notices associated with the office within the authority applying to the role.

Owners and Committees remain central to governance. Engaging professional managers, advisers or contractors does not remove the need for the Owners Corporation to make decisions that remain within its responsibility.

Strata Manager

A Strata Manager is appointed by the Owners Corporation to perform agreed functions within the scope of their appointment and authority.

Typical functions may include:

- preparing and supporting meetings
- maintaining Owners Corporation records
- issuing notices and correspondence
- supporting financial administration and levy processes
- arranging payment of authorised accounts
- supporting budgeting and financial reporting
- coordinating approved maintenance and service providers
- communicating with owners, Committees and other stakeholders
- supporting compliance and governance processes
- implementing authorised Owners Corporation decisions

The Strata Manager's role is primarily one of Owners Corporation administration, governance support, financial management, communication and coordination.

A Strata Manager is not automatically responsible for:

- inspecting or supervising building works
- diagnosing building defects
- providing engineering or technical advice
- acting as a Building Manager or Facilities Manager
- acting as a Project Manager
- making decisions reserved for the Owners Corporation or Committee
- performing services outside the manager's contract or authority

Where additional services are required, the Owners Corporation should consider whether these fall within the Strata Manager's agreed services or require another appropriately qualified provider.

Building Manager

A Building Manager commonly supports the day-to-day operation of a building within an agreed contractual scope.

Depending on the engagement, functions may include:

- monitoring day-to-day building operations
- receiving and reporting maintenance issues
- coordinating site access for contractors
- monitoring contractor attendance
- supporting resident move-in and move-out procedures
- managing building access arrangements
- monitoring presentation of common areas
- maintaining operational records
- escalating building issues to the Strata Manager or Committee
- supporting implementation of building procedures

The Building Manager's authority should not be assumed from the job title. The contract should identify what the Building Manager is expected and authorised to do.

A Building Manager may coordinate contractors or report on works without being technically qualified to assess the work or authorised to approve additional expenditure.

Facilities Manager

Facilities Management generally focuses on the operation, performance and lifecycle of building assets and systems.

Depending on the engagement, functions may include:

- monitoring building systems and equipment
- coordinating planned maintenance
- supporting asset management
- maintaining maintenance schedules and records
- monitoring contractor performance
- assisting with lifecycle and capital works planning
- identifying maintenance requirements
- coordinating specialist service providers
- supporting building compliance processes

The distinction between Building Management and Facilities Management is not always clear-cut. In some buildings the functions overlap or are performed by the same provider.

The relevant contract and Scope of Services should therefore be used to determine responsibility rather than relying on the job title.

Property Manager / Real Estate Agent

A Property Manager or real estate agent generally acts for an individual lot owner in relation to that owner's property and tenancy.

Typical functions may include:

- managing the tenancy
- collecting rent
- communicating with tenants
- arranging repairs for which the lot owner is responsible
- undertaking property inspections
- managing lease documentation
- liaising with the owner about their individual property

A Property Manager does not manage the Owners Corporation simply because they manage a lot within the building.

Where a tenant raises a common property issue, the Property Manager may need to refer the matter through the appropriate Owners Corporation communication pathway.

Residents and Occupiers

Residents and occupiers are important participants in the day-to-day operation of a strata community, whether or not they own their lot.

Their role may include:

- complying with applicable Owners Corporation rules
- using common property appropriately
- reporting maintenance or security issues through established channels
- following building procedures
- providing access where properly required
- communicating relevant issues to their owner or Property Manager where appropriate

Residents should be given clear information about who to contact for different types of issues.

Consultants and Professional Advisers

Owners Corporations may require specialist advice that sits outside the expertise of the Committee, Strata Manager or Building Manager.

Depending on the issue, advisers may include:

- lawyers
- engineers
- building consultants
- quantity surveyors
- building surveyors
- accountants and auditors
- fire safety specialists
- sustainability consultants
- security consultants
- lift consultants
- other appropriately qualified specialists

Their role is generally to provide professional or technical advice within the scope of their engagement.

A consultant may recommend a course of action, but the Owners Corporation or other authorised decision-maker remains responsible for deciding whether to proceed.

Contractors and Service Providers

Contractors are generally engaged to perform defined works or services. Examples may include:

- cleaners
- gardeners
- electricians
- plumbers
- lift contractors
- fire services contractors
- security contractors
- restoration contractors
- pest control providers
- waste contractors
- maintenance contractors

Contractors should work within their agreed scope and relevant qualifications or licensing.

A contractor's technical recommendation should not automatically be treated as authority to approve additional works or expenditure.

Insurers and Insurance Brokers

Insurance involves several distinct roles.

Insurer

The insurer provides insurance cover in accordance with the relevant policy terms and manages matters falling within its role under that policy.

Insurance Broker

An insurance broker may assist with insurance placement, policy information, renewal processes, claims and other insurance services within the scope of their engagement and applicable authority.

Strata Manager

A Strata Manager may perform insurance-related administrative or distribution functions depending on:

- their contract of appointment
- the authority provided by the Owners Corporation
- arrangements with the relevant insurer, broker or Australian Financial Services Licence holder
- the particular insurance services they are authorised to provide

The Strata Manager's insurance role should therefore be determined by the actual arrangements applying to the Owners Corporation rather than assumed to be the same in every building.

Developers and Builders

Developers and builders have important roles during the creation and construction of strata developments, but their functions are different from the ongoing governance and management roles of the Owners Corporation.

Depending on the circumstances, they may be involved in:

- development and construction
- establishment of the subdivision
- initial building documentation
- handover information
- warranties and defects
- transition to ongoing Owners Corporation management

As a development moves from construction into occupation and ongoing management, clear handover of records and information is important.

Responsibility for building defects can be complex and should not be assumed solely from a person's role as developer, builder, owner or manager.

Regulators and Industry Bodies

Regulators oversee particular legal or professional requirements relevant to strata communities. Industry bodies perform a different role.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) is Victoria's consumer affairs regulator and has responsibilities relevant to Owners Corporations and Owners Corporation Managers. CAV:

- provides information and guidance about Owners Corporations
- administers the registration of Owners Corporation Managers
- provides information about the rights and responsibilities of owners, Committees and managers
- has regulatory and enforcement functions under Victorian consumer and Owners Corporation legislation

SCA (Vic) is the industry association for strata professionals in Victoria. SCA (Vic):

- represents and supports strata professionals and the broader strata sector
- provides education and professional development
- develops member resources and guidance
- advocates on industry issues and legislative reform
- promotes professional standards and good practice

SCA (Vic) does not replace the role of CAV or other government regulators and does not provide regulatory enforcement.

Define Roles Clearly

Roles should be clearly understood from the beginning of an engagement.

For service providers, this means documenting:

- services included
- services excluded
- authority
- reporting arrangements
- approval requirements
- communication pathways
- additional service arrangements

Clear documentation reduces reliance on assumptions about what a Strata Manager, Building Manager, Facilities Manager or other provider "normally" does.

Check Authority Before Acting

Before a significant decision or instruction is implemented, consider:

- Who has authority to make the decision?
- Is an Owners Corporation resolution required?
- Can the Committee decide?
- Has authority been delegated?
- Does the service provider's contract permit them to act?
- Is expenditure authorised?

The answer may vary depending on the issue.

Separate Decision-Making, Coordination and Advice

A useful way to clarify responsibility is to ask three separate questions:

Who decides?

The Owners Corporation, Committee or another person with appropriate authority.

Who coordinates?

This may be the Strata Manager, Building Manager, Facilities Manager or another appointed provider.

Who provides specialist advice or carries out the work?

This may require a consultant, professional adviser or appropriately qualified contractor.

The same person does not need to perform all three functions.

Establish Communication Pathways

Owners Corporations should make it clear where common types of enquiries should be directed.

For example:

- governance and Owners Corporation administration → Strata Manager
- day-to-day operational building issues → Building Manager, where appointed and within scope
- individual tenancy matters → Property Manager
- specialist technical issues → appropriate consultant or contractor through the authorised process
- Owners Corporation decisions → Committee or Owners Corporation as appropriate

Actual pathways should reflect the arrangements in the particular building.

Use Appropriately Qualified Specialists

Where an issue requires expertise beyond the capability of the people currently involved, specialist advice should be obtained.

The Owners Corporation should consider:

- required qualifications
- licensing
- relevant experience
- independence where appropriate
- Scope of Services
- professional insurance where relevant

Specialists should be engaged to answer clearly defined questions wherever possible.

Document Decisions and Instructions

Important decisions and instructions should be recorded.

Depending on the matter, records may include:

- resolutions
- meeting minutes
- written instructions
- quotations
- consultant reports
- contractor scopes
- approvals

- delegations
- correspondence

Good records help establish who decided what, what was authorised and who was responsible for implementation.

Review Roles as Buildings Change

The needs of a strata community can change over time.

Role arrangements may need review where:

- the building becomes more complex
- major assets age
- new facilities or systems are introduced
- service providers change
- major projects commence
- recurring responsibility gaps emerge
- existing contracts no longer reflect actual building needs

The aim is not to add more service providers unnecessarily, but to ensure the building has appropriate capability and clear responsibility for the work that needs to be done.

5. Manager / Committee Guidance

When an issue arises, the first question should not simply be "Who normally handles this?" The better approach is to identify the nature of the issue, who has authority to make the required decision and who has the appropriate expertise to assist.

Questions to Ask

Before directing or acting on an issue, consider:

- Is the issue related to common property, private property or both?
- Who has responsibility for the matter?
- Who has authority to make the required decision?
- Does the Committee have authority, or is an Owners Corporation decision required?
- Has authority been delegated?
- What does the relevant contract or Scope of Services say?
- Is the person being asked to decide, coordinate, advise or carry out the work?
- Does the matter require specialist technical, legal, insurance or other professional advice?
- Is there an existing contractor or consultant responsible for the relevant service?
- Has expenditure been appropriately authorised?
- Who should communicate the decision or next steps?
- How should the decision and instructions be documented?

Before Asking the Strata Manager to Act

Consider whether the requested task:

- forms part of the Strata Manager's agreed services
- is within the manager's authority
- requires an Owners Corporation or Committee decision first
- requires specialist advice
- involves additional services outside the agreed contract
- would be more appropriately handled by a Building Manager, Facilities Manager, Property Manager, consultant or contractor

The Strata Manager can often assist with identifying the appropriate pathway, but this does not mean every issue becomes the Strata Manager's responsibility.

Before Asking a Building or Facilities Manager to Act

Check:

- whether the task is included in their Scope of Services
- whether they are being asked to coordinate the matter or approve it
- whether expenditure has been authorised
- whether specialist technical advice is required
- whether the matter should first be referred to the Strata Manager or Committee
- whether the proposed action affects Owners Corporation governance or decision-making

A Building Manager or Facilities Manager may have detailed knowledge of the building without having authority to make the underlying Owners Corporation decision.

Before Engaging a Specialist

Consider:

- What question does the Owners Corporation need answered?
- What expertise or qualification is required?
- Who has authority to approve the engagement?
- Is a clear Scope of Services available?
- Does the specialist need access to existing reports or building records?
- Who will coordinate the engagement?
- Who will receive and assess the advice?
- Will further Owners Corporation approval be required before recommendations are implemented?

A clear brief can help avoid unnecessary work and ensure the Owners Corporation receives advice relevant to the decision it needs to make.

Practical Role Check

When responsibility is unclear, work through the issue in this order:

1. Identify the issue

What has happened and what needs to be resolved?

2. Identify the property or responsibility involved

Does it involve common property, private property, a building service or another shared responsibility?

3. Identify the decision-maker

Who has authority to decide what happens next?

4. Check existing arrangements

What do the relevant contracts, appointments, resolutions and delegations say?

5. Identify the expertise required

Is specialist technical, legal, insurance or other advice needed?

6. Nominate the coordinator

Who will obtain information, communicate with stakeholders and progress the matter?

7. Document the decision

Record the approval, instructions, scope and responsibility for next steps.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who is responsible for common property?

The Owners Corporation is responsible for managing and administering common property and carrying out its functions under the applicable legislation.

Determining whether a particular area, service or item forms part of common property may require reference to the plan of subdivision and other relevant information.

Q. Is the Strata Manager responsible for everything that happens in the building?

No. A Strata Manager supports the governance and administration of the Owners Corporation within their appointment and authority. Their role may include financial administration, meetings, records, communication and coordination.

They are not automatically the Building Manager, Facilities Manager, Project Manager, engineer, lawyer or other specialist adviser.

Q. What is the difference between a Strata Manager and a Building Manager?

A Strata Manager primarily supports the governance and administration of the Owners Corporation.

A Building Manager generally supports the day-to-day operation of the building within an agreed Scope of Services.

The roles may interact frequently, but they are not interchangeable.

Q. What is the difference between a Building Manager and a Facilities Manager?

The terms are sometimes used differently between buildings.

Building Management commonly focuses on day-to-day building operations, while Facilities Management may have a stronger focus on building systems, assets, maintenance and longer-term operational performance.

There can be significant overlap. The relevant contract and Scope of Services should therefore be checked rather than relying on the title alone.

Q. What is the difference between a Strata Manager and a Property Manager?

A Strata Manager acts in relation to the Owners Corporation within their appointment and authority.

A Property Manager generally acts for an individual lot owner in managing that owner's property and tenancy.

A tenant's individual tenancy issue would generally be directed to their Property Manager or landlord, while an Owners Corporation or common property matter should follow the building's established Owners Corporation communication pathway.

Q. Who decides whether maintenance or repairs should proceed?

It depends on the nature of the work, responsibility for the property and the authority already in place. The decision may sit with:

- the Owners Corporation
- the Committee
- a person acting under delegated authority

A manager or contractor may coordinate or recommend work without necessarily having authority to approve it.

Q. Who is responsible for building defects?

There is no single answer that applies to every defect. The Owners Corporation should first identify:

- the nature of the issue
- whether common or private property is affected
- whether specialist investigation is required
- what contracts, warranties or other rights may be relevant

Appropriate technical and, where necessary, legal advice can then assist in determining responsibility and available options.

The Strata Manager or Building Manager may help coordinate the process but should not be expected to diagnose technical defects unless appropriately qualified and engaged to do so.

Q. Who handles insurance?

Several parties may be involved. The insurer provides cover under the insurance policy. An insurance broker may provide insurance placement, policy, renewal, claims or other services within their engagement and authority.

A Strata Manager may perform insurance-related administrative or distribution functions depending on their appointment, authority and applicable insurance arrangements.

The particular arrangements applying to the Owners Corporation should therefore be checked rather than assuming the same process applies to every building.

Q. Who can engage a specialist consultant?

The engagement should be authorised by the person or body with authority to approve it. Depending on the circumstances, this may be:

- the Owners Corporation
- the Committee
- a person acting under an appropriate delegation

A Strata Manager or Building Manager may assist with obtaining proposals or coordinating the engagement without necessarily being the decision-maker.

Q. Can an individual Committee member instruct a contractor?

Not automatically. Being a Committee member does not necessarily give an individual authority to commit the Owners Corporation to expenditure or instruct works.

The relevant Owners Corporation decision, Committee authority, delegation and existing contractual arrangements should be checked.

Q. Can a contractor approve additional work because they discover another problem?

Not automatically. A contractor may identify additional work and recommend that it be undertaken, but approval should follow the appropriate Owners Corporation process unless the contractor or another person already has clear authority to proceed.

Q. Who should residents contact?

This depends on the issue and the arrangements in the particular building. Typical pathways may include:

- tenancy issue → Property Manager or landlord
- Owners Corporation administration → Strata Manager
- day-to-day building operational issue → Building Manager, where appointed
- emergency → appropriate emergency service or established building emergency process
- common property maintenance → established building or Owners Corporation reporting process

Owners Corporations should make these communication pathways clear to residents.

7. Emerging Issues and Future Considerations

Increasingly Complex Developments

Larger apartment buildings, mixed-use developments and developments involving multiple Owners Corporations can create more complex relationships between stakeholders.

Clear responsibility, reporting lines and contractual scopes become increasingly important as the number of parties involved grows.

Greater Specialisation

Modern strata communities increasingly rely on specialist expertise across areas such as:

- building defects
- fire safety
- sustainability and electrification
- cyber security
- electronic security
- lifts
- insurance
- major capital works
- building compliance

This reinforces the importance of recognising when an issue falls outside the expertise of the Strata Manager, Committee or Building Manager.

Digital Communication and Platforms

Digital platforms are changing how owners, residents, Committees, managers and contractors communicate.

These systems can improve access to information and issue tracking, but they do not change the underlying authority to make Owners Corporation decisions.

Clear communication pathways remain important even where technology makes it easier for stakeholders to contact one another directly.

Accountability and Documented Authority

As strata communities become more complex, there is increasing value in clearly documenting:

- who is responsible for particular functions
- who has authority to approve expenditure or works

- who provides advice
- who coordinates implementation
- how issues should be escalated

Good documentation can reduce uncertainty when staff, Committee members or service providers change.

Changing Building Needs

The roles required by an Owners Corporation may change as the building ages.

An Owners Corporation that once required relatively simple administration may later need greater support with:

- asset planning
- major works
- building systems
- defects
- compliance
- sustainability upgrades
- specialist procurement

Roles and service arrangements should therefore be reviewed periodically rather than assumed to remain appropriate indefinitely.

8. Key Takeaways

- The Owners Corporation remains responsible for its decisions.
- Authority should not be assumed from a person's job title.
- Contracts, resolutions, appointments and delegations help define who can do what.
- Decision-making, coordination, specialist advice and carrying out work are different functions.
- Strata Managers support Owners Corporation governance and administration but are not automatically Building Managers, Facilities Managers or Project Managers.
- Building and Facilities Management responsibilities depend on the agreed Scope of Services.
- Property Managers act for individual lot owners and should not be confused with Strata Managers.
- Technical, legal and other specialist matters should be referred to appropriately qualified advisers where required.
- Clear roles, communication pathways and documented authority can reduce delays, duplication and disputes.
- As buildings become more complex, role arrangements should be reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.

9. Further Resources

For further information, refer to:

- Owners Corporations Act 2006 (Vic)
- Owners Corporations Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Subdivision Act 1988 (Vic)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria – Owners Corporations
- Victorian Building Authority
- relevant SCA (Vic) Governance Guides
- relevant SCA (Vic) Industry Guides
- SCA (Vic) member resources and professional development materials

Appendix A – Who Does What? Quick Reference

Before Referring an Issue Ask:

- What is the issue?
- Who has responsibility for it?
- Who has authority to decide?
- Who should coordinate it?
- Is specialist advice required?
- Who is authorised to carry out the work?

Remember: The person who receives or coordinates an issue is not necessarily the person responsible for making the decision.

If the issue relates to...	Start by considering...	Remember...
Owners Corporation governance or decisions	Owners Corporation / Committee / Strata Manager	Check who has authority to make the decision
Owners Corporation administration	Strata Manager	Check the manager's appointment and Scope of Services
Day-to-day building operations	Building Manager, where appointed	Responsibilities depend on the Building Manager's contract
Building systems and asset performance	Facilities Manager, where appointed	Specialist technical advice may still be required
Individual tenancy matters	Property Manager / landlord	A Property Manager acts for the individual lot owner, not the Owners Corporation
Common property maintenance	Owners Corporation's established reporting pathway	Coordination and approval are different functions
Technical building issue	Appropriately qualified consultant or contractor	The Strata Manager or Building Manager should not be expected to provide specialist technical advice
Building defect	Owners Corporation + appropriate technical adviser	Establish the nature and location of the defect before assuming responsibility
Legal issue	Appropriately qualified legal adviser	Managers may coordinate the process but should not provide legal advice outside their expertise
Insurance issue	Insurer / broker / Strata Manager, depending on the matter	Roles depend on the policy, appointment and applicable insurance arrangements
Contractor work	Relevant contractor or service provider	Check Scope of Works and approval authority before additional work proceeds
Resident issue	Relevant building communication pathway	The correct contact depends on whether it is a tenancy, building operations or Owners Corporation matter
Emergency	Emergency services and established building emergency procedures	Immediate safety takes priority