

GENERAL GUIDE TO BUYING A STRATA PROPERTY



INTRODUCTION

Strata Managers

Strata Managers support the Council of Owners within the Strata Scheme to ensure the maintenance of the property and common areas for the benefit of all lot owners. They also assist Council Members with financial and administrative management, compliance, and governance matters.



Our Strata Managers are supported by specialized teams dedicated to managing your complex:

- Administration & Accounts
- Compliance/Governance
- Maintenance
- Note: We do not serve as on-site Building/Facility Managers or Project Managers.

Bunbury Settlement Services

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PAGE 1

WHAT DO I OWN?

When you purchase in a Strata Scheme, you own your individual lot as well as a share in the common property. There are two types of Strata Schemes:

1. Strata: This involves existing buildings on a single plot of land subdivided into two or more strata lots, such as multi-level apartments or multiple apartments on one land parcel, delineated on a Strata Plan.
2. Survey Strata: This consists of one plot of land divided into smaller lots, where each lot has surveyed boundaries, and no buildings are indicated on the Survey-Strata Plan. A Survey-Strata may or may not include common property.

The boundaries of your lot are shown on the Strata Plan or Survey Strata Scheme. The specifics of what you own versus what constitutes common property depend on these boundaries, so it's advisable to contact our office for clarification if needed.



COMMON PROPERTY

WHAT IS COMMON PROPERTY?

Common property refers to areas of the land that are not part of an individual lot. This may include:

- Garden areas
- Shared driveways
- Lifts
- Foyers
- Swimming pools
- Gyms
- The building structure itself

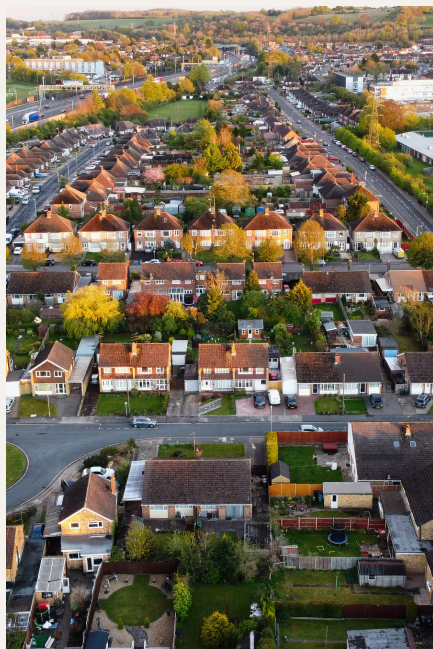
Typically, the Strata Company maintains the common property, but each Strata Scheme may have different by-laws that could make maintenance the responsibility of the owners. Please reach out to our office for assistance if needed.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PROPERTY

- Strata Company (all owners): Votes on financial and budget matters at the AGM.
- Council of Owners: Makes day-to-day decisions.
- Strata Manager: Provides administrative support to facilitate these decisions.

THE COUNCIL OF THE STRATA COMPANY

The Council of the Strata Company, comprised of 3 to 7 owners elected at the Annual General Meeting, manages daily obligations similar to a Board of Directors. They are authorized to fulfill many responsibilities of the Strata Company, subject to certain restrictions.



MEETINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)

he AGM is held each year, where owners review the past year's financial records and address items such as insurance placements, levy contributions, and budget planning for the following year. It is also an opportunity for discussions about significant projects for common property, like building exteriors. Owners will receive at least 14 days' written notice (via post or email) regarding the AGM, and attendance is encouraged as key decisions are made.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS (EGM)

An Extraordinary General Meeting is a gathering that is not the Annual General Meeting. EGMs can be called by the Council of Owners for matters that require decisions outside the scope of an AGM. These meetings are held to address urgent or specific issues that arise between regular AGMs. Notice of an EGM, including the date, time, and place, is typically sent to all property owners via post or email. We encourage all owners to attend as important decisions about the strata scheme are made during these meetings.

CIRCULAR RESOLUTIONS

A Circular Resolution is a method used by the Strata Company to make decisions without holding an in-person meeting. Instead, voting is conducted via postal or email communication. Circular Resolutions must adhere to the Act's requirements, including providing a minimum of 14 days' notice before voting begins. The resolution must clearly state the reasons for the proposed decision. Owners are encouraged to review the provided documentation thoroughly and submit their vote as requested.



PAGE III CONTINUED

LEVIES & INSURANCE

STRATA CONTRIBUTIONS – STRATA LEVIES

Strata contributions (levies) are set by the Strata Company (or the owners) at each Annual General Meeting and must be paid by all owners. These contributions are essential for covering the costs associated with the strata scheme. Payment schedules for these levies may vary, and the Strata Company will specify the due dates. For instance, contributions might be payable monthly, quarterly, every six months, or on another schedule as determined.

Please note that Bunbury Settlement Services is not qualified to provide insurance advice. For insurance-related inquiries, please consult your strata company's underwriter or broker.

INSURANCE

The strata scheme insurance usually covers the building(s), fixtures, and fittings. However, in certain cases, such as a Survey Strata Scheme, the insurance may only cover common property. For instance, in a survey-strata scheme, the only item covered might be the common driveway.

Fixtures and fittings within your lot can include items such as kitchen cabinets, benchtops, bathroom vanities, shower screens, and fixed flooring.

Lot owners/occupants are advised to consider obtaining their own private contents insurance to cover items like carpets, window treatments, and personal belongings, as these are not covered by the building insurance policy. Additionally, landlords may want to consider landlord insurance for added protection.



BY-LAWS

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All Strata Schemes are governed by by-laws in accordance with the Strata Title Act. All owners, occupants, and visitors must comply with these by-laws. Additionally, some Strata Schemes have specific by-laws registered on the Strata Plan.

BY-LAW OVERVIEW

- By-Laws Source: By-laws are included within the Strata Title Act WA. However, your Strata Scheme may have additional specific by-laws.
- Modification of By-Laws: By-laws can be amended, added, or repealed by the Strata Company (all owners).
- Governance By-Laws: Schedule 1 of the Strata Title Act outlines governance by-laws which dictate the operation of a Strata Scheme and impose certain responsibilities on lot owners.
- Conduct By-Laws: Schedule 2 of the Strata Title Act consists of conduct by-laws related to conduct matters. These apply to all owners, occupants, and visitors to the Strata Scheme.



PAGE III

BY-LAWS

BY-LAWS YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF
ALWAYS CHECK BEFORE YOU ACT

PETS/ANIMALS

Always consult your Strata Manager before bringing a pet to your lot. Many properties have by-laws that prohibit the keeping of any animal, bird, or fish. Additionally, your Strata Scheme might have by-laws requiring approval from the Strata Company or Council of Owners before bringing a pet to reside on your lot. Ensure you obtain this approval before bringing any pet to your premises.

ALTERATIONS

Before making any alterations to your lot, you must seek advice to determine if approval is needed from the Strata Company (all owners) of the Council of Owners. This includes even minor changes such as painting, hanging pictures, or installing new blinds which may require approval. Always check before you act.

FLOORING

Replacing the flooring in your lot will require the Strata Company (all owners) approval, especially if there are by-laws that restrict certain types of flooring. Always check with your office before making any changes to the flooring within your lot. Obtain approval before you act

Please consult with your strata manager prior to making any changes to ensure compliance with relevant by-laws.

STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

A structural alteration is defined as a change that affects the structure of the building. If your intended alteration goes beyond a simple cosmetic change, it is likely a structural alteration and will need approval from the Strata Company (all owners). This also applies to changes such as bathroom renovations. Always verify with your strata manager prior to proceeding.



PAGE III

MAXIMIZING YOUR STRATA SCHEME EXPERIENCE

For Owners:

- Get involved in decision-making processes.
- Attend general meetings regularly.
- Exercise your voting rights.
- Voice your opinions.
- Consider running for the Council of Owners.

For Residents:

- Build connections with your neighbors and contribute to fostering a strong community.
- Utilize and enjoy the available facilities to the fullest.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions or need clarification regarding any aspect of your lot or the topics covered in this document, please feel free to contact our office. We are here to assist you with any inquiries you may have.

