STRATA IQ ACADEMY

COMMITTEE MEMBER
WELCOME GUIDE

A practical guide for your first 30 days

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Practical judgement informed by 25+ years of strata experience

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WELCOME

Thank you for stepping forward

Serving on a strata committee means helping to look after the building, its money and the people who live or work there. You do not need to know everything on day one. Start by asking good questions, checking the facts and acting for all owners—not only yourself.

This guide is for busy committee members. It shows a simple way to make sound decisions: understand the issue, check who can decide, gather reliable information, record the decision and follow it through.

SILVESTRO'S PRACTICAL RULE Before asking 'What do I want?', ask 'What does the scheme need, who has authority, and what evidence should guide the decision?'

Your first 30 days

- Read the latest AGM and committee meeting minutes.
- Review the current budget, financial position and capital works fund plan.
- Obtain the registered by-laws and understand the approval pathways.
- Ask for a summary of current repairs, projects, disputes and compliance deadlines.
- Confirm how the committee will communicate and how formal decisions will be recorded.
- Understand the strata manager's delegated authority and the committee's spending limits.
- Declare any conflicts of interest before the relevant matter is discussed.
- Keep scheme information secure and separate from personal or informal group chats.

A GOOD START You are not expected to solve every historic issue immediately. Build a reliable picture of the scheme, agree priorities and record the next action.

Keep these documents close

- The latest AGM and committee minutes.
- The registered strata plan and current by-laws.
- The approved budget, financial statements and capital works plan.
- The insurance policy, key contracts and current compliance calendar.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The three decision-making layers

A well-run scheme is clearer when everyone understands the difference between the Owners Corporation, the strata committee and the strata managing agent.

Decision-maker	Primary role	Practical boundary
Owners Corporation	All owners together. It decides matters that need a general meeting, including budgets, levies and decisions required by law.	It is the scheme's highest decision-making body.
Strata committee	The elected group that handles many day-to-day decisions for the Owners Corporation, within its legal authority.	It cannot make decisions the law reserves for all owners.
Strata managing agent	Provides professional administration and carries out tasks formally delegated under the agency agreement or a recorded resolution.	The agent supports and implements decisions. The agent does not replace the committee or all owners.

COMMITTEE MEMBER DUTIES Exercise your functions honestly and fairly, with due care and diligence, and for the benefit, as far as practicable, of the Owners Corporation. Comply with the Act and regulations, use information only for committee work or as authorised or required by law, and do not unreasonably interfere with lawful use or enjoyment of lots or common property.

Committee office holders

- **Chairperson:** Chairs meetings and supports orderly discussion. The chairperson does not have a casting vote at a strata committee meeting.
- **Secretary:** Supports notices, agendas, minutes, correspondence and the strata roll, unless these functions are delegated.
- **Treasurer:** Supports financial records, budgets, levies and reporting, unless these functions are delegated.

ONE COMMITTEE - ONE VOTE EACH Office holders coordinate particular functions, but every eligible committee member has one vote. Authority comes from legislation, resolutions and valid delegations - not from job title alone.

AUTHORITY BEFORE ACTION

Who decides what?

Use this traffic-light guide before giving instructions, promising an outcome or committing scheme funds. It is a practical starting point; always check the specific legislation, meeting resolutions, by-laws, budget and delegations.

Authority level	Examples
GREEN - Committee can generally decide	Routine maintenance and contractor instructions within approved budgets and authority; day-to-day administration; operational follow-up; implementing valid Owners Corporation resolutions.
AMBER - Check before deciding	Unbudgeted or high-value expenditure; disputed responsibility; renovations; insurance or defect matters; legal services; conflicts of interest; urgent works; decisions affected by a committee restriction or prior resolution.
RED - General meeting required	Annual budgets and levy contributions; special levies; by-law creation or amendment; matters requiring a special or unanimous resolution; functions legislation expressly reserves for the Owners Corporation.

The five-question judgement check

1. What is the actual issue, stripped of personalities and assumptions?
2. Is it common property, lot property, shared property or still uncertain?
3. Who has legal and financial authority to decide?
4. What evidence, quotation, report or advice is needed before acting?
5. How will the decision, reasons and next action be recorded?

> **STOP AND CHECK** If authority is unclear, pause the commitment - not the risk response. Urgent safety steps may still be required while formal authority and funding are confirmed.

A simple example

A leaking pipe may need an immediate make-safe response. Control the risk first, then confirm responsibility, authority, scope and funding. If still unsure, ask the strata manager to identify the relevant by-law, resolution, delegation or legislative pathway before the committee votes.

MEETINGS AND VOTING

Make decisions properly

Committee meetings deal with day-to-day scheme matters. Owners can generally attend as observers and may speak with the committee's permission. Proper notice, an agenda, valid voting and an accurate record matter.

Core rules

- One-member committee: that member must be present. Otherwise, quorum is at least half of those entitled to vote, based on the committee size last determined by the Owners Corporation.
- Each eligible committee member has one vote. A motion passes by simple majority; the chairperson has no casting vote.
- Voting may occur in person, electronically or in writing when the required process is followed; an informal chat is not a recorded decision.
- A committee decision has no effect if, before it is made, the secretary receives opposition from owners whose combined unit entitlements exceed one-third of the scheme's aggregate unit entitlement.

Resolution language in plain English

Resolution	Plain-English meaning	Typical use
Ordinary	Passed using the ordinary voting rule applying to the meeting.	Most general-meeting decisions.
Special	Usually, not more than 25% of votes cast by unit entitlement are against. Sustainability and accessibility infrastructure use different thresholds.	By-laws and other matters specified by legislation.
Unanimous	No vote is cast against the motion.	Limited matters expressly requiring unanimity.

Conflicts of interest

A member must disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary interest that appears to conflict with their duties as soon as possible at a committee meeting. Record the disclosure. The member must not be present for deliberation or take part in the decision. Minutes should record the motion, voters, result, conflicts, action owner and due date.

MONEY AND STEWARDSHIP

Financial decisions belong to the scheme

Committee members do not need to be accountants, but they should understand the story behind the numbers: what the scheme owns, what it owes, what is due next and whether planned funding matches foreseeable work.

The two main funds

Fund	Purpose	Typical examples
Administrative fund	Day-to-day operating expenses.	Cleaning, utilities, insurance, management fees and routine services.
Capital works fund	Major repair, replacement and long-term asset expenditure.	Painting, roofs, waterproofing, lifts and major plant replacement.

What owners decide

- Annual budgets and levy contributions are determined by the Owners Corporation at a general meeting.
- A special levy must be introduced at a general meeting of the Owners Corporation.
- The ten-year capital works fund plan must be reviewed at least every five years.
- Accounts must be audited for a large strata scheme or where the annual budget exceeds $250,000. Utility and parking lots are excluded from the large-scheme lot count.

Committee financial checks

- Compare actual spending with the approved budget.
- Check the scope, authority and funding source before approving expenditure.
- Consider the total cost, not just the cheapest quotation.
- Monitor arrears, cash flow, unpaid creditors and upcoming large commitments.
- Keep owners informed when a material funding decision is approaching.

MONTHLY FINANCE CHECK A bank balance alone is not the full picture. Review cash in each fund, unpaid invoices, committed spending, levy arrears, payment dates, planned work and the next levy income together.

REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

Protect people first, then confirm responsibility

The Owners Corporation has a statutory duty to maintain and repair common property. However, boundaries and responsibility can be scheme-specific. The strata plan, registered by-laws, expert evidence and the circumstances of the damage may all matter.

Triage the issue

Priority	Examples	Committee response
Emergency	Serious and imminent health or safety threat, major active leak, fire-system fault, major electrical danger.	Make the area safe, notify the manager/building manager, engage emergency assistance within authority, preserve evidence and record the action.
Urgent	Active water ingress, failed essential service, security failure or escalating damage.	Arrange prompt assessment, temporary controls and a documented decision pathway.
Routine	Cleaning, gardening, minor repairs and programmed servicing.	Use the approved maintenance process, budget and contractor controls.
Capital project	Roof, waterproofing, facade, lift or major plant renewal.	Define scope, obtain technical advice, check approvals, funding, procurement and project controls.

Before engaging a contractor

- For work valued at $30,000 or more, obtain at least two independent quotes unless the legislative emergency-repair exception applies.
- Define the problem and required outcome before requesting prices.
- Use comparable scopes; otherwise quotations cannot be meaningfully compared.
- Check licensing, insurance, safety documents and relevant experience.
- Confirm who may approve, instruct, vary and sign off the work.
- Retain quotations, reports, work orders, photographs, warranties and invoices.

DO NOT DELAY RISK CONTROL A disagreement about who ultimately pays should not prevent reasonable steps to protect people and limit further damage.

CLOSE THE WORK ORDER Confirm the scope was completed; record defects or variations; file the invoice, photographs, warranty and compliance documents; then update the maintenance plan and next service date.

RECORDS, COMMUNICATION AND PRIVACY

Good records protect good decisions

Most required Owners Corporation records generally need to be kept for seven years. Required records created from 11 June 2024 must be kept electronically. The strata roll must always be kept up to date.

Keep a clear decision trail

- Meeting notices, agendas, motions, voting records and minutes.
- Financial statements, invoices, quotations, contracts and levy records.
- Correspondence sent and received by the Owners Corporation or committee.
- Insurance, fire safety, compliance, building and contractor records.
- Reports, photographs, certificates, warranties and project approvals.

Communication standards

- **Be factual:** Separate verified facts from assumptions, opinions and allegations.
- **Use the right channel:** Operational updates may be communicated by email, but decisions must follow the proper process.
- **Protect privacy:** Use or disclose information obtained as a committee member only as required to carry out committee functions, or as authorised or required by law.
- **Close the loop:** Every material issue should have an owner, next action and review date.

EMAIL IS A RECORD Write every scheme email on the assumption that it may later be inspected by an owner, insurer, regulator, tribunal or court.

WHEN DISAGREEMENT BECOMES DIFFICULT Return to the issue, evidence, authority and required decision. If it remains unresolved, use a formal motion, specialist advice, mediation or the appropriate tribunal process. Record the next action, owner, due date and evidence location.

ANNUAL CONTROL CHECKLIST

The committee's yearly rhythm

This checklist is a management aid, not a complete statement of every obligation. Scheme type, building use, location and existing orders may create additional requirements.

Control	Timing	Practical check
Annual General Meeting	Once in each financial year	Budget, levies, financial statements, insurance and required motions prepared and considered.
Strata Hub annual report	Within 3 months after AGM	Reporting submitted and fee paid; changed contact details updated within 28 days.
Building insurance	Review annually	Replacement value, policy terms, claims history and renewal confirmed.
Annual Fire Safety Statement	Where applicable - annually	Inspection, defect rectification and lodgement timetable controlled.
Capital works fund plan	10-year plan; review at least every 5 years	Forecast aligns with condition, expected projects and funding strategy.
Financial audit	Annually where required	Mandatory for a large scheme or where the annual budget exceeds $250,000.
Safety controls	Programmed and event-driven	Windows, pools, access, asbestos, electrical and other relevant risks monitored.
Contracts and delegations	Review before expiry and when roles change	Authority, service scope, performance, insurance and renewal dates recorded.
By-laws and strata roll	Keep current	Registered by-laws accessible; ownership, agent and tenancy information updated.

CALENDAR THE CONTROLS For every deadline, record who owns it, when it is due, what evidence proves completion and who is told if it becomes overdue.

PRACTICAL MEETING TOOLS

Your first committee meeting

Suggested agenda

1. Welcome, introductions and disclosure of conflicts of interest.
2. Election of chairperson, secretary and treasurer, if required.
3. Confirmation of communication and record-keeping arrangements.
4. Financial position: cash, arrears, creditors, budget and upcoming commitments.
5. Maintenance, defects, safety and compliance priorities.
6. Current contracts, projects, disputes and legal matters.
7. Agree the top priorities, responsible person and review date for each action.
8. Confirm the next meeting date and matters requiring owner consideration.

A practical maintenance workflow

Step	Action	Evidence to retain
1	Record and triage the issue.	Date, location, photographs, reporter and immediate risk.
2	Check responsibility and authority.	Strata plan, by-laws, budget, delegation and relevant resolutions.
3	Define scope and obtain advice/quotes.	Comparable scope, technical report and contractor credentials.
4	Make and record the decision.	Motion, vote, reasons, funding source and instructions.
5	Manage delivery and changes.	Work order, access, variations, progress records and safety documents.
6	Inspect, close and file.	Completion evidence, invoice approval, warranty and maintenance register update.

END EVERY MEETING WELL Read back the decisions and actions before the meeting closes. Confirm the responsible person, due date and how progress will be reported.

QUICK REFERENCE

Ten habits of capable committees

1. Put the Owners Corporation's interests ahead of personal agendas.
2. Check authority before promising, instructing or spending.
3. Deal with safety and active damage promptly.
4. Use evidence and comparable scopes, not assumptions.
5. Plan maintenance before assets fail.
6. Understand cash flow, liabilities and future funding together.
7. Declare conflicts early and manage them transparently.
8. Record every material decision and next action.
9. Communicate respectfully, factually and consistently.
10. Ask for professional advice early when the issue exceeds the committee's expertise.

Questions to ask before voting

- What decision are we actually being asked to make?
- Do we have authority, quorum and adequate notice?
- What evidence supports the recommendation?
- What are the cost, risk, timing and alternatives?
- Is there a conflict of interest or privacy issue?
- What must be recorded and communicated after the vote?

THE 60-SECOND VOTING PAUSE Before voting, restate the decision, confirm authority, identify the evidence and name the next action. Capable committees understand why the decision matters and how it will protect the scheme.

OFFICIAL SOURCES AND LEARNING BOUNDARY

Use current, official information

This guide is an educational starting point. NSW strata law changes over time, and every scheme has its own strata plan, registered by-laws, resolutions, contracts, delegations and factual circumstances.

- Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 (NSW)
- Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2016 (NSW)
- NSW Government - Serving on a strata committee
- NSW Government - How to run a strata meeting
- NSW Government - Levies
- NSW Government - Record keeping requirements
- NSW Government - Strata annual reporting
- NSW Government - Who's who in strata
- NSW Government - Repairs and maintenance

SOURCE CONTROL Legal-source check completed against NSW legislation and NSW Government guidance current as at 24 August 2026. Recheck after legislative change and before consequential scheme-specific action.

When to obtain specialist advice

- Responsibility for property or damage is genuinely disputed.
- The decision could create significant legal or financial exposure.
- Building, fire-safety, engineering or insurance expertise is required.
- The committee is considering litigation, mediation or tribunal action.

LEARNING BOUNDARY This guide is general professional-development material. It is not legal, financial, engineering, building, fire-safety or scheme-specific advice. Before consequential action, check the current legislation, registered by-laws, strata plan, resolutions, delegations and appropriate specialist advice.

About the Academy

Strata IQ Academy develops practical workplace judgement—helping people think, decide and act like capable strata professionals, informed by Silvestro Musumeci's 25+ years of practical strata experience.

Questions or learning feedback: hello@strataiqacademy.com.au

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ABOUT THE FOUNDER

Experience behind Strata IQ Academy

Silvestro Musumeci is a NSW Class 1 Licensed Strata Managing Agent and the Founder of Strata IQ Academy. With more than 25 years of practical strata experience, he has worked across strata operations, committee governance, building management committees, complex decision-making and professional capability development.

Silvestro established Strata IQ Academy to help people develop practical workplace judgement—how to think, decide and act like capable strata professionals. His approach is plain-English, evidence-informed and grounded in the realities of managing buildings, supporting committees and protecting strata communities.

THE ACADEMY PURPOSE Practical training. Real scenarios. Better strata. The goal is not simply to know the rules, but to use sound judgement, ask better questions and follow decisions through.

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