

FAQs – Lot Improvements

Strata Mastery Help Desk

1 HOW DO I APPLY TO THE BODY CORPORATE FOR AN IMPROVEMENT?

Lot Owners must complete the Body Corporate 'Application for Lot Improvement' (online) form. The applicable link has been provided directly below.

LINK: <https://stratamastery.com.au/customer-support/lot-improvement-application-form/>

Alternatively, Owners may visit the 'Strata Mastery' website at: stratamastery.com.au.

1. Select the '**SERVICES**' 2nd tab which appears at the top of your screen. The 'Body Corporate Management Services' panel will then appear –

SM STRATA MASTERY
BODY CORPORATE MANAGEMENT & TRAINING SERVICES

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Body Corporate Management Services

Effective, professional and streamlined services optimising your body corporate scheme.

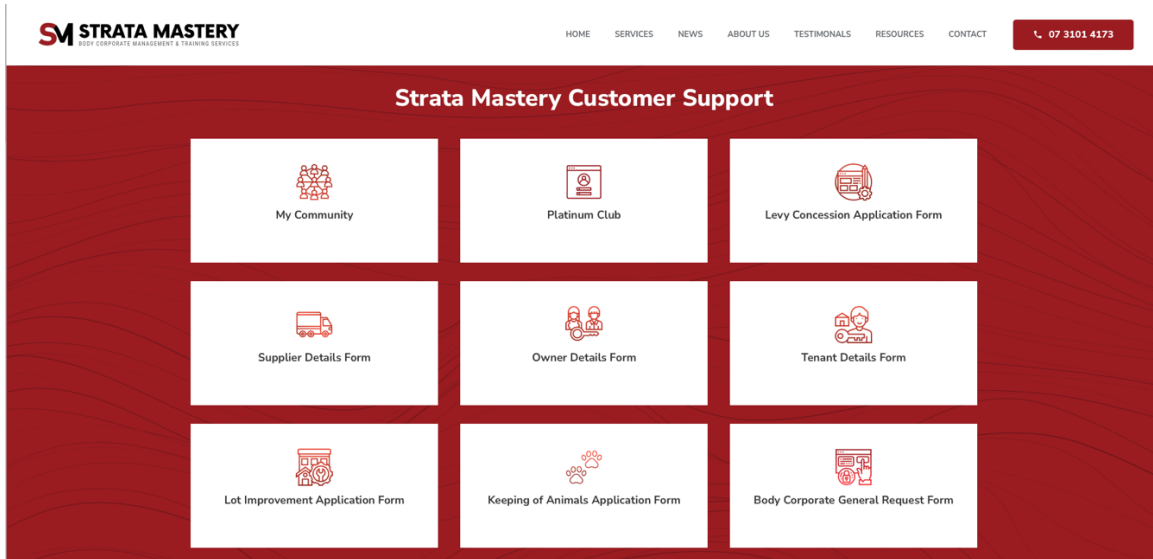
- ✓ Organising and scheduling meetings
- ✓ Preparation of meeting notices, agendas and minutes within legislative timeframes
- ✓ Optional assistance with chairing meetings
- ✓ Complete post meeting action requests promptly and provide accurate updates
- ✓ Orderly management of your records electronically for ease of access
- ✓ Manage Body Corporate information, including roll and registers
- ✓ Organise correspondence including drafting, sending, filing and archiving
- ✓ Provide advice on all administrative matters, communication issues and records
- ✓ Make applications to the Office of the Commissioner for BCCM
- ✓ Consult with industry specialists, lawyers, engineers, builders, compliance auditors
- ✓ Free biannual training for newly elected Committee Members and Caretakers

Strata Mastery Customer Support

2. Select the (red) '**Strata Mastery Customer Support**' button shown. This button will direct you to the customer service landing page (see below).

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE).

3. Select 'Lot Improvement Application Form'. See: 1st Column, 3rd Box Down.



4. **ALL** supporting documents are recommended to be prepared in advance and saved to your desktop files (in PDF format) **prior** to commencing your online application. See *below* for sample list of supporting documents.

Online applications may be saved (whilst applications are in progress), however, all applications will be automatically deleted after **3 days** for security purposes.

2 WHAT DOCUMENTS MUST BE PROVIDED WITH MY APPLICATION FOR IMPROVEMENT?

Responsibility falls on the **Lot Owner**, who is making the request, to provide all relevant supporting documents that apply.

IMPORTANT: It is **not** the responsibility of the Body Corporate to provide Lot Owner's with a list of compliance items pertaining to the Owner's request.

Lot Owners are responsible to carry-out any/all necessary searches to ensure **absolute** compliance. To remove any possible doubt, it is the Owner's responsibility to ensure that all relevant Acts, National Construction Code (NCC), Body Corporate By-laws, WHS Act, Fire Safety Act, Electrical Safety Act, Codes of Practices, Australian Standards are satisfactorily met. Any/all costs to comply is also a **Lot Owner** responsibility to meet. For example, engaging a suitably qualified fire service provider to isolate and de-isolate the fire panel whilst builders and building management are on site.

	<p>A sample list of supporting documents is provided below. This is intended as a general guide only -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Service Contractor Licence and Insurance Certificate/s (ii) Warranty & Guarantee Details (iii) Quotation/Proposal (Detailing: 'Scope of Works', Product Specifications – Make, Model, Colour Design Type, Format, Size, Quantity, Service Contractor Contact Information etc.) (iv) Marked-up Building Plans/Diagrams/Drawings/Photographs/Floor Plans etc. (v) Proposed Start and End Date of Works (vi) Waste Management Details and Assurances (vii) Adjoining Lot Written Consent (viii) Copy of Written Notification to Insurer <p>Ongoing maintenance and any damages originating from the improvement is a <u>Lot Owner</u> Cost. For example, rust damage identified some years after the improvement has been made for air conditioning installations, solar panel installations, shutter installations, would be a <u>Lot Owner</u> cost or apportioned cost to meet.</p> <p>To avoid any disappointments and delays, great care must be taken to ensure that all relevant supporting documents are provided to the Body Corporate.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>Where structural improvements are being made (changing the original layout, removing, or erecting a new structure such as a wall), care must be taken to include the following additional supporting documents to the Body Corporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Council Approvals. (ii) Engineer's Reports. (iii) Worker/s - SWMS (Safe Work Method Statements). (iv) Building Certifier Statements. <p>If work includes alterations to the original layout of the lot, or structural alterations of any kind, then the <u>Lot Owner</u> shall, at his/her own cost, obtain certification from a relevantly qualified person (e.g. Builder, Architect, Engineer). Consultant advice may often be nominated by the Body Corporate/Committee. This advice must provide written assurance that the proposed building works will not affect the structural integrity of the scheme.</p>

Any project that involves **plumbing works** will require local Council certification and adjoin your application.

Any project that involves **waterproofing** will require a Form 43 or Form 12 on the waterproofing works and adjoin your application.

Any project that involves changing or removing **internal walls** should be checked against the "As Construction Plans" for concealed infrastructure.

Any project that involves changing/adding or removing **dividing walls or exterior walls/windows/doors** should be checked against the Development Approval (DA) as well for compliance with the DA.

The Body Corporate may request the Building Approval from the Lot Owner's private certifier **PRIOR** to works starting [or a letter from a Certifier stating that no Building Approval is required] and a copy of all building compliance certificates mentioned on the Building Approval [e.g. Engineer's Form 15's].

The Body Corporate/Committee reserves the right to inspect any/all works that are in progress and at completion of works.

To avoid any disappointments and delays, great care must be taken to ensure that **all** relevant supporting documents are provided when lodging your application.

If there are no 'structural' improvements, is a Lot Owner still required to apply to the Body Corporate for the improvement?

In short, **yes**. The Body Corporate will require the written assurance that the proposed building works are indeed 'non-structural' and that all applicable Acts, National Construction Code (NCC), Body Corporate By-laws, WHS Act, Fire Safety Act, Electrical Safety Act, Codes of Practices, Australian Standards will be satisfactorily met.

Workers will also often require access to **common property/shared** visitor parking bays, **shared** lifts, hallways, riser cupboards, pathways, walkways etc.

Any damages to common property by a Lot Owner's nominated tradesperson is a Lot Owner's cost and responsibility to repair.

Rectification works will require to be supervised by the Building Manager (or in the absence of the Building Manager, the nominated Committee Member) who in turn will keep the Body Corporate/Committee informed of any developments.

	<p>In short, 'structural' improvements is a serious matter and must be handled with great care.</p>
4	<p>HARD FLOORING INSTALLATIONS – ACOUSTIC UNDERLAY BETWEEN APARTMENTS</p> <p>Multi-storey buildings were designed and built in the late 1990s and thus predated legislation on acoustic insulation between strata titles.</p> <p>The majority of Bodies Corporate will require a minimum 4-star insulation rating between strata titles/lots.</p> <p>Changing the flooring from carpet to a hard surface timber, laminate tiles or vinyl requires acoustic insulation from the floor below Vinyl has an advantage of depth and softness but is often not perceived as having the same high quality as other flooring systems.</p> <p>Floating floors such as laminate or engineered timber are favoured due to the separation of the flooring from the concrete slab. Although not as quiet as carpet or vinyl, these systems have the potential to provide an acceptable level of noise transfer in most applications.</p> <p>You must not remove flooring coverings or replace floor coverings with a different type of floor covering, except with your Body Corporate's prior written consent.</p> <p>Prior to installation, advice should be sought from a requested acoustic consulting company. Advice as to: suitable floor treatments and the level of floor impact isolation rating required to ensure the hard flooring does not cause an unreasonable interference or nuisance to another occupier. A copy of the advice obtained is recommended to adjoin your application.</p> <p>An Acoustic Engineer's Report may have also been commissioned by your Body Corporate to determine an appropriate LnTw Rating for your scheme. You may make enquiries with your Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.</p> <p>Body Corporate By-laws may also state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) That the underlay installed is a 5 star rating (LnTw (dB) 45) being 5mm Regupol, Angelstep Gold8, or other equivalent products. The lower the LnTw rating the better, the higher the FIIC rating the better;

- (ii) *Where a complaint is received by the Body Corporate, the floor may be required to be tested to ensure that the minimum FIC requirement has been met. In this instance, an acoustic certificate is required to be provided to the Committee. Testing costs more than \$1,000 and will often require access to the unit located directly below to conduct a test.*

To obtain contact details for Lot Owner's that are located immediately below, you may reach out to your Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.

5 **AIR CONDITIONING INSTALLATIONS**

Adding an air conditioner to your apartment or townhouse is the Lot Owner's full responsibility including all costs for installation and maintenance. Airconditioning systems permitted are often split systems with the condenser unit mounted externally usually on a balcony. Window mounted air conditioning systems are not generally permitted.

Your Body Corporate Committee will examine placement and noise and whether the unit's operation will affect adjacent owners.

It is important that Owners use a reputable licensed air-conditioning contractor and install a recognised brand. Not only will it be quieter, but it will consume less electricity.

The dBa outdoor sound rating of the Condenser must be provided to the Body Corporate and must be a maximum of 68 dBa. The condensate waste must be plumbed to a storm water drain.

Where complex mechanical infrastructure exists, your Body Corporate may instruct that the building air conditioning contractor be engaged to supervise works.

The Lot Owner/Applicant will be held responsible for any damage to common property during or after its installation. Owners in adjoining lots must be notified if any drilling into the building's external wall is required.

To obtain contact details for adjoining Lot Owner's, you may reach out to your Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.

	<p>Ongoing maintenance of the improvement, after works is completed, is a Lot Owner cost and responsibility. The Body Corporate/Committee may request evidence of maintenance by the Lot Owner in instances where issues have arisen.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>BATHROOM, KITCHEN, AND LAUNDRY LOT IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>Bathroom renovations must be waterproofed across the whole floor and full height of walls in shower recesses and above baths in accordance with relevant construction codes. Written certification must be provided upon completion.</p> <p>Any project that involves plumbing works will require local Council certification and adjoin your application.</p> <p>Any project that involves waterproofing will require a Form 43 or Form 12 on the waterproofing works and adjoin your application.</p> <p>Any project that involves changing or removing internal walls should be checked against the "As Construction Plans" for concealed infrastructure.</p> <p>Any project that involves changing/adding or removing dividing walls or exterior walls/windows/doors should be checked against the Development Approval (DA) as well for compliance with the DA.</p> <p>"As Constructed Plans" may be requested from the Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.</p> <p>Delays may be expected where the Body Corporate does not have in their possession the Developmental Approval (DA) Plans. The Body Corporate must be given reasonable time to obtain any requested plans.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL CONDITIONS AND BODY CORPORATE BY-LAWS</p>
	<p>Unless prior approval from the Council and the Body Corporate is obtained, an Owner is <u>not</u> permitted to close in balconies or terraces (balconies must remain unenclosed with shutters, glazing, louvers, awnings, or similar permanent screening structures).</p> <p>Should approval be granted by the Council and Body Corporate, the Committee may, at its sole discretion, impose reasonable conditions on the approval, including however not limited to, colour, location, brand, uniformity with the rest of the Scheme, contractor/installer requirements, obtaining any necessary certifications, obtaining prior approval from the Council and future maintenance.</p>

	<p>It is a good idea to check with your Building Manager on any past approvals.</p> <p>Body Corporate By-laws and their associated Policies can provide helpful information on how best to comply. Policies may include – Lift Booking Policy, Moving In & Out Policy, Security Fob Policy. It is important that Lot Owners’ comply at all times, and this includes the conduct of all Service Contractors you engage.</p>
8	<p>FIRE SAFETY OBLIGATIONS</p>
	<p>An Owner must ensure that the operation of all fire safety equipment including fire sprinkler systems or smoke detectors in the lot are not impeded in any way by the renovations and the Owner shall at the end of the works provide the Body Corporate a fire safety inspection certificate to this effect.</p> <p>No work should be carried out which interferes with the fire protection services of the building without the prior approval of the building's fire services provider. This requirement includes certified fire rated doors and changes to layout and ceiling heights.</p> <p>The front entry door to each lot in a Highrise scheme is defined as a ‘Fire Door’, as such, any changes to locking devices must also comply with the QFES regulations and prior written consent of the Body Corporate must be obtained. When in doubt, please consult a suitably qualified fire expert.</p> <p>Where isolation and de-isolation of the fire indication panel is required, Lot Owners must provide to the Body Corporate –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The QBCC fire alarm licence details held by the appointed fire contractor. 2. Notify their insurance company of the works being carried out and ensure their unit is covered; and 3. The owner will need to provide confirmation from their insurer that their unit and the building is covered, during the renovation works, in the event of a fire within their unit. <p>A Building Manager should not undertake any isolation or de-isolation of the fire indication panel for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are not licenced to perform the work, unless they hold a QBCC fire panel licence; 2. In the event the Building Manager carries out an incorrect isolation they may put the building and its occupants at risk;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The Building Manager is not qualified to carry out the necessary risk assessment to ensure the monitoring of the isolated area is being carried out correctly; 4. In the event the wrong detector/zone is isolated, the fire panel will still be activated in the event of a false alarm, calling out the fire brigade and incurring additional costs; and 5. The Building Manager's insurance policies and their public liability may not be covered and may be void with the performance of unlicensed work.
9	<p>INHERITING LOT IMPROVEMENTS FROM A PREVIOUS OWNER</p>
	<p>'Buyer Beware' any <i>unauthorised</i> improvements will be passed on/inherited by the new Lot Owner who is then responsible to rectify any damages that have originated from the unauthorised improvement.</p> <p>The Body Corporate 'Lot Improvement Register' will provide details of any previously approved/authorised improvements within the scheme. This Register may be requested from your Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.</p> <p>Retrospective approval may be sought, however, there can be no guarantees that the Body Corporate Committee consent will be granted. Lot Owners may find that the unauthorised improvement must be removed and building reinstated at the new Owner's cost.</p>
10	<p>OWNER OBLIGATIONS TO REGULARLY INSPECT COMMON PROPERTY AND SUPERVISE THE WORK OF CONTRACTORS</p>
	<p>Obligations fall on the Lot Owner to inspect the common property <i>daily</i> and to ensure that any trade waste, dirt, dust, rubbish etc. is removed from common property (shared hallways, walkways, pathways, lift, foyer, car park etc.) during the improvement period.</p> <p>An inspection of the common property will also be supervised by the Building Manager.</p> <p>Where the Lot Owner is found to be in breach, any/all costs to engage an external contractor to clean, repair, restore common property will be a Lot Owner's cost.</p> <p>A common breach to avoid - tradewaste that has been disposed of in common waste bins. All trade waste must be disposed of off-site. Lot Owners found to be in breach will be responsible for costs to have the tradewaste removed from common bins and professional cleaning of the wastebin area.</p>

11	<p>INSURANCES</p>
	<p>Obligations fall on the Lot Owner to advise the building insurer of any Lot Improvements and provide confirmation of the above to the Body Corporate/Committee.</p> <p>Contact details for the Insurer may be obtained from the Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager.</p> <p>Increases in insurance premium may apply where property values increase because of the improvement. Any increase in insurance premium is a Lot Owner cost.</p> <p>Contact the Insurer for technical advice. The Body Corporate Committee, Building Manager and/or Body Corporate Manager is not authorised to provide Insurance Advice but may assist with general type queries.</p>
12	<p>NOTIFYING YOUR BUILDING MANAGER</p>
	<p>Lot Owner's must keep the Building Manager informed at all times. In the absence of a Building Manager, the Body Corporate Committee nominated representative (e.g. Secretary).</p> <p>The Building Manager/Secretary may assist with –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any unique building requirements. 2. List of recommended service contractors (who are currently familiar with the scheme). 3. Location of main utility services (water, electricity, gas, phone etc.) 4. Provide contact details for neighbouring lots. 5. Assist with lift bookings, information regarding the permitted hours for building works etc. <p>The Building Manager may also be instructed by the Body Corporate/Committee to regularly inspect Lot Owner improvements with sufficient written notice provided to the Lot Owner.</p> <p>Contact your Body Corporate Manager if you are not sure who your Building Manager or Body Corporate Secretary is? Write to: admin@stratamastery.com.au. Operating Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.</p>
13	<p>BODY CORPORATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL PROCESS</p>
	<p>The Body Corporate Committee is only authorised to approve lot owner requests which fall within their relevant committee spending limit.</p>

Requests which exceed this limit must be considered at a general meeting of the Body Corporate.

The Committee must be provided up to 6 weeks to respond to all Lot Owner motions for improvement. The 6 week period commences only where all relevant supporting documents have been received by the Body Corporate.

Where a request is the first of its kind and will set a new precedent in the scheme, the Committee resolves the right to have the matter/application/request considered at a general meeting (despite the request falling within their Committee Spending Limit). The expected timeframe to coordinate and arrange a general meeting of all lot owners is more than 8 weeks.

FOR FURTHER QUERIES, PLEASE CALL STRATA MASTERY | Phone 07 3101 4173