integrity strata

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the latest edition of our Integrity Strata Newsletter. As a pillar of professional strata management, we're here to keep you informed, supported, and involved in the vibrant life of our strata community. Our dedicated team continues to work tirelessly to provide transparent, efficient, and responsive service that upholds the values of our namesake—integrity.

Dive into our latest updates, insights, and community spotlights that make our shared spaces not just places to live but places to thrive.

For more information, visit our website: Integrity Strata

ABOUT INTEGRITY STRATA: A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Integrity Strata stands as a family-owned beacon of excellence in strata management, proudly serving the South Coast of NSW for over four decades. Our director, at the helm of our operations, infuse every decision with deep industry expertise and a hands-on approach.

Our unwavering dedication is to deliver superior service to every community we represent, from boutique complexes to expansive estates. As certified members of prominent Strata Associations, we uphold the highest ethical standards, ensuring trust and quality in all we do.

General Manager Katrina Longmore and Nowra Branch Manager Tanya Chapman are leading our dynamic team, who champion a personalised service culture. Our team is driven by a commitment to nurturing client relationships and delivering bespoke management solutions.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Q&A: What does the role of a public officer involve in a NSW strata plan, and what tasks does a strata manager perform when acting in this role? - page 3
- Set and forget with biller-initiated direct debit from DEFT - page 4
- New Strata Committee Members Duties- Page 5
- Retirement Announcement - Page 6
- Welcoming new members - Page 7

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICER IN A NSW STRATA PLAN?

By: lookupstrata.com.au

Q **What does the role of a public officer involve in a NSW strata plan, and what tasks does a strata manager perform when acting in this role?**

What duties does the management agency carry out on behalf of the owners to fulfil this role? If the strata manager did not act as the public officer, what extra responsibilities would fall to the strata committee or the owners corporation instead?

A **If the public officer role is left vacant or mishandled, the OC may face penalties or delays.**

In my experience managing small to large strata schemes across Sydney, one of the lesser-known compliance obligations for an owners corporation (OC) is the appointment of a public officer. This role might sound administrative, but brings main legal responsibilities under Commonwealth law.

What is a Public Officer and Why is it required?

Under **section 252** of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* (Cth), every OC that has an Australian Business Number (ABN) must assign a public officer within three months of registration.

The public officer performs as the official representative of the OC to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). In practical terms, this person works to ensure the scheme meets its taxation and reporting obligations and receives all official ATO correspondence.

Main Duties of the Public Officer

The public officer's responsibilities include:

- Lodging tax returns and Business Activity Statements (BAS), if the OC **earns taxable income** (e.g. bank interest or lease revenue).
- Maintaning the Tax File (TFN) and updating the ATO with any change of address or contact details.
- Dealing with official ATO correspondence.
- Ensuring the OC complies with **GST registration and reporting requirements**, if applicable.
- **Maintaining related records.**

In short, the public officer acts as the OC's tax liaison, ensuring compliance and continuity.

When the Strata Manager Acts as Public Officer

Strata Agencies may act as a public office against certain fees. The strata agent should keep the below:

- Maintains the ATO correspondence address on behalf of the scheme.
- Liaises with the OC's accountant for annual lodgements.
- Executes relevant ATO documents where delegated.
- Overseers compliance triggers (for example, whether GST registration becomes necessary).

This procedure delivers professional oversight and decreases the administrative burden on volunteer committees, ensuring deadlines and correspondence are met.

If the OC or Committee Takes on the Role

If the strata manager does not hold this position, the OC must appoint one of its members as public officer. That person will then be responsible for:

- Registering with the ATO as public officer.
- Managing all ATO correspondence and compliance.
- Lodging returns and maintaining records.
- Notifying the ATO when they resign

While is permitted, this method does require the appointed individual to have a sound understanding of ATO procedures and deadlines. If, for any reason, the role is vacant or mishandled, the OC may face unnecessary administrative penalties or compliance delays.

Practical Tip

Owners can check who is currently registered as their public officer by checking ATO records linked to their ABN or reaching out to their accountant. Even if the scheme has minimal income and pays no tax, it is still required to appoint a public officer once an ABN is held.

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Set and forget with biller-initiated direct debit from DEFT

Biller-initiated direct debit is the easy way to manage your payments.

Here's how it works:

Once you've given authority, payments will begin when they're due, meaning you'll no longer need to worry about making payments.

We'll let you know by email each time a payment is made.

You can get in touch with your biller if you'd like more details about the timing of your payments.

You'll be able to view all your payments in your transaction history whenever you log in to DEFT.

For more information, simply log in to DEFT to view our Frequently Asked Questions.

How to register:

1. Go to **deft.com.au** and register using your email address.

2. Set your password and complete personal details.

3. Go to **'DEFT reference numbers'**.

4. Add the DRN/s you wish to authorise for direct debit.

5. Authorise your biller and select your payment method.

If you're already registered with DEFT, simply authorise your existing DRNs for direct debit.

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New Strata Committee Members Duties

Understanding the New Statutory Duties for Strata Committee Members

Acting with Honesty, Fairness & Due Care

Under the NSW strata law reforms effective from 1 July 2025, strata committee members are now legally required to exercise their functions with honesty, fairness, due care, and diligence. This represents a significant shift as these standards have evolved from being merely expected behaviours to becoming legally enforceable duties.

The core responsibilities now require committee members to:

- Be conscientious and thorough when performing their role
- Take their responsibilities seriously
- Ensure the scheme is managed for the benefit of all owners

This transition from best practice to legal requirement means committee members now face a higher standard of accountability in all their decision-making and actions.

Acting in the Best Interests of the Owners Corporation

A fundamental obligation introduced by the NSW strata reforms is the requirement for every committee member to act in the best interest of the owners' corporation as a whole. This duty ensures that decisions prioritise the collective interest of all lot owners, rather than serving the personal interests of individual members or specific groups within the strata scheme.

This principle reinforces that the committee's primary function is to manage the strata scheme effectively and equitably. Consequently, all actions taken and decisions made must be guided by what serves the best interests of the entire community, thereby promoting a fair and cohesive living environment.

Complying with Strata Laws & Handling Confidential Information

The recent strata law changes place a clear legal duty on committee members to comply with the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 (NSW) and its associated regulations. This ensures that all committee operations and decisions align with the established legal framework governing strata schemes in NSW.

Furthermore, members have specific responsibilities regarding confidential information they may receive in their role. These duties include:

Benefits of These Reforms

Raising Governance Standards

The formalisation of committee member and chairperson duties establishes clear, legally-backed expectations for strata governance across NSW. This creates:

- Consistency in how schemes operate regardless of size or location
- Professionalism that brings volunteer committees closer to corporate governance standards
- Clarity about what constitutes appropriate versus inappropriate conduct
- Alignment between strata manager obligations and committee member expectations

Protecting Owners' Interests

The statutory duties provide tangible protections for lot owners by:

- Ensuring accountability for committee decisions and actions
- Safeguarding privacy through information handling requirements
- Promoting fair treatment through the honesty and fairness obligations
- Enabling recourse when committee members breach their duties

Improving Meeting Efficiency

The chairperson's duties specifically address common meeting dysfunction by:

- Creating structure through agenda adherence requirements
- Empowering management of disruptive participants
- Encouraging participation from all attendees
- Establishing order without stifling legitimate discussion

Retirement Announcement

Katrina

End of July 2026

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It is with a mix of excitement and a touch of sadness that we share Katrina is retiring at the end of July 2026

Over the coming months, the buildings that Katrina currently manages will be progressively transitioned to Strata Managers within Integrity Strata. This transition will be carefully planned to ensure service continuity and minimal disruption. She will continue to work in the background during this period to support the incoming managers and assist with a smooth handover of all records, processes, and ongoing matters.

Further details regarding your new Strata Manager and transition timing will be provided in due course

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New Team Members

Our Wollongong office welcomes Mia, Renee and Trina, who have recently joined our growing team. Each brings valuable skills, professionalism and a strong commitment to client service.

MIA

RENEE

TRINA

In our Nowra office, we are delighted to introduce Lynn and Dean, who further strengthen our local presence and support our expanding portfolio across the South Coast.

LYNN

As our business continues to grow, so does our commitment to delivering responsive, knowledgeable and reliable strata management services. We look forward to the positive contribution each of these team members will make to our clients and the communities we manage.

Please join us in welcoming them to Integrity Strata.