

Waste management



Nearly every unit in strata generates waste, materials, and debris. The result is a huge pile of waste that demands good planning to manage. While the waste from each unit may vary, the total waste collected may be greater and complex for community handling.

On the other hand, strata may generate other types of waste, such as biological and chemical waste (which we discussed last month), that need an effort of trained personnel to combat. Good planning entails hazard mitigation and source reduction, especially in high-density strata.

Reducing landfill waste and understanding what can and can't be recycled or upcycled, will also ensure your building is more sustainable by reducing the number of natural resources consumed and creating as minimal waste as possible.

Through good waste management plans, the strata manager and the councils can:

- Minimise time wastage during collection and dumping
- Integrate efficient waste management decisions
- Work hand-in-hand with responsible stakeholders' such as recycling plants and disposal facilities
- Boost the tenants' resilience
- Minimise the rates of detracton among the tenants

However, this is not always the case in NSW. The burden of waste collection heavily depends on the efforts of the whole building, and as a result, there is confusion about the most effective way of managing strata waste. Strata waste does not only come in large quantity but also different types. Due to factors such as urbanisation and population increases.

In NSW, high-density strata suffer from a handful of residents that do not understand the benefits of environmental stewardship. Therefore, the overproduced wastes are rendered unmanageable.

One of the barriers for efficient waste collection and removal in Sydney is inadequate recycling facilities in unit blocks. On the other hand, apartments generally have insufficient waste collection and storage facilities for the volume of waste produced.

Since community living is a shared responsibility, in a strata property, one person's trash becomes everyone's problem. As apartment and strata living becomes more common, waste disposal has become more of an issue! Nobody enjoys having, seeing, or smelling rubbish near their living spaces, which means that all residents should follow the proper protocol when it comes to rubbish disposal. We often see conflicts arise between tenants because of improper waste disposal, so it's crucial that strata management has clear and efficient waste management systems in place.

All owners and occupiers of a lot must follow a set of rules when it comes to garbage disposal:

If you DO have shared receptacles for waste:

You must ensure your waste is securely wrapped, drained, separated and prepared in accordance with the applicable waste and recycling guidelines. You are responsible for cleaning up any waste or spillage that may occur when you are transferring your rubbish to the shared receptacles.

If you do NOT have shared receptacles for waste:

You must maintain rubbish receptacles within your lot, ensuring it is securely wrapped, drained, separated and prepared in accordance with the applicable waste and recycling guidelines. After this, you must place your bins in the designated rubbish collection area no more than 12 hours before rubbish collection time, and promptly return it to your property after collection.

What happens to waste left in common areas?

Owners and occupiers may not dispose of their waste on common property unless they have the prior written approval of the owners corporation. If the waste includes perishable goods, the owners corporation may dispose of this without any notice. For all other items, they remove the goods after issuing a disposal notice which includes a description of the goods, the date and time the notice was issued, the date and time the goods will be moved from the common property, and contact details of a member of the strata committee.

What happens to waste left in common areas?

Owners and occupiers may not dispose of their waste on common property unless they have the prior written approval of the owners corporation. If the waste includes perishable goods, the owners corporation may dispose of this without any notice. For all other items, they remove the goods after issuing a disposal notice which includes a description of the goods, the date and time the notice was issued, the date and time the goods will be moved from the common property, and contact details of a member of the strata committee.
Be mindful of food waste

Did you know that 38% of rubbish in NSW garbage bins is food waste and that 20% of the food Australians throw out is because they buy too much or don't store their food correctly? Once in the landfill, food waste produces greenhouse gases that impact our environment so it's important only to buy what you need. Your strata complex may also want to consider a compost bin if you have the room to install one.
Bulky goods collection

Bulky goods collections are a free service provided by council. However, any items collected of bulky goods are compacted, crushed and sent to landfill so the collection should be a last resort and only used for items that can't be upcycled.

The owners corporation is allowed to either move the offending goods to another area, throw them away, or sell them (and put the proceeds of the sale into the administrative fund).

If the offender is known, they are responsible for the cost. If the offender is not known, the cost falls back on the owners corporation.

The importance of recycling:

The big issue for recyclers is the high level of contamination in recyclable bins, which greatly diminishes the recyclable value of the materials and increases the amount of processing required.

If anything, which is not recyclable is spotted or sorted, the rubbish is charged out as general waste, which is an increased cost to owners.

Owners and occupants alike should become increasingly wary of what they put in their recycling bins to avoid increased costs and practice more sustainable waste management.

Owners corporations should encourage residents to recycle as much as possible. Educate them on ways to recycle and upcycle items.

For example, donate things in good working order to charities, or sell or give them away on Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree. Donation partnerships are also a good idea. Organisations such as Clothing Away offer a great (and often affordable) alternative to the standard recycling options in a scheme. Clothing Away supplies free textile collection and recycling bins on site in apartment waste rooms for the convenient collection of clothing and household textiles.

New building waste

If your building is new and numerous residents are moving in at the same time, it's likely that there will be an overflow of packaging from furniture or large products and moving boxes. Ensure your building or strata manager has organised a procedure to deal with excess bulky waste.

Garbage chute

Garbage chutes are convenient but, unfortunately, misused, which can be costly for the owners corporation. If you live in a high rise with garbage chutes, ensure you provide owners and tenants with detailed instructions on use. Don't be afraid to let residents know how much garbage chute repairs are costing the owners corporation, and hold repeat offenders accountable. Improving communication with residents about proper use is key to preserving long-term functionality.

CONTACT US

*Disclaimer:
The information contained in this news post is general in nature and is intended to provide a general summary only and should not be relied on as a substitute for professional advice.*