Committee, strata manager, building manager, owner - who decides, who does it, and who you call.

Who Does What

General guidance, not a rulebook - every building's circumstances differ, so take what's useful and leave the rest.

Almost every argument in an apartment building starts as a misunderstanding about whose job something was. Not bad faith. Just four roles that overlap in ways nobody explains when you move in or get elected.

This is the map. It won't match every building exactly — read it alongside your own agreements — but the shape is the same nearly everywhere.

The four players

Role	What they are	Who they answer to
The owners (body corporate / owners corporation / strata company)	Every lot owner, collectively. The legal entity that owns the common property.	The legislation, and each other
The committee (body corporate committee / strata committee / council)	Volunteer owners elected to make day-to-day decisions on the owners' behalf.	The owners, at general meetings
The strata manager (body corporate manager / OC manager)	A contracted professional business. Administration, finance, compliance, meetings, correspondence.	The committee, under a written agreement
The building manager (caretaker / onsite manager / facilities manager)	Contracted or employed to look after the physical building day to day.	The committee, under a written agreement

*The distinction that solves most confusion: **the committee decides, the managers execute.** A strata manager who makes decisions has overstepped. A committee that expects its manager to decide has abdicated. Neither is how it's meant to work.*

Who does what, in practice

Task	Decides	Does it
Approving a repair over the committee's spending limit	Owners at a general meeting	Manager arranges
Approving a repair under the limit	Committee	Manager or BM arranges
Setting the budget and levies	Owners at the AGM	Manager drafts and invoices

Task	Decides	Does it
Chasing unpaid levies	Committee sets the policy	Manager acts on it
Issuing a by-law breach notice	Committee	Manager prepares and serves
Placing the insurance	Committee (or owners)	Manager arranges and pays
Booking fire safety inspections	Committee	Manager or BM
Unblocking a common-area drain	Nobody — just do it	BM or contractor
Cleaning, gardening, bin rooms	Committee sets the standard	BM or contractor
Keeping the records	Legally the owners corporation	Manager holds them
Answering a resident's question about a by-law	—	Anyone who knows. Usually the BM.

Lot or common property?

The other half of every argument. The general rule: **you own the airspace inside your lot; the building owns the structure.** Where the boundary sits exactly is set by your registered plan, so check it before assuming.

Usually yours	Usually the building's	Ask first
Internal walls, floor coverings, paint	External walls, roof, foundations, slab	Windows and glazing
Fixtures and appliances inside the lot	Common stairwells, lifts, lobbies, corridors	Balcony tiles and waterproofing membrane
Your own contents insurance	The building insurance policy	Air conditioning units and their pipework
Pipes serving only your lot	Pipes serving more than one lot	Front doors, door frames, locks

Who to call for what

Situation	First call
Water coming through your ceiling right now	Building manager, or the after-hours number
A common-area light out, a broken gate, a lift fault	Building manager
A levy notice you don't understand	Strata manager
A neighbour's noise, parking or pet	The neighbour first. Then the committee.
A question about what the by-laws say	Anyone — but read them yourself first
Something that's been reported and hasn't moved	Committee, in writing
You want a document or record	Strata manager, in writing
You disagree with a committee decision	Committee first. Then your state's tribunal.

When nobody's sure

It happens, and it's the moment most jobs stall. Three moves that unstick it:

1. **Ask in writing, to one named person.** 'Who owns this one?' is a fair question and a fast one. Copying four people guarantees nobody answers.
2. **Check the agreements.** The strata management agreement and the caretaking agreement both list what's included. Most buildings have never read either. They answer more questions than people expect.
3. **Write the answer down where the next person will find it.** The point of settling it once is that nobody has to settle it again.

> *If your building can't say in one sentence who is responsible for a given thing, that's not a personality problem — it's a documentation problem, and it's fixable in an afternoon.*

General guidance only. Responsibilities are set by your state's strata legislation, your scheme's registered plan and by-laws, and your building's own management agreements - and these differ. Current as at August 2026.