Noise, parking, pets, stand-offs - how to solve problems while staying neighbours.

Resolving Issues In Your Building

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

The apartment-living truth

In a detached house, an annoying neighbour is over the fence. In an apartment building, they're above your ceiling, sharing your walls, and voting on your levies. That closeness is what makes buildings communities — and what makes conflict feel bigger than it is. The good news: almost every building dispute follows the same escalation ladder, and most are solved on the first rung.

A note before you start

This resource is general information, not legal advice. Strata and body corporate law differs between Australian states and territories and changes over time. Always check the current rules for your state, and get professional advice for anything significant. We have used plain language on purpose — your legislation will use fancier words for the same ideas.

The ladder — always start at the bottom

1. **Talk, like humans.** Most 'disputes' are things the other person doesn't know they're doing. Knock, mention it kindly, assume good faith. 'Hey, not sure if you realise, but your subwoofer travels' resolves more than any tribunal ever will.
2. **Put it in writing — politely.** If talking doesn't work (or isn't possible), a short, factual, friendly note or message. Dates, specifics, no adjectives. This also starts the paper trail you'll want later.
3. **Raise it with the committee or manager.** If it involves the rules, common property, or keeps happening, ask (in writing) for it to be addressed. The committee can send a formal reminder of the rules, and for breaches can issue formal notices.
4. **Formal internal steps.** Breach/contravention notices, motions at a general meeting, or the scheme's internal dispute process where one exists. Many states require you to attempt internal resolution before going further.
5. **External resolution — the last rung.** Every state has a free or low-cost pathway (below). These bodies will ask what you tried first, so climb the ladder in order.

Where to go in your state (final rung)

State	Pathway
QLD	BCCM Commissioner's office — free conciliation, then adjudication
NSW	Fair Trading mediation, then NCAT (tribunal)
VIC	Consumer Affairs Victoria, then VCAT (tribunal)
WA	State Administrative Tribunal (SAT)
SA	Community mediation, then Magistrates Court

State	Pathway
TAS	Recorder of Titles / mediation services
ACT	ACAT (tribunal)
NT	NTCAT (tribunal)

Before you file anything, ask yourself

Have I actually spoken to them? (Tribunals ask.)

Is my paper trail factual, dated and calm?

What outcome do I actually want — an apology, a repair, a rule enforced? Name it. 'Winning' is not an outcome.

Is this worth the relationship cost? Sometimes yes — genuine safety, serious money, repeated bad faith. Often, no.

For committees: handling complaints well

- **Acknowledge fast, even if you can't act fast.** 'Received, it's on the next agenda' costs nothing and defuses most frustration. Silence reads as contempt, even when it's just busyness.
- **Play the issue, not the person.** Every building has a frequent complainer. They're sometimes right. Assess each issue on its merits.
- **Enforce rules consistently or change them.** A rule enforced only against unpopular residents is a tribunal case waiting to happen.
- **Minute it.** Complaints, decisions and reasons. Your future selves will thank you.
- **Know when to hand it off.** Genuine legal disputes, harassment, or anything involving safety belongs with your strata manager, insurer or the authorities — not in a volunteer's inbox at midnight.

In this building

Item	Details
Raise an issue with the committee via	
Our rules / by-laws live at	
Our internal process (if any)	
Our state's dispute body	

In the Nalo?

A surprising amount of conflict is really just missing information. Buildings in the Nalo cut disputes off early because notices, rules, decisions and request statuses are visible to everyone in NaloHub — fewer surprises, fewer feuds.

Sources: NSW Fair Trading and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, Queensland Government (BCCM Act and modules), Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Owners Corporations Act 2006, Landgate WA - current as at August 2026. Always confirm against your own scheme's registered by-laws or rules, as some schemes have variations.