



8 tips for
uncomplicated
strata meetings



PRIOR STRATA
UNCOMPLICATED MANAGEMENT & ADVICE



Uncomplicating strata

Prior Strata has been managing Sydney's strata for over 40 years, which is why we know a thing or two about effective meetings.

We hope you find the following tips useful, they reflect what our business is all about – uncomplicated strata management and advice.

[Get in touch](#) and let us know how your next meeting goes or if you want to find out more.

Andrew Davis
Director and Strata Manager

Uncomplicated

Strata Meetings

Meetings are a vital component in the management of your building and general meetings ensure all owners have an opportunity for input and to set the direction for the future. With this in mind we've created a guide to help everyone, not just committee members, to ensure meetings are inclusive, effective and efficient.

- ① Be Prepared
- ② Set the Scene
- ③ Encourage Every Voice
- ④ Listen with an Open Mind
- ⑤ Keep on Point
- ⑥ Think Beyond Your 4 Walls
- ⑦ Respect the Decision
- ⑧ Review then Action



Like all good scouts


① Be Prepared

- Read the agenda and attachments beforehand.
- Switch your phone off.
- Have questions ready, and
- A pen and paper to take notes.

Remember those meetings where the person sitting next to you is not following the agenda or pace? They've arrived late or haven't read the material. Perhaps asking questions that have already been answered or are clearly explained in the agenda... you don't want to be THAT person!

- If you expect there to be contentious issues or disagreement to a position you may wish to take, come prepared with insights and if possible, data or real examples to support your position.
- If you are hosting the meeting, have the room ready – clean, and no distractions from inside or outside noise or light.
- Arrive early. Greet people and have a chat to build relationships. Being friendly and approachable at the start will build trust and confidence which should minimise any negative impact from difficult conversations later in the meeting.





There was a debate at a meeting over the rectification of structural issues. Everyone thought a new owner attending was ok with the decisions being made as they didn't speak.

While feeling uncomfortable to do so, the new owner eventually interrupted the ensuing disagreement with a solution. It turns out they were a civil engineer and their solution saved the building \$25k in remediation costs.

From that point, the committee listened more and asked questions to ensure the owner's voice was heard in the future.

Don't diminish the song

③ Encourage Every Voice

Often there may be a few dominant voices as some attendees may not feel confident speaking up. But that doesn't mean they don't have an opinion or are happy with the decisions being made. Try to make everyone feel welcome and ask for their feedback. It could be in your building's interest.

Silence is golden

④ Listen with an Open Mind

Conflict can begin early in a meeting, even if someone is accidentally cut off. But listening patiently is not always easy and rightly so if others veer off track. Respectfully remind others (and yourself) to be patient and stay calm.

Of course, if the stage is being dominated by one person, politely ask they take some time to listen and reflect. But if someone has a different view let them be heard, their idea could be absolute genius! As a participant, make sure others take the time to listen so that all ideas or risks can be heard.

Don't dance around

⑤ Keep on Point

Speak to the motion. Don't allow hearsay or personal grievances to take the meeting off track. If anecdotes are raised, ensure they are relevant.

People love to chat, we are social beings after all. But have you ever been in that meeting where the conversation is so off track you can't remember where you started?

At one of my first strata meetings as an owner the conversation was about a leaking roof, but after 20 minutes of side conversations and detours the committee decided to repaint the stained eaves! I said "what about the problem, you know, the leaking roof?" "Ooohhhh yeaaaahhh" they said.

Sure the water stains were unsightly and needed to be painted, but not before fixing the problem.



The whole is greater

⑥ Think Beyond Your 4 Walls

A solution that's in everybody's interest is usually in your best interest, as well as ensuring the *Strata Schemes Management Act 2015* requirements are met.

Look at it this way, does the decision increase the value of the building or decrease its value? A decision may not directly affect the value of your lot, but if it has a negative impact on another, as all lots are intertwined the impact will indirectly affect the value for everyone, either via real estate agent benchmarking or negative opinions of a strata search agent.

An owner demanded their bathroom ceiling be repaired as they were selling. Under duress the committee agreed, but they had wanted to wait as the leak from above kept reappearing.

The unit went on the market and on the morning of the first inspection, the upstairs bathroom leaked again – not a good look for prospective buyers. If the owner had listened to the committee's advice and waited, the first 2 open houses wouldn't have been wasted and they could potentially have sold in a shorter amount of time for top dollar!

People can be demanding if they feel issues are not being addressed and repairs seem like they are taking forever. But the reality is with many problems hidden in the walls, ceiling or floor (the concrete slab), they can be complex and take time to locate the root cause, especially when the source of the problem is water related.

As Aretha would say

⑦ R-E-S-P-E-C-T the Decision

Strata is a democracy, with decisions shared amongst the owners. Sometimes these decisions don't go the way we want, fortunately there is a legislative framework and avenues to pursue if the decision is unjust. However, when the hands have voted and the decision is within guidelines, owners need to work together to follow or enact that decision.

I've seen people spend more time complaining about a decision rather than accepting and moving on. It's this misspent energy that can bring people down as well as damage a reputation. I've also seen an owner very vocal against a decision be out voted, however afterwards they took the decision in their stride and worked diligently to see the task through in their role as a committee member. This person rose above their disappointment to gain the respect of other owners and maintain harmony within the building.

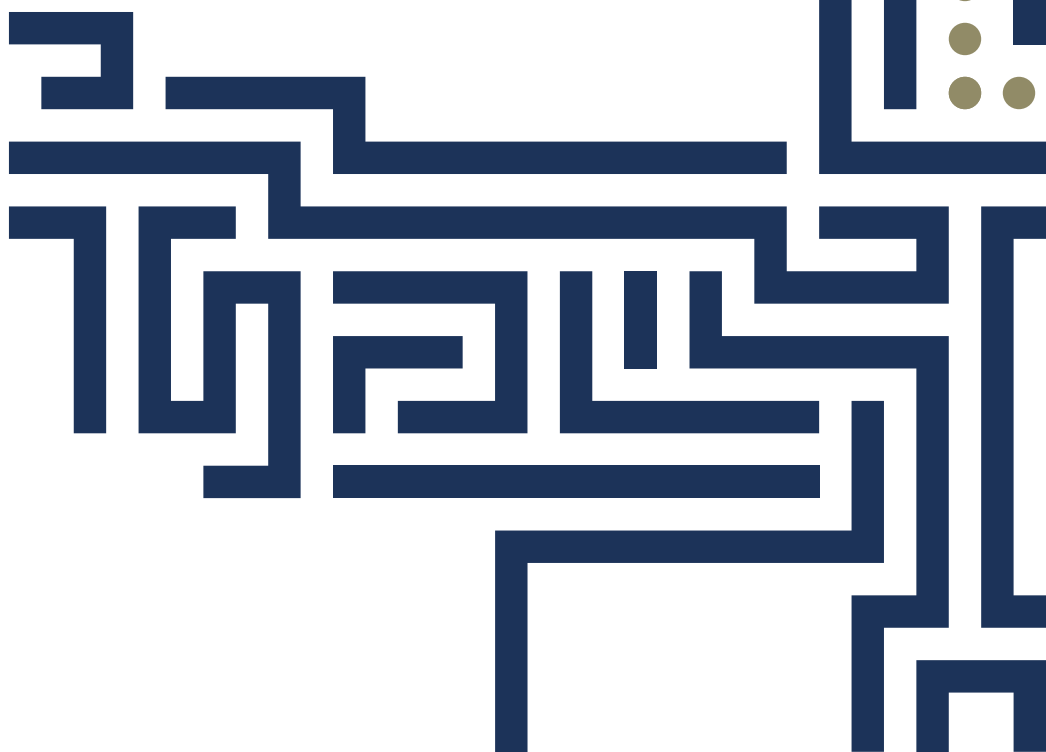




Lights, camera... ⑧ Review then Action

Why have a meeting if no one knows who is doing what or everyone is expecting someone else to do the work? Before closing, review the decisions and delegate responsibility to see each item through.

A self-managed strata plan took 2 years to have their windows cleaned! After each meeting everyone walked away expecting each other to take care of the task, only to realise at the next AGM it hadn't happened. The windows (plus a few other tasks) were eventually completed but not until after a series of complaints by residents.





Need some further help?

At Prior Strata we are all about removing the complexities of strata, allowing clients to make informed decisions that not only protect their home or investment, but let it stand out as an appealing community to the right prospective owners and tenants.

But we don't shy away from complex or difficult situations ourselves – we love a challenge! Noise disputes, parking, dumped rubbish, misuse of facilities... we tackle issues head on, no matter how big or small the building.

Our goal is to take the stress away from committees, ensuring all residents live in a safe and respected community. And while responsive to issues as they arise, we prefer to take a long-term view of maintenance to protect each owner's valuable asset in a cost effective manner.

We also recognise every building is unique, which is why we tailor a response to your specific needs. If you require help from time to time, we're here. Whether you're stuck in a long-term contract with an underperforming strata manager, or you're self-managed and need support occasionally, we provide the guidance and confidence to handle any issue.

[Get in touch](#) to find out more.

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