

Important changes under the Strata Law Reforms: Renovation categories

Below are examples of the new renovation categories. As you can see, there are some renovations such as kitchen renovations that can no longer be approved by the Strata Committee and will need to be approved at a general meeting of all owners which can be quite costly. Furthermore, bathroom and laundry renovations that involve waterproofing will now need a general meeting of all owners in addition to the registration of a special by-law.

Whilst this may appear to be a step backwards, owners should consider that the old legislation had already required the passing of a special by-law for most, if not all, of the below-mentioned work.

The reforms brought the most expansive and comprehensive changes to the strata industry in 20 years and with respect to renovations, was aimed at simplifying the process for most strata schemes. The reforms however, did not take into consideration the schemes that had already implemented by-laws to do this and therefore has resulted in the reforms complicating the process.

Owners' patience and understanding is encouraged over the next 12 months whilst the industry tests the new strata laws and implements changes to once again simplify the procedures that relate to renovations.

EXAMPLES OF COSMETIC WORK

The following work will generally not require approval:

- installing or replacing hooks, nails or screws for hanging paintings and other things on walls
- installing or replacing handrails
- painting
- filling minor holes and cracks in internal walls
- laying carpet,
- installing or replacing built-in wardrobes
- installing or replacing internal blinds and curtains

The following is not cosmetic work:

- work categorised as 'minor renovations'
- work involving structural changes
- work that changes the external appearance of a lot
- work that detrimentally affects the safety of a lot or common property, including fire safety systems
- work involving waterproofing
- work involving plumbing
- work involving exhaust system
- work involving reconfiguring walls

EXAMPLES OF OTHER RENOVATIONS

The following work will require a **special resolution at a general meeting of all owners** and the **drafting of a special by-law**:

- **work involving waterproofing**
- work involving structural changes
- work involving reconfiguring load bearing walls
- work that changes the external appearance of a lot
- work that requires the permanent occupation of common property airspace
- work that is not categorised as 'cosmetic work' or 'minor renovations'

EXAMPLES OF MINOR RENOVATIONS

The following work will generally require a **resolution at a general meeting of all owners**:

- **renovating a kitchen**
- changing recessed light fittings
- **installing or replacing wood or other hard floors**
- installing or replacing wiring, cabling or power points
- work involving reconfiguring non-load bearing walls
- removing carpet or other soft floor coverings to expose underlying wooden or other hard floors
- installing a rainwater tank
- installing a clothesline
- **installing a reverse cycle split system air conditioner**
- installing double or triple glazed windows
- installing a heat pump,
- installing ceiling insulation

The following is not a minor renovation:

- work categorised as 'cosmetic work'
- work involving structural changes
- work that changes the external appearance of a lot
- work involving waterproofing
- work that must be authorised by a by-law

IMPORTANT NOTES

From time to time, the Owners Corporation may pass a special by-law that can place certain types of renovations into either the 'cosmetic work' or 'minor renovations' categories.

It is important that owners read and understand all by-laws registered for their scheme.