



Sustainability in Strata

Why sustainability?

- Climate emergency
- Attract tenants
- A survey by You Move has found that 42% of tenants consider how eco friendly a property is before making a decision
- Higher rental yield
- Buildings with green certifications bring in a rent premium of 6 per cent, and a sales premium of 7.6 per cent
- Cost saving measure – reduced utility costs can lead to lower strata fees
- Resilient properties will have higher value



Existing sustainability infrastructure.

- Sustainability management plans are being more common as a part of council approval processes.
- Planning permits often have conditions also that include sustainable infrastructure
- We often find OCS that don't know the infrastructure of their building
- If you know what you have, you can ensure it is maintained correctly
- A common example is recycled water systems
- Also solar panels



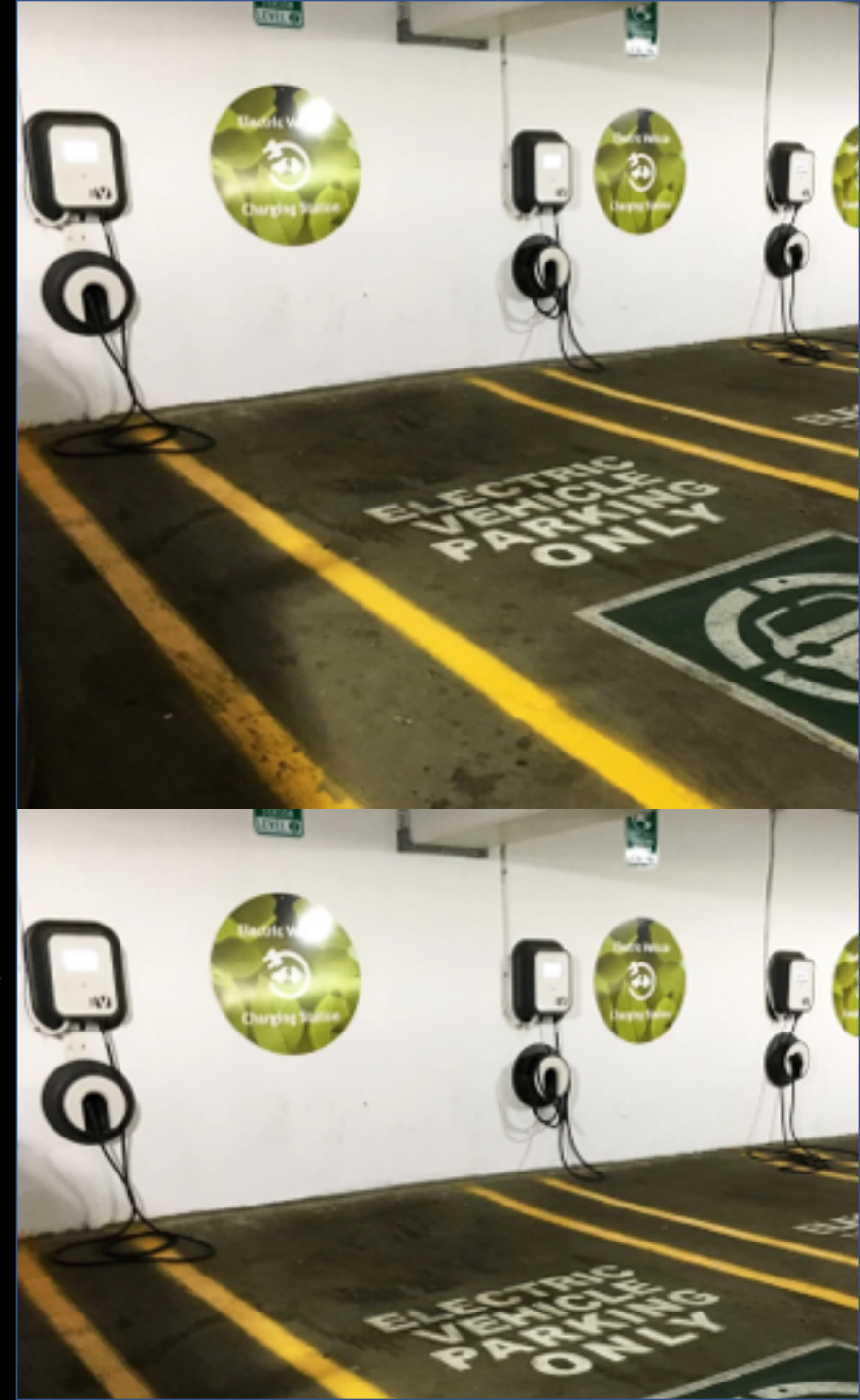
Rainwater systems

- Often a planning permit condition
- Most commonly they use rainwater either to water the garden or flush the toilets
- With toilet systems they can cause the water to go brown
- You can get finer filters installed, but it will limit how much water can go through
- They require maintenance and sometimes expensive repairs.
- I have been asked to decommission these systems before because of this.
- However you need to keep in mind:
 1. If it is a planning permit condition the system needs to be there
 2. It will reduce water costs.



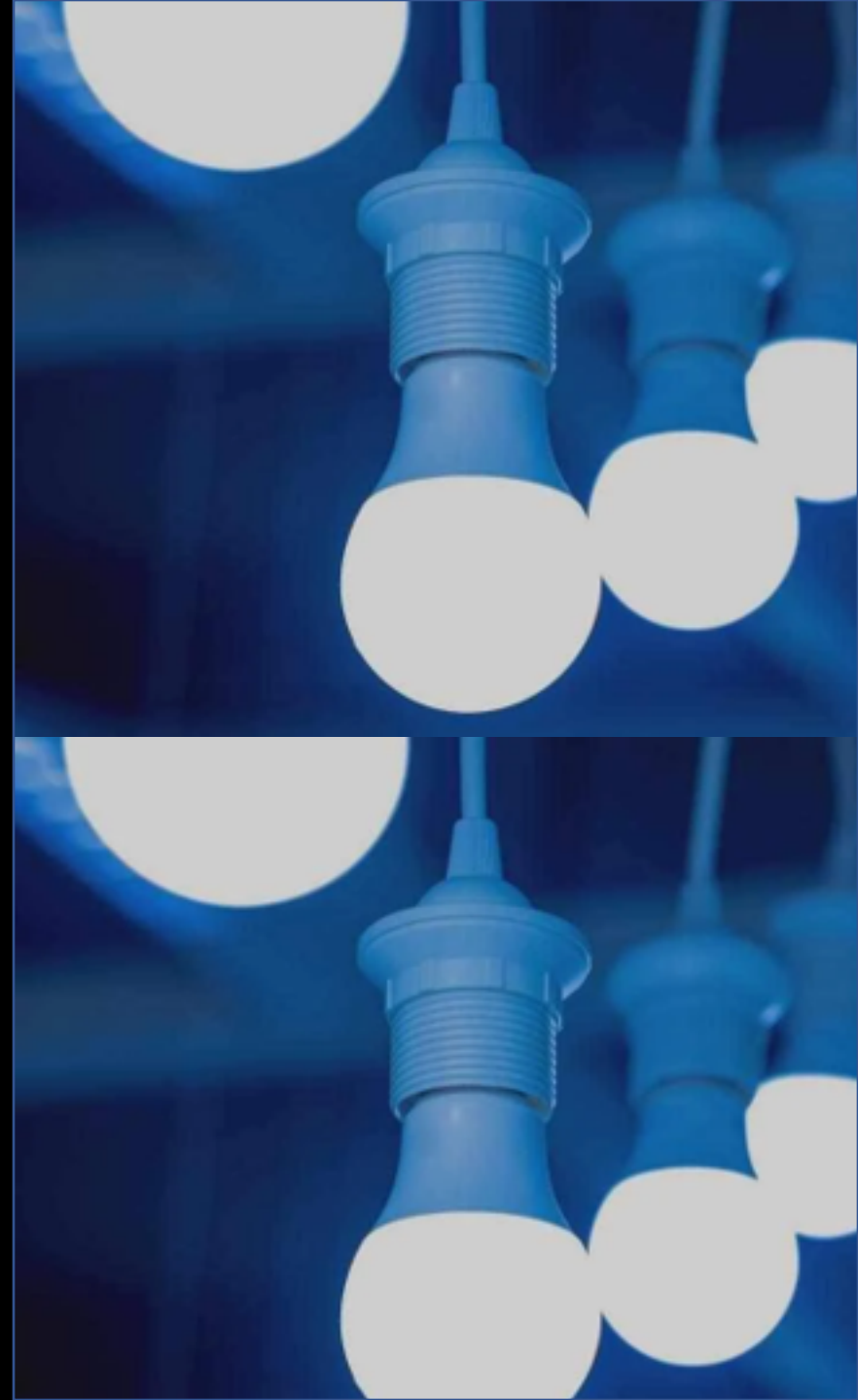
Electric vehicle charging.

- Demand is currently booming for EV retrofits.
- It is not as simple as installing a GPO in a space.
- There is a limit on how many can be installed.
- You also need to consider what power is being used.
- The power load of the building should be assessed.
- We encourage anyone looking into EV to speak to a consultant.
- Upgrading the backbone can be expensive
- Future proofs the building and makes it more attractive to tenants
- Generally the strata pays for the backbone infrastructure and then owners/ residents pay for the actual charger to be installed.
- It is then a user pays system.



LED upgrades.

- Simply switching to LED lighting within common areas can drastically reduce electricity consumption
- Most projects can recoup the initial outlay in just a few years
- The benefits also include protecting yourself against rising energy costs and potentially allocating more of your levies to maintenance
- In Victoria Owners Corporations can change fluoro lighting to LED under the Governments VEU scheme often at no cost
- Under this scheme you get new lights, with a 5 year warranty
- It's worth investigating the product you choose to install
- You can also install timers or sensors



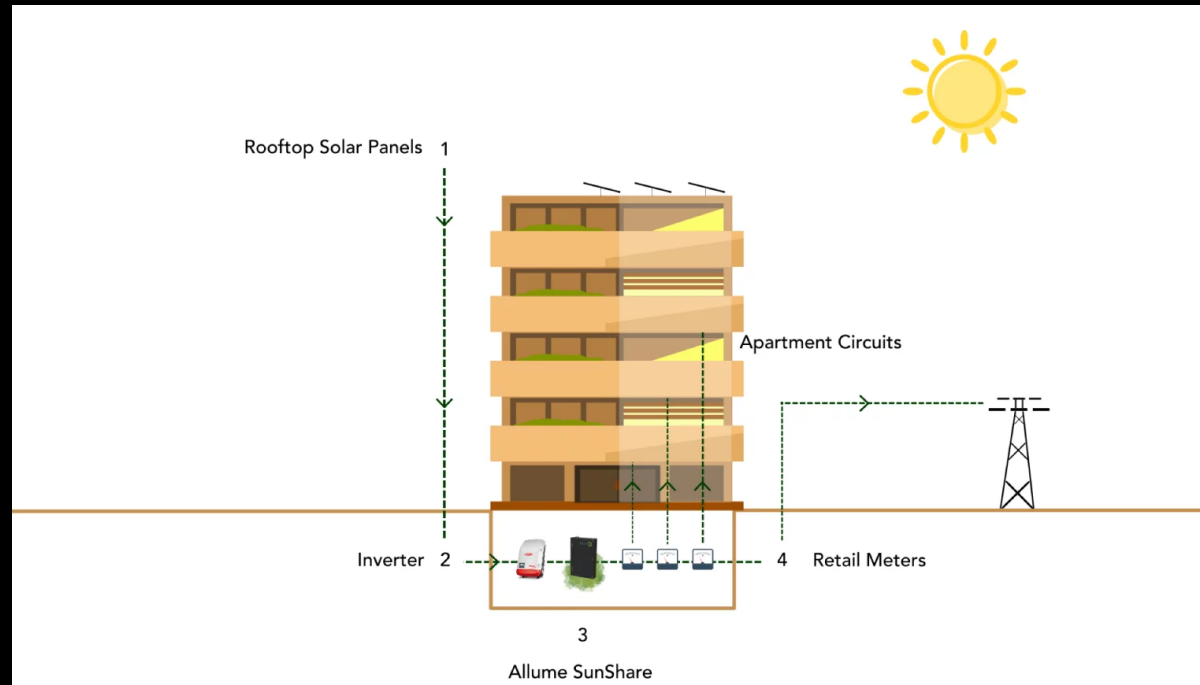
Solar panels.

- There are a variety of options available to Strata complexes looking into Solar Power.
 1. Solar for common areas
 2. separately-metered system for each unit
 3. solar powered embedded network
- Installing solar can vary in complexity and cost, depending on which option you choose.
- The main hurdles for this project include:
 1. getting approval from the majority of Owners
 2. raising the funds (generally on top of current levies)
 3. and the feasibility of installation (roof area and exposure to sunlight).
- Most apartments will have individual electricity meters, with individual accounts attached to them, making the fair distribution of solar energy a difficult task.
- There are not for profits that can help i.e Yarra Energy Foundation

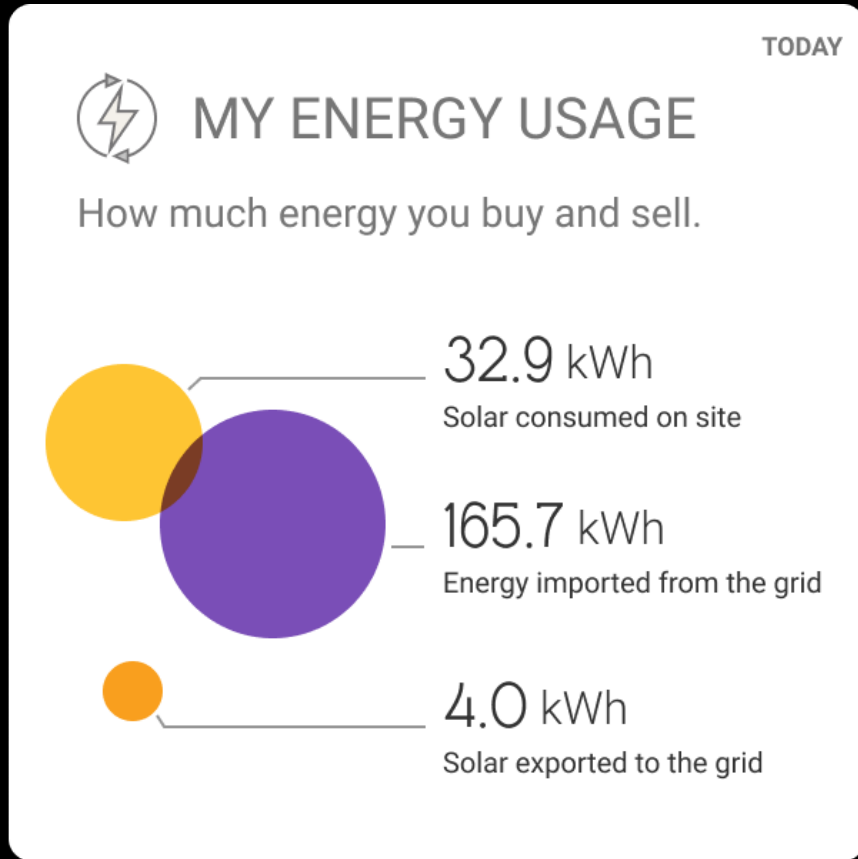


Solar panels.

- A relatively new approach is a single system, with benefits allocated individually.
- *SolShare* by *Allume Energy* allows the energy generated by a single rooftop solar system to be shared between multiple apartments.
- it delivers the same amount of solar energy to each apartment, but supplies it when it's needed – making it fair and efficient, and overcoming many of the challenges of other solar options for strata.



Solar monitoring.



- Sometimes we get asked how we know solar is working
- Solar monitoring systems can be installed
- It tracks performance of your panels and estimates savings
- It will tell you if the system is not performing as it should
- Needs either WiFi or 3G/4G connection



Water.

- Simple things the you can do to reduce water use are:
- Ensure there are no leaks within common areas
- install timed watering systems for shared gardens (use between 10pm and 6am will reduce evaporation)
- consider replacing foreign plants with native alternatives requiring less water
- Ensure recycled water systems are functioning



Swimming pools.

- Old pools often have old motors that can be extremely inefficient
- Sometimes upgrading your pool motor can actually save you money over time with the reduction in energy costs
- It is worth having the conversation with your pool company
- if your property has an outdoor pool, a cover can prevent 90-95% of evaporation



Email correspondence.

- Most Strata Managers will send communication via post unless owners opt in to email communication.
- We send out a lot of correspondence – AGM agendas can be 50+ pages!
- Postal fees are typically charged to the property so it is also more expensive
- We include a reminder on the AGM notice

17. Receiving Fee Notices and Correspondence by E-mail

Lot owners were reminded that they can receive Owners Corporation fee notices and correspondence by e-mail if they notify The Knight in writing. In order to do so please update your preferences in the 'Property Log In' section on The Knight's website (www.theknight.com.au) or email theknight@theknight.com.au.

- This will only reach those who attend the AGM/read the minutes. I also include a reminder with the levy notice
- Some strata buildings charge a “paper correspondence fee”



Hot water systems.

Solar hot water systems

- Solar Hot Water Systems use solar power to heat the water. These systems are usually boosted by either gas or electricity for heating during overcast weather or night time.
- This means that you are not drawing on the grid when the solar panels are in use, which means less carbon emissions and a lower electricity bill.
- The shortcomings of Solar Hot Water Systems however are the space required for the panels, and the need for constant sunlight to make them run efficiently.



Hot water systems.

Heat Pump Hot Water Systems

- While still running on electricity, Heat Pump Hot Water Systems have been estimated to be more efficient even than electric boosted solar systems. This is because they absorb warmth from the air and transfer it to heat water, and electricity is required only to run the compressor and the fan, rather than to directly heat the water.
- Heat Pumps may struggle in cold climates, but in most of Australia, when installed in an area with good air flow, they can be an extremely efficient alternative to other heating systems.
- They can also run off your solar grid if your building has one, making them virtually emission-free



Separate meters.

- Many strata buildings will have a shared meter, with water usage being charged to Owners based on Lot Liability, as individual usage cannot be determined.
- one way to help reduce your water use is to consider installing check meters for each lot, known as 'Separate Metering'.
- Separate Metering enables Owners to be charged for their lot's water use, or pass this charge onto their tenant (which is not legal when a shared meter is used).
- **The benefits of separate metering include:**
 - Owner and Tenant incentive to reduce water consumption to keep bills down
 - easier leak detection and repair
 - reduced 'common' water usage and therefore reduced bills



Supply chain considerations.

- Strata buildings can also think about all the services they employ
- Choosing to engage carbon neutral companies is a good way to lower your impact
- Cleaning and security and two of the most at risk industries for Modern Slavery
- Tenders should include a condition of compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2018
- Most owners do not want to employ a company that behaves unethically or mistreats its employees. Making it a part of the tender, ensures you do your due diligence and reduces the likelihood of unethical behaviour.
- You can also think about non toxic cleaners, contractors who use low or no VOC products, recycled products etc.
- We know of one committee who replaced their carpets and included in the tender that the contractor had to palletize the old carpet so it could be repurposed



Waste management.

- Getting residents to recycle correctly can be a huge challenge
- A lot of it comes down to education. We know one property that re-named their bin room the “Resource room” to change people’s thinking
- We encourage information on recycling to be included in move in guides and apartment manuals
- Clear signage around bin rooms also helps



Residents in our building recycle



Recycle here



Paper and cardboard



Hard plastic containers



Glass bottles and jars (no lids)



Cans and aerosols



Household plastic bottles (no lids)

Put in the rubbish bin



Food scraps



Clothing



Polystyrene



Soft plastics



Plastic bags

Using our recycling bin correctly means your items are recycled and the building is kept tidy. Putting the wrong items in this bin may result in bins not being serviced and items going to landfill.

Find out how to recycle all of these items:
recycling.vic.gov.au



Moving out? Spring cleaning? Large unwanted items?

Does it work?



Donate to friends/
family or charity
shops



Sell or give
away online



Advertise through
your building

Is it broken?



Fix it at a local
repair café



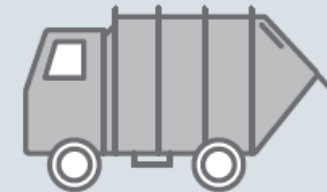
Take it to your
local transfer
station



Contact
your building
manager



Use your council hard
waste service



Arrange collection with a
private waste contractor

Placing items on the kerb without using a council hard waste collection service (if available) is illegal dumping and fines apply.

For more information: mwrrg.vic.gov.au/recycling



Food & organic waste (FOGO).



- Many councils offer free FOGO pick up and it is just a matter of contacting them and asking for a bin
- If you have private waste, there are contractors who pick it up

Decomposers:

- Strata properties can install systems that decompose or dehydrate food by heating and agitating the waste. Some of these systems require a sewer connection to dispose of the wastewater and a filter for the vapours vented to the air. Council approval may be required to install.



Food & organic waste (FOGO).

Composting & Green Cones

- Compost bins can be installed onsite. They work best when there is a communal garden and residents onsite are committed to maintaining the system.
- Green cones are an alternative composting system which are relatively maintenance free. They require a patch of sunny, well draining soil.

Worm Farms

- Worm farms can be installed to manage compostable material which can be used in common gardens. They can be located on balconies, car parks, basements or gardens. There are also companies such as Worm Lovers who can provide and maintain the system. Otherwise, onsite residents will need to manage the system.



Embedded networks (local energy networks).

- Embedded networks can be a cheap way to source greenpower
- In Victoria embedded networks will be banned from Jan 1 unless they are 100% renewable
- Many embedded network companies will offer sustainable options
- We have seen embedded network managers offer to fund EV installation and solar panels as an incentive to sign contracts.
- If your embedded network contract is coming up, talk to your provider about what they can do for you



Private lot upgrades.

- Often lot owners will want to make their individual properties more sustainable but can be held back by the strata committee not agreeing
- A common one is townhouse owners wanting to install solar panels
- On 1st of December 2021 in Victoria, a change to the Owners Corporation Act meant that committees can not unreasonably withhold consent
- Unreasonably includes on aesthetic grounds



Communicate with your community.

- Each year the committee of management must provide a report to the AGM
- This is often quite dry
- Including sustainable achievements
- Some OCS have strategic plans
- Achievements can also be shared in building newsletters or on noticeboards
- You can survey your community on what they want to see. We encourage open ended questions to show your committee is listening.



Case study: Gertrude Street, Fitzroy.

- Formed sustainability subcommittee
- Worked together to form a terms of reference
- LED upgrade – researched best product
- Following the LED upgrade undertaken by the Owners Corporation, we saw a reduction in the energy usage of the Owners Corporation of 50%. Saving approximately 24,090 kwh of power a year and about \$4,800 a year.
- Surveyed community on interest in EV



Case study: Gertrude Street, Fitzroy.

- Achieved a special resolution to install solar panels
- Reported on successful projects at the AGM
- Resident Whats App group
- Interact with local community- allowed a local projection festival to use their face
- supported the launch of Yalinguth, an app that reflects the oral story telling tradition of Aboriginal Australians by proving geolocated stories read by Aboriginal elders. They allowed Yalinguth to place posters on the building to promote the initiative at no cost.
- Won SCA Sustainability award 2021



Case study: Nightingale Village, Brunswick.

- Completely electric – no gas
- Shared electric car onsite
- Rooftop garden that encourages food production. This is built into the rules
- 100% green power embedded network
- Recycled materials used in production
- Lots of bike racks, few car spaces, Green travel plan
- Communal laundries
- Slow lifts to encourage people to use the stairs



Other elements of sustainability.

- Anti bullying
- Respect for diversity
- Indigenous recognition

The Knight would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

1. Commencement of Meeting



Thank you.

Contact: Alex Smale

Alexandra@theknight.com.au

