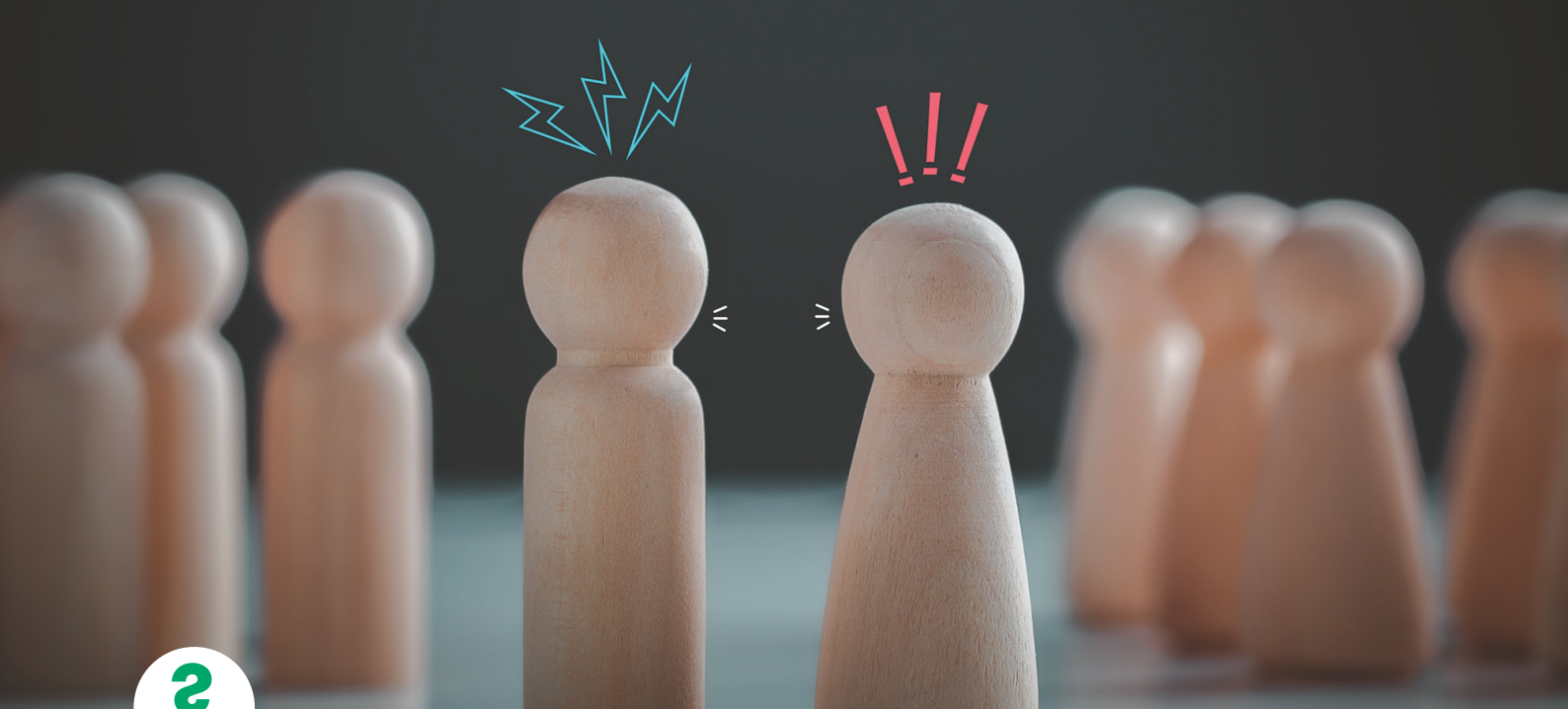




What happens when things go wrong and how do you raise a dispute?

Things go wrong in strata. A repair that never gets done. A neighbour who keeps breaching the by-laws. A committee that isn't acting in the best interests of all owners. When these things happen, knowing how to respond is everything.

Step one: try to resolve it directly

Before escalating, try a direct conversation or a polite written message. Many issues can be resolved this way, and doing so preserves relationships and keeps the community intact. It's also worth keeping in mind that your neighbour may not be aware of the impact they're having. Like all of us, they're navigating the ups and downs of their own life. Approaching the conversation with compassion can make a real difference.

Step two: put it in writing to the committee or strata manager

Describe the issue clearly and specifically. State what you've already tried, what the impact is, and what outcome you're looking for. Keep copies of everything.

Step three: formal processes within the scheme

The strata committee or manager may be able to issue a formal notice, enforce a by-law or facilitate a mediated conversation between the parties involved.

Step four: external dispute resolution

If the issue can't be resolved internally, most states and territories have a free or low-cost tribunal or dispute resolution process. These exist specifically so owners don't need lawyers to resolve common strata problems.

- New South Wales: NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)

- Victoria: Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)
- Queensland: Commissioner's Office (Body Corporate and Community Management)
- Western Australia: State Administrative Tribunal (SAT)
- South Australia: South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT)
- Australian Capital Territory: ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)
- Tasmania: Magistrates Court of Tasmania
- Northern Territory: Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT)

Disputes are a normal part of community living. What matters is how they're handled. A community with a clear, fair process for resolving disagreements is more resilient, more trusting and more pleasant to live in. Using the right channels protects you, protects your neighbours, and protects the community as a whole.

If you're unsure of the right process for your situation, speak to your strata manager first. They can guide you through the steps that apply to your building and your state or territory.