



# RESPONDING TO UPSET OWNERS AND TENANTS

## **Series: Effective Communication is the most important issue for lot owners** **Part 10 of 12: Responding to upset owners and tenants**

Seldom in the management of a strata community does an owner or a tenant make contact with a committee member or a strata manager without being upset.

Often, this contact from the enraged owner or tenant is the first contact the committee member or strata manager has ever had with the owner or tenant which can escalate the problem.

The contact may be by telephone or, more likely these days by email – that dangerous form of communication that lends itself so well to regrettable outbursts.

It is therefore more important than ever in strata management to learn how to handle the upset or difficult owner or tenant. These tips will help:

### **Process for responding to an upset owner or tenant**

To respond to an owner or tenant who is upset or complaining:

**Stay calm and friendly** – This will help you to control the situation.

**Hear the person out** – Give the person a chance to say what is upsetting them but do not allow people to keep repeating themselves. This only makes them more upset.

**Restate the person's concern as you understand it and get the person to confirm that you've heard it correctly** – Always check to be sure you understand what the person wants you to know or do. Sometimes people complain about one thing and really are upset about another. Or they just want you to hear them out.

**Offer an appropriate apology** – You do not have to accept responsibility for something you are not responsible for. But you can always say you are sorry about a situation and mean it.

**Recognise the person's feelings** – Even if you address the issue, people will often continue to be upset if they think you are ignoring how they feel about it. Put the person's feelings into words. For example: "This must be frustrating".



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**Explain what you will be able to do** – An upset person wants “answers” and “actions”. Those answers and actions may be an explanation of how the association can respond to the concern or they may be an explanation of why the association cannot respond and some suggested alternatives.

Thank the person for bringing the situation to your attention – If something is wrong or not working we want to know about it so we can respond in an appropriate manner. That is what quality service is all about.

**Next week: Effective Communication about Breaches of Rules and By-Laws**