

EV-ready guide for owners corporations



We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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Contents

Technical glossary	2
Purpose of this guide	3
Why an EV strategy helps	4
What an EV strategy should achieve	4
The three core frameworks	5
Technical framework	6
Identify and compare appropriate pathways	6
Assess available electrical capacity	8
Assess the main switchboard and distribution	8
Load management	8
Design principles	9
Selecting the right type of charging equipment	11
Indicative building-tier guidance	12
Commercial framework	14
Applying the benefit principle	14
Funding an EV backbone	14
Billing and cost recovery	15
Insurance and risk mitigation	15
Legal framework	16
Owners corporation powers, common property and the strata plan	16
Taking the preferred pathway for approval	16
Approving the proposed works	16
Approving the funding	18
Electricity rules, standards and safety compliance	18
Electricity cost recovery and retail exemptions	19
Operational responsibilities: setting safe-use rules	19
Documenting the OC committee's decisions	19
Supplier due diligence and contracting	21
Communication, engagement and coordination	22
How a project champion can support effective delivery	22
How and when to use surveys	22
Help lot owners understand and participate	22
How to use the annual general meeting (AGM)	22
How to design effective EV charging surveys for strata	24
What other OCs have learned	26
Frequently asked questions	29

Technical glossary

Cable tray:

A metal tray fixed to ceilings or walls of a building and used to support and route electrical and communications cables, including between an EV distribution board and individual car spaces.

Common-property electrical infrastructure:

The electrical equipment, cabling and pathways that form part of, or are installed on, common property and are used to receive, distribute, control or protect the building's electricity supply. This may include the main switchboard, distribution boards, submains, common-property circuits, cabling, risers, cable pathways and associated protection and control equipment.

Distribution board (DB):

A switchboard connected to the main switchboard that distributes electricity to individual circuits and contains protective devices. In EV charging systems, distribution boards are often positioned closer to car spaces to support staged charger connections.

EV Backbone:

The common-property electrical and communications infrastructure that enables individual car spaces to be connected for EV charging over time. An EV backbone may combine modifications to existing common-property electrical infrastructure with new components, including dedicated circuits, EV distribution boards, cable trays, risers, communications infrastructure and a load management system. It does not include an individual lot owner's charger or the final connection from the EV backbone to that lot owner's car space.

Final circuits:

The electrical cable connecting the backbone EV infrastructure to an individual charger or car space.

General power outlet (GPO):

A standard, fixed electrical socket in a building used to safely connect portable appliances to the mains power supply.

Level 1 charging:

Slower AC charging using a household-style GPO or smart GPO, generally up to 1.8 kW.

Level 2 charging:

Faster AC charging using a dedicated EV charger, typically around 7 kW in apartment buildings.

Load management system (LMS):

A system that protects the building while allowing more residents to charge their vehicles safely. It continuously monitors the building's electrical demand and dynamically shares available capacity between charging vehicles, ensuring the building's electrical supply is always protected.

Main switchboard (MSB):

A main switchboard is the central point of connection between the site and the grid. Power is distributed from here to other parts of the site.

Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP):

An open communication standard that supports the exchange of information between compatible EV chargers, EVs and the building's charging management systems, including load-management and billing platforms. OCPP can support interoperability and reduce reliance on a single supplier, although compatibility depends on the functions supported and overall system design.

Smart GPO:

A GPO that incorporates communication, monitoring and control capabilities, enabling electricity supply to be remotely monitored, scheduled, controlled or interrupted in response to user preferences, electricity prices, network conditions or external control signals.

Trip shunt:

A device that allows power to the EV charging system to be shut off remotely or automatically, including when activated through the building's fire indicator panel.

Purpose of this guide

This guide helps owners corporation (OC) committees in Victoria understand how to make informed, fair and lawful decisions about electric vehicle (EV) charging. It provides a practical decision-making framework across the technical, commercial and legal issues that commonly arise in strata settings.

Every building is different. This guide therefore focuses on how OC committees can approach EV charging decisions, rather than prescribing a single solution. It can also help residents understand how their OC may assess EV charging requests and why a building-wide EV strategy is often the most effective way to manage current and future demand.

Learning from real-world experience



This guide draws on the real-world experience of Victorian OCs that have considered, planned or delivered EV charging in buildings of different sizes and circumstances. These experiences reinforce the guidance by showing how OCs have applied similar principles in different ways according to their infrastructure, demand, financial position and priorities.

Case-study call-outs throughout the guide provide practical examples of particular issues and approaches. The section **What other OCs have learned** brings these experiences together and summarises the recurring lessons for other OCs.



Why an EV strategy helps

An EV strategy is an OC's agreed approach to decision-making about EV charging. It sets out the principles, processes and information the OC committee will use to assess options, manage approvals, allocate costs, mitigate safety and compliance risks, and plan for future demand.

It does not assume that a particular technical solution, or immediate installation, is appropriate. Instead, it provides a disciplined way to determine the most suitable pathway for the building.

What an EV strategy should achieve

Identify the right pathway for the building

An EV strategy should help the OC decide whether, when and how to facilitate EV charging. Depending on the building's circumstances, the appropriate pathway may be to proceed with a building-wide project, stage works over time, support a proportionate interim solution, or not proceed with installation at that time.

The decision should reflect the building's electrical capacity, parking arrangements, likely demand, financial position and competing priorities. Where works do not proceed immediately, the OC can document the reasons and identify when the issue should be reconsidered.

Enable planning for future demand

EV uptake will increase over time. A strategy allows the OC to plan for future ownership and charging demand, reducing the likelihood of rushed, reactive or costly upgrades later.

Create clarity and consistency

A strategy provides a structured framework for decision-making in a complex building environment, where multiple lot owners, shared infrastructure, common property and OC approvals need to be considered together. It helps lot owners understand how options will be assessed, what evidence will be relied upon, and how costs may be allocated.

Improve fairness and reduce conflict

A strategy helps avoid ad hoc approvals that unintentionally disadvantage other lot owners, create technical lock-in, or lead to inequitable outcomes. It supports transparent reasoning and consistent application of OC rules and Victorian legal requirements.

Support legal, safety and compliance obligations

EV charging decisions may involve common property, electrical work, safety systems, insurance and formal OC approvals. A strategy helps ensure those matters are considered before commitments are made, and that decisions are properly authorised and documented.

The three core frameworks

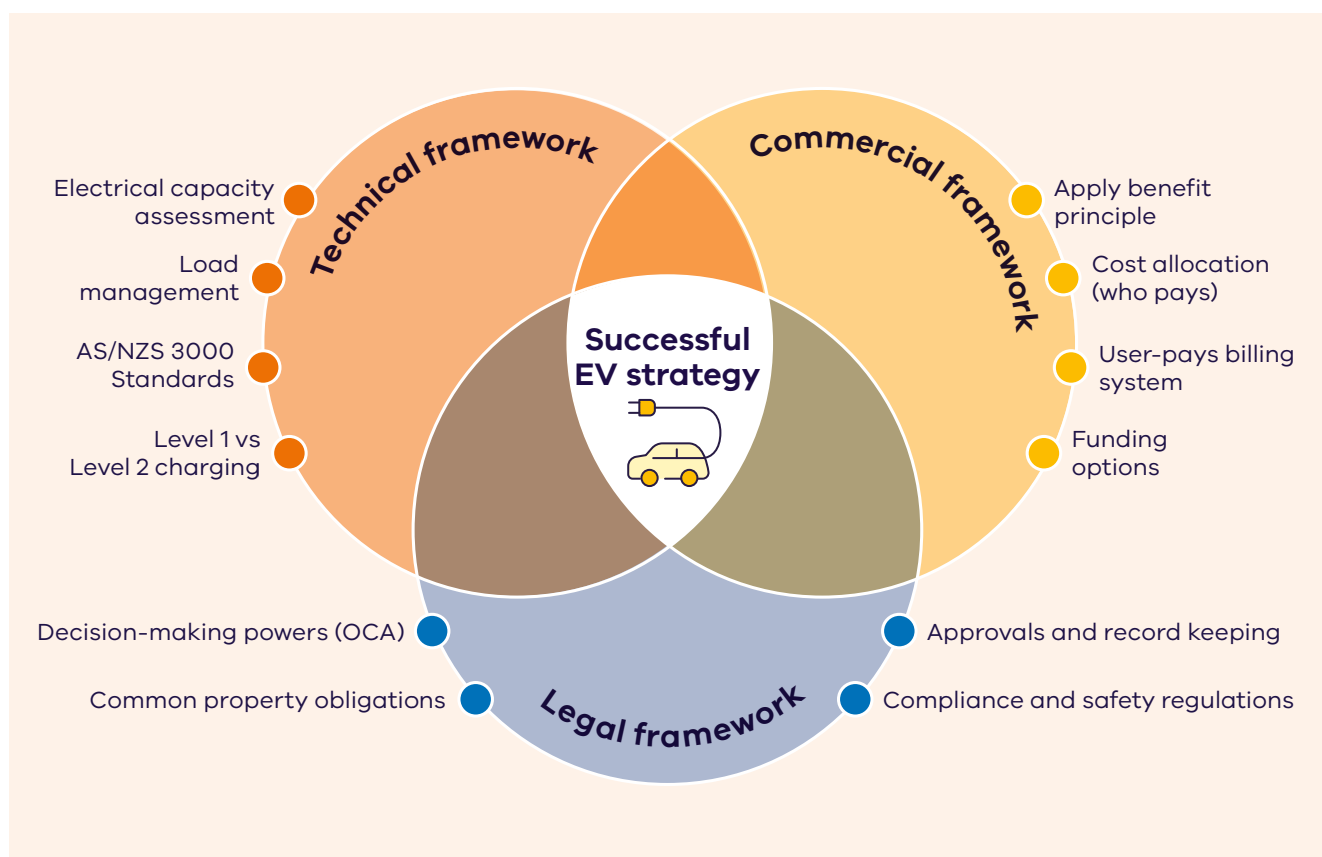
Developing an EV strategy requires the OC to consider more than the charging equipment itself. The OC must identify an appropriate pathway for the building, determine how it will be funded and managed, and ensure it can be lawfully approved and implemented. Three interconnected frameworks provide a structured way to work through these decisions:

- **technical framework** – how the OC identifies an appropriate pathway for the building and determines what is physically and safely achievable within that pathway.
- **commercial framework** – how costs and benefits will be allocated, including the benefit principle, funding options, billing approaches and insurance considerations.

- **legal framework** – how EV charging interacts with the OC's decision-making powers, common property obligations, approvals, documentation and compliance requirements.

These frameworks are interconnected and should be considered together. The order used in this guide reflects a practical way to present the issues, not a hierarchy or fixed sequence.

A pathway that appears technically straightforward or low-cost may not be fair, scalable or legally appropriate, while an attractive commercial offer may create long-term contractual, billing or infrastructure risks. The EV strategy brings these considerations together into a clear and consistent decision-making process.



Technical framework

The technical framework helps the OC identify and compare feasible EV charging pathways, and determine what can be delivered physically and safely within the preferred pathway.

It should be informed by a building-wide assessment, reliable data and recognised standards, so decisions reflect the building's broader infrastructure, constraints and future needs rather than individual requests or untested assumptions about available capacity.

Identify and compare appropriate pathways

An EV strategy should help the OC identify the most appropriate pathway for its building rather than assume a particular approach or immediate installation from the outset.

For many apartment buildings, modifying common-property electrical infrastructure to deliver an EV backbone will provide the most coordinated and forward-looking pathway. An EV backbone allows lot owners to connect chargers progressively as demand increases. It can preserve fair access to electrical capacity and cable pathways, reduce incompatible or poorly planned installations and avoid unnecessary future rework.

Work on an EV backbone may also maintain, protect and future-proof the building's wider electrical infrastructure. For example, upgrades to electrical capacity, switchboards and load management may support important building systems such as lifts, pumps and common-area services.

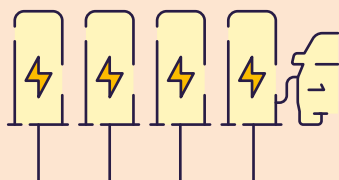
However, a comprehensive EV backbone may not be the right immediate pathway for every building. Ultimately, the preferred pathway should reflect the building's circumstances, informed by independent advice and consideration of its size, layout, existing electrical infrastructure, parking arrangements and likely demand, as well as the OC's financial position, competing priorities and the needs of lot owners. Taking these factors into account, the appropriate approach may be to:

- deliver an EV backbone across the building;
- stage parts of the backbone as demand increases;
- undertake targeted initial works while preserving future expansion pathways;
- approve a proportionate interim individual arrangement; or
- defer installation until the building's circumstances change.

Any staged or interim approach should preserve future access, avoid using electrical capacity or cable pathways needed by other lot owners, and remain compatible with a later building-wide approach.

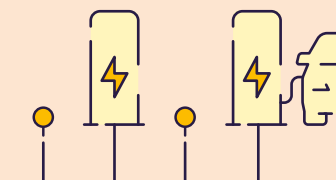
The detailed assessments below should help the OC compare these pathways and refine the preferred approach. The EV strategy should document the pathway selected, the evidence and advice supporting it, and how it can adapt as demand and building circumstances change. The preferred pathway should then be tested against the commercial and legal frameworks before it is approved.

Different pathways for different buildings



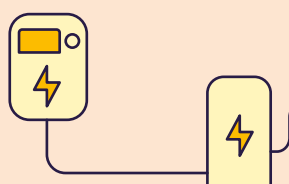
Comprehensive EV backbone: Triptych Apartments

Despite low EV ownership at the time, the OC anticipated future demand and installed an EV backbone across the carpark. At the outset, the OC installed cable trays and other EV-backbone components across the full car park. The system was supplied by an existing 250-amp circuit at the main switchboard and dynamically controlled through load management. The coordinated designs preserved pathways for other lot owners to connect as demand increased, allowing the OCs to manage upfront costs without closing off future access.



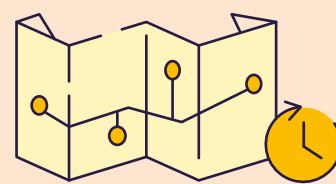
Staged EV backbone: Portside and St James Apartments

At both buildings, the OC initially installed cable trays and other backbone components in areas of demonstrated demand rather than extending every component across the full carpark upfront. The coordinated designs preserved pathways for other lot owners to connect as demand increased, allowing the OCs to manage upfront costs without closing off future access.



Proportionate individual arrangement: Toorak

A nine-unit OC approved a dedicated Level 1 charging circuit from one lot owner's apartment switchboard to their car space. The lot owner funded the installation, and the electricity used for charging was metered and billed through their apartment's existing electricity account. This met the immediate needs of one lot owner without committing the OC to an EV backbone before broader demand emerged.



Deferring installation: Pascoe Vale

A 9-unit OC had a strong focus on sustainability and proactively considered how the building could support EV charging. However, urgent foundation works, limited available funds and the absence of immediate charging requests meant that installation was not proportionate at that time. The OC prioritised the essential structural works, identified nearby public charging as an interim option and will reconsider onsite EV charging as demand and the building's financial circumstances change.

Assess available electrical capacity

The first step is determining the surplus power available from the building's supply to support EV charging. This requires advice from a registered electrical contractor or suitably qualified consultant to assess the building's electrical infrastructure, demand profile and future needs.

Larger or more complex buildings may need a more detailed assessment that considers interval data alongside actual operating conditions, essential services, common equipment, load management options and broader electrification needs. Interval data alone may be insufficient if it does not reflect actual operating conditions or the impact of essential services and common equipment.

The assessment should inform not only EV charging decisions but also broader electrification opportunities, such as heat pumps, solar, batteries or common-area upgrades. Getting this analysis early reduces the risk of stranded assets and unnecessary rework later.

Assess the main switchboard and distribution

As part of the capacity study, the contractor should assess the main switchboard, incoming supply, cable sizes, distribution boards, spare capacity and any constraints or upgrades required. The assessment should identify whether the building can support EV charging now, what work is needed to make it EV-ready, and how the system can be expanded as demand grows. The contractor can also assess the capacity for wider electrification plans both now and into the future, if desired.

Planning around ageing infrastructure



At St James Apartments, the ageing main switchboard and limited availability of compatible components initially appeared to be a barrier to EV charging. Specialist advice identified a compatible switch that could support a dedicated EV circuit without replacing the entire switchboard. The wider system was designed so key components could remain useful after any future switchboard replacement, enabling staged EV connections while reducing rework and stranded-asset risk.

Load management

A load management system (LMS) controls EV charging demand so it does not exceed the building's available electrical capacity or compromise essential services. Compatible charging equipment may use the Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP), an open communication standard that allows information to be exchanged with load-management, monitoring and billing platforms.

A simpler LMS may apply fixed limits to a circuit or group of outlets, schedule charging, or rotate supply between vehicles. This may suit smaller buildings or where there is lower projected EV demand. By contrast, a more advanced LMS can dynamically adjust charging in real time as whole-building demand changes. This may better suit larger buildings, where EV charging must be balanced with infrastructure such as lifts, pumps and boilers, while making more efficient use of available capacity.

An LMS may operate locally, through a cloud-based platform or as a hybrid system. Where operation relies on communications, the system should have safe default settings that prioritise essential building loads if communications fail. Integration with billing is also important so electricity use can be accurately measured and charged to the appropriate lot owner.

Before choosing an LMS, the OC should ask its registered electrical contractor or consultant to compare at least 2 options, including upfront costs, upgrade pathways, ongoing fees, service arrangements and scalability as EV uptake increases.

Using available capacity more efficiently



At Fifty Albert, real-time load management balanced EV charging against total building demand across two circuits. This enabled Level 2 charging across all seven carpark levels within the building's available electrical capacity, avoiding a cost-prohibitive main switchboard replacement. The selected system reduced upfront costs by 25 per cent and was projected to reduce the OC's total cost of ownership by 40 per cent over five years.

Design principles

A good technical design should be proportionate to the building's circumstances and preserve future options. It should reflect the building's size and layout, available electrical capacity, likely EV demand, budget, existing infrastructure and other planned building works. Once the OC has identified its preferred pathway, the design should give effect to that pathway, whether this involves installing or upgrading an EV backbone across the building, staging infrastructure as demand increases, or adopting an interim solution that can be adapted or replaced later.

Where works are staged, the design should identify what will be installed initially, how the system can expand, and any future works or decision points that may be required. The scale and timing of investment should align with the OC's EV strategy. In some circumstances, comprehensive upfront investment may provide better long-term value; in others, a staged or lower-cost solution may be more proportionate. Any approach should preserve practical options for future expansion and avoid technical lock-in, stranded assets or unnecessary rework.

Regardless of the pathway selected, the technical design should:

- **preserve equitable access:** the design should avoid first-mover advantage by ensuring early users do not consume all available electrical capacity or occupy infrastructure pathways needed by future users. An EV backbone that allows individual lot owners to connect progressively is often the most future-ready approach. Where works are staged, sufficient capacity and cable pathways should be preserved for later users.
- **integrate safety arrangements:** the design should integrate with the building's existing safety arrangements. In multi-level car parks, the OC should consider central isolation of the EV system, emergency information, block plan updates and clear identification of charging infrastructure for first responders. A registered electrical contractor and, where relevant, a fire safety practitioner should advise on the applicable requirements.
- **consider broader building benefits:** EV charging works may create opportunities to address compatible building needs at the same time. For example, communications infrastructure required for load management and billing may also improve connectivity in basement car parks, support emergency communications or enable vehicle software updates. Coordinating compatible works can improve overall value and reduce duplicated installation costs. These additional benefits should support, rather than drive, selection of an EV charging solution.

Combining EV works with improved connectivity



At Supply Co, cloud-based load management and billing required reliable basement communications. The OC used the project to address an existing mobile-coverage and safety issue by installing dedicated communications infrastructure and Wi-Fi throughout the basement. This enabled residents to make emergency calls, supported reliable operation of the charging system and allowed vehicle software updates. These tangible building-wide benefits helped demonstrate the project's value to all lot owners, including those without an EV.

Solving charging challenges through innovative design



At a tier 1 OC building, some car spaces had no adjacent wall or pillar suitable for mounting EV chargers. A freestanding EV charging column was designed, approved and installed in Victoria to overcome this constraint.

The column can be adjusted to suit different floor-to-ceiling heights, including variations within the same car park, and fixed securely to the floor slab and underside of the slab above. This allows the structure to support up to 4 chargers, enclose the cabling and provide vehicle-impact protection without requiring barriers around the entire installation. Together with wheel stops, signage and other required safety measures, it enabled a practical and compliant installation.



Selecting the right type of charging equipment

Once the OC has assessed the building's electrical capacity and likely charging demand, it should select equipment suited to the preferred pathway. The main options are Level 1 charging through general power outlets (GPOs) or smart GPOs, and Level 2 charging through dedicated EV chargers.

The appropriate choice will depend on available capacity, likely EV uptake, lot owners' charging needs and upgrade costs. Both options can be paired with an LMS to keep charging within available capacity. The OC should obtain technical advice, as performance will depend on the equipment and system design.

Level 1 charging

Level 1 charging uses a household-style GPO or smart GPO and provides slower charging.

Managed Level 1 systems may suit smaller buildings with fewer expected users or lower charging demand. Smart GPOs can meter and control charging by scheduling, limiting or rotating electricity supply between outlets.

Check OCPP capabilities for managed Level 1 charging



Smart GPOs may support selected OCPP functions and manage charging within set circuit or system limits. However, they generally cannot adjust charging continuously to changing whole-building demand like compatible Level 2 chargers. The OC should confirm the OCPP and load-management functions supported.

Level 2 charging

Level 2 charging uses dedicated EV chargers and provides faster, more scalable charging.

Managed Level 2 systems may suit larger buildings expecting more EV users, greater charging needs or multiple vehicles charging simultaneously. Compatible chargers can communicate with an LMS to adjust charging as building demand changes.

OCPP is required for managed Level 2 charging



Managed Level 2 chargers must support OCPP 1.6J or a later version supported by the selected LMS. OCPP allows the chargers to communicate with the system so charging can be monitored and adjusted as building demand changes. The chargers also communicate with connected EVs to regulate power delivery, allowing the overall system to keep charging within available capacity and defined safe operating limits.

Different charging levels for different buildings and circumstances

Managed Level 1 charging: Clifton Hill



At this small tier 4 building, replacing the main switchboard and upgrading electricity supply for Level 2 charging was estimated to cost approximately \$60,000. Instead, the OC installed supporting infrastructure and 4 smart GPOs for approximately \$10,000. Cloud-based load management rotates charging between connected vehicles, meeting current needs while preserving options to expand or upgrade as demand grows.

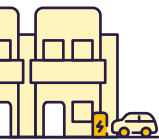
Managed Level 2 charging: 8 Murphy Street



At this tier 3 building, limited electrical capacity and demand peaks made major infrastructure upgrades costly. The OC paired Level 2 chargers with real-time load management, allowing the system to operate within existing capacity. An EV backbone was later extended to every car space at approximately \$870 per space, with around 14 per cent of lot owners installing connections from the outset.

Indicative building-tier guidance

Building size provides a useful starting point for considering which charging approach may suit an OC. The charging level and load-management approach should be considered together, based on the OC's EV strategy and building-specific technical advice. The selected approach should meet current needs while preserving practical options to expand or upgrade as demand increases. The table below provides indicative guidance only.

	OC tier	Typical characteristics	Indicative approach	Why this makes sense
	Tier 1: more than 100 lots	Large apartment complexes; often underground or covered parking; high shared charging demand.	Managed Level 2 charging with dynamic load management.	High numbers of potential users and varied charging needs require a faster, scalable system that can manage simultaneous demand within available electrical capacity.
	Tier 2: 51–100 lots	Medium-large complexes; mixed above-ground or underground parking.	Managed Level 2 charging using smart chargers with dynamic load management. Where individual charging requests arise before broader demand develops, a managed Level 1 system using smart GPOs may provide a proportionate interim solution.	Multiple users and increasing EV uptake are likely to favour a scalable shared system, although slower charging may meet lower initial demand.
	Tier 3: 10–50 lots	Small to medium complexes; mixed parking arrangements.	Managed Level 1 charging may suit smaller or lower-demand buildings. Managed Level 2 charging may better suit larger tier 3 buildings or those expecting greater demand.	The diversity of building sizes, parking arrangements and likely user numbers means that either charging option could be appropriate.
	Tier 4: 3–9 lots	Small strata or townhouse clusters; often above-ground parking.	Managed Level 1 charging. Level 2 charging remains an option where faster charging is preferred and technically feasible.	Fewer potential users and simpler parking arrangements may allow charging needs to be met without a faster or more scalable system.

Smart GPOs used for managed Level 1 charging



Dedicated chargers used for Level 2 charging



Commercial framework

The commercial framework helps the OC determine how the preferred EV charging pathway will be funded, owned and operated over time. It should clearly distinguish between costs that benefit the building and costs attributable to individual users, apply the benefit principle fairly, and establish transparent arrangements for electricity billing, maintenance and ongoing service costs.

Applying the benefit principle

Under the OC Act, the benefit principle is central to fair cost allocation. In simple terms, if everyone benefits, everyone pays; if only one or some lot owners benefit, those lot owners must pay more. Applying this principle transparently helps ensure decisions are fair, consistent and defensible.

In practice, EV charging costs generally fall into three categories: the EV backbone, private components and electricity usage. The benefit principle should be applied to each category according to who receives the benefit:

- **EV backbone:** work to install or upgrade the common-property electrical infrastructure that supports EV charging is typically funded by all lot owners according to lot liability. This may include the main switchboard, circuits feeding distribution boards, shared cable trays, risers and an LMS.
- **Private components:** the individual lot owner typically funds their own charger, final cabling from the EV backbone to their car space, and ongoing maintenance of that private equipment.
- **Electricity usage:** each user should pay for the electricity they consume through an OC-approved platform or another compliant metering and billing arrangement.

The OC should consider how the benefit principle applies in the building, with advice from the OC manager where one is engaged. Where the allocation is complex or likely to be disputed, the OC should consider legal advice before approving the funding model.

Separating building-wide and individual costs



At Triptych Apartments, the OC applied the benefit principle by funding the building-wide EV backbone across all lot owners according to lot liability, at approximately \$500 per car space. Lot owners who choose to connect pay for their own charger and final connection. User-pays billing recovers electricity and ongoing operating costs from EV users, helping to keep these costs neutral for lot owners without an EV.

Funding an EV backbone

Once the OC has identified which components are part of the EV backbone, it will need to decide how those costs will be funded. Common approaches include:

Using existing OC funds, where available:

- using the maintenance fund, where the works are permitted by the OC's approved maintenance plan,
- using accumulated surplus funds, such as unspent administrative funds, where these are available and can be allocated to offset the cost of the works, subject to the OC Act and the OC's governance arrangements, or
- allocating costs through the annual budget and ordinary annual fees, in accordance with lot liability where appropriate.

Seeking new funds or external funding:

- raising special levies, subject to the OC Act and the OC's governance arrangements,
- borrowing, subject to relevant approval requirements under the OC Act and the OC's governance arrangements, or
- considering third-party or contractual funding models, including arrangements with service providers, which should be assessed carefully for long-term cost, flexibility, ownership, exit rights and risk.

The appropriate pathway will depend on the scale of works, the building's financial position, the likely pace of EV uptake, and how the OC balances upfront cost with fairness between current and future owners. OCs should avoid funding models that appear cheap initially but create inflexible, high-cost or difficult-to-exit arrangements over time.

Billing and cost recovery

A user-pays billing system is needed so non-EV lot owners do not subsidise electricity used by EV lot owners. The billing arrangement should be compatible with the technical design and should minimise administrative burden for the OC. It should also provide clear reporting, transparent pricing, and reliable reconciliation with the OC's electricity account.

Specialist EV charging providers can help with metering, usage data, billing, payment collection and compliance. The OC should ensure any contract clearly explains pricing, fees, reporting, data access, service levels and exit arrangements.

A renter or lot owner can only be asked to pay for a utility if their usage is separately metered. This applies to electricity used for EV charging in apartment buildings. A standard 10-amp GPO in a car park is not a separate meter, so the OC cannot charge a flat fee (for example, \$100 per year) or any other unmetered amount for EV charging.

Electricity must be billed based on actual, measured consumption through a compliant metering or billing system. This protects residents from unfair charges and ensures the OC complies with Victorian tenancy laws, electricity retail exemption rules and the OC Act. See the **Legal framework** for electricity retail exemption and OC Act requirements.

Insurance and risk mitigation

OCs should plan EV charging with early insurer engagement and a well-documented risk-management approach. This includes being able to demonstrate how EV charging infrastructure will be assessed, installed and maintained to manage safety risks in the building.

The OC should retain relevant documentation and keep a register of chargers, switchboard changes, load management equipment and other EV infrastructure. The insurance broker should be notified before new or expanded EV infrastructure is installed, so any insurer expectations can be addressed early.

These steps support proportionate risk management rather than treating EV charging as a reason to avoid EV-ready infrastructure. The OC committee should seek advice from a registered electrical contractor and consult the OC's insurer to inform its assessment of risk, with relevant safety controls, maintenance arrangements and emergency information documented in the EV strategy.

Addressing insurance risk through a planned approach



At Triptych Apartments, the OC developed a risk-management and mitigation strategy informed by the Australian Building Codes Board's (ABCB) Safer EV charging guidance. It documented the practical controls adopted, including a trip shunt, updated block plans, signage and safer-charging rules. This helped the insurer understand the EV backbone in its wider building-safety context, assess the building's risk profile and see how identified risks would be managed.

Legal framework

The legal framework helps the OC determine how it can lawfully proceed with the preferred pathway identified through its EV strategy. The selected pathway, including the proposed works, use of common property, ownership arrangements, funding model and ongoing responsibilities, will inform the approvals and compliance requirements that apply.

Legal considerations remain relevant throughout the development of the EV strategy. If the preferred pathway cannot be properly authorised or would create unacceptable legal or governance risks, the OC may need to refine the technical design, commercial model or proposed scope before proceeding.

Committees should check current requirements, seek advice where needed and ensure decisions are made honestly, in good faith and with due care and diligence for all lot owners.

Owners corporation powers, common property and the strata plan

An OC is responsible for managing, controlling, repairing and maintaining common property. The Owners Corporations Act 2006 (the OC Act) sets out how an OC must administer common property, raise and spend money, make decisions and document those decisions. The Subdivision Act 1988 and the OC's plan of subdivision determine what is common property and what forms part of an individual lot.

Delivering EV charging in a strata building will often require works to, or use of, common property. Once the preferred pathway has been identified, the OC should confirm which parts of the proposal affect common property, who owns or controls the relevant areas, and what approvals are required. Depending on the building and proposed design, the works may affect electrical rooms, main switchboards, distribution boards, cable trays, risers, car park ceilings and walls, visitor parking spaces and other common-property infrastructure.

Where common property is involved, the OC must ensure decisions are made at the appropriate level of authority under the OC Act and are properly documented. OC committees should obtain advice from suitably qualified technical practitioners, such as an EV charging specialist or registered electrical contractor, to inform the proposed design and works. Where the approval or cost-allocation pathway is unclear, the OC committee should consider obtaining independent legal advice. Where an OC manager is appointed, the OC may also seek their assistance with meeting processes, communications and recordkeeping.

Taking the preferred pathway for approval

Once the technical and commercial frameworks have identified a preferred pathway and viable funding model, the OC must determine how the proposal can be properly authorised. The required approvals will depend on the proposed works, how they affect common property, the ownership arrangements and how the project will be funded.

The technical, commercial and legal considerations remain interconnected. If the proposed pathway cannot be approved or funded through the intended process, the OC may need to adjust the scope, staging, ownership arrangements or funding model before presenting the proposal for decision.

Approving the proposed works

The type of resolution required to approve the works under the OC Act will depend on the scope of the selected pathway, how it affects common property and whether they form part of maintaining or modernising existing common-property infrastructure.

In many buildings, modifying existing electrical infrastructure to provide an EV backbone may form part of maintaining or modernising common property. Where appropriate, these works can be included in the OC's maintenance plan and approved by ordinary resolution.

Approving works through the maintenance fund



At St James Apartments, the OC treated modifications to its ageing main switchboard and related common-property electrical infrastructure as works to maintain and modernise the building for future EV charging. The OC approved the works by ordinary resolution and funded them through its maintenance fund. This provided an authorised pathway to improve the building's electrical infrastructure and allow lot owners to connect to EV charging progressively.

The OC can adopt or amend a maintenance plan by ordinary resolution to include the relevant electrical works and expected costs. Decisions to implement the works may then be delegated to the OC committee, subject to the OC's existing delegations and governance arrangements.

Installing new infrastructure does not, by itself, determine the required resolution. The OC should consider whether the works maintain, replace or modernise existing common-property infrastructure, or instead significantly change the use or appearance of common property. The same type of infrastructure may therefore require different approvals in different buildings.

A special resolution is required where the selected pathway would significantly alter the use or appearance of common property. This may include:

- granting a lot owner exclusive use of part of the common property; or
- changing how a shared area is used, such as installing EV charging in visitor car spaces for individual lot owners.

These proposals affect the rights of other lot owners and should be put to all lot owners for approval.

Changing the use of common property



At a small Clifton Hill OC, the OC proposed relocating GPOs from a disused common-property laundry to individual car spaces for exclusive EV charging. As this would significantly change the use of common property, the proposal was put to all lot owners and approved by special resolution. The OC then approved the specific works and their funding from the annual budget by ordinary resolution.

A special resolution is also required where the selected pathway would involve upgrading works which need a planning permit or building permit to carry out the works.

An OC may also choose to seek a special resolution as a precautionary governance measure, even where an ordinary resolution may be suitable. This may be appropriate where the correct approval pathway is uncertain or there is strong opposition among lot owners, and the OC considers that seeking a broader mandate may reduce the risk of a later dispute.

Securing a broader mandate to minimise disputes



At 8 Murphy Street, the OC proposed a building-wide EV backbone, funded from a surplus in the Administrative Fund, to support Level 2 charging connections over time. Although legal advice indicated that an ordinary resolution would have been sufficient, the OC sought a special resolution because of differing views and some internal opposition among lot owners. The broader mandate reduced the risk of a later dispute and enabled the OC to proceed with the project, delivering the EV backbone within the approved budget and allowing lot owners to connect progressively.

Ultimately, the OC should seek advice from its OC manager or an independent legal adviser where it is unclear whether the proposed works are covered by the maintenance plan, constitute a significant alteration to common property, or warrant a more conservative approval process.

Approving the funding

The OC must also separately consider how the selected pathway will be funded. The decision to undertake the works and the decision on funding may be made together, but each must satisfy the applicable approval requirements.

Funding and expenditure for works included in an approved maintenance plan can be approved by ordinary resolution and relevant decisions can be delegated to the OC committee. Funding for works that are considered significant alterations may be approved by special resolution at the same time as approval for the works.

A special resolution is separately required to fund works where:

- a special levy exceeds twice the OC's current annual fees; or
- proposed borrowing exceeds the OC's annual fees; or
- extraordinary (unplanned) payments for the works from the maintenance fund exceed twice the OC's current annual fees.

For information about funding options, see **Funding an EV backbone** under the commercial framework.

Electricity rules, standards and safety compliance

EV charging infrastructure must comply with relevant electricity connection requirements, electrical safety laws and technical standards. These requirements determine how charging infrastructure can be connected, wired, protected, inspected and certified.

OCs should engage a registered electrical contractor to assess and install EV charging infrastructure. Electrical installation work must be carried out by an appropriately licensed electrical worker, and a Certificate of Electrical Safety (COES) must be provided for the completed work. Where the work requires independent inspection, the COES must also be signed by a licensed electrical inspector.

Key requirements include:

- **Victorian Service and Installation Rules (VSIR)** – the electricity distributors' technical requirements for connections to Victorian electricity distribution networks. A design that does not meet applicable connection requirements may be refused by the electricity distributor.
- **AS/NZS 3000 Wiring Rules** – the national electrical installation safety standard. EV charging infrastructure must be installed consistently with applicable wiring requirements for the work to be certified as compliant.
- **Electricity safety legislation and regulations** – Victorian requirements covering safe electrical work, licensing, inspection, circuit separation, labelling and other safety obligations.

These requirements limit what can be safely and lawfully installed in a building. The OC should not approve an installation method that conflicts with applicable connection or safety requirements, even if it appears cheaper or simpler.

For example, connecting a charger directly to an individual apartment meter may not be feasible or compliant where cabling passes through common property or interacts with shared electrical infrastructure. Any proposal of this kind must be assessed against the applicable connection and safety requirements, including circuit separation, labelling and clear identification of supply arrangements.

A non-compliant installation may not receive the required COES or, where distributor approval is required, may not be accepted for connection. It may also expose the OC to safety, regulatory, insurance and liability risks. The OC should retain the COES and other relevant compliance records after the work is completed.

Electricity cost recovery and retail exemptions

In Victoria, a person who sells or supplies electricity generally requires a licence under the Electricity Industry Act 2000 unless an exemption applies. The General Exemption Order 2022 (GEO 2022) provides exemptions for certain electricity supply and sale activities, including the sale or supply of electricity specifically for EV charging.

For many apartment settings, this means an OC can support user-pays EV charging arrangements without the OC becoming a licensed electricity retailer, provided the relevant exemption applies and any applicable conditions of the GEO 2022 are met, such as reporting to the Essential Services Commission. Depending on the billing and infrastructure model, registration, reporting or other exemption obligations may also apply under national energy frameworks.

In practice, many OCs can minimise administrative complexity by engaging a specialist EV charging provider to support metering, billing, reporting and compliance requirements. OCs should ask the provider to confirm which licensing, exemption, registration or reporting obligations apply to the proposed model, including any Victorian or national energy framework requirements, and ensure the contract clearly allocates responsibility for meeting those obligations.

The provider should also be asked to clearly explain how EV charging costs are calculated and recovered, including any electricity, billing platform or administration costs passed through to users, so the OC can communicate this transparently to lot owners.

Operational responsibilities: setting safe-use rules

The EV strategy should set practical safe-use rules, including how charging cables are stored, when damaged vehicles should not be charged, procedures following an incident, and expectations for safe use in shared car spaces.

OCs should also consider relevant guidance on practical controls for safer EV charging. For example, the ABCB's Safer EV charging guidance highlights practical measures to support safer EV charging in buildings. These include clearly marked isolation points, appropriate signage and placarding, chargers with a Regulatory Compliance Mark, updated block plans, emergency information for first responders and regular maintenance.

Documenting the OC committee's decisions

EV charging decisions should be clearly documented in accordance with the OC Act and the OC's rules. Documenting decisions is important to reduce the risk of disputes and support transparency. For each decision, record:

- the resolution, date and voting outcome,
- the advice relied on, including legal, technical or commercial advice,
- how costs were allocated, including how the benefit principle was applied where relevant (see commercial framework),
- the approved scope of works and any conditions,
- after completion, the COES, updated asset records and relevant electrical documentation, including updated single line diagrams, and
- risk management and mitigation measures for insurance, maintenance and safe operation.



Supplier due diligence and contracting

EV charging can involve long-term hardware, software, billing and maintenance arrangements. The OC should undertake due diligence on their processes, suppliers, equipment and billing systems before signing any contract.

OC committees should:

- seek advice from experienced EV charging consultants or registered electrical contractors, and compare proposals from multiple specialist providers. Consider whether each proposal reflects the building's needs or is shaped by the provider's particular products and service model;
- ask for references and speak with lot owners or committees about their experience;
- understand how long the provider has been operating, its financial standing and whether it can support the system over the expected life of the infrastructure;
- require written information about technical support, service response times, warranties, maintenance requirements and upgrade pathways;
- check compatibility between chargers, LMS, billing platforms and the building's preferred technical design;
- confirm the charging equipment's OCPP capabilities and compatibility with the proposed LMS, metering and billing platforms; and
- confirm warranties, guarantees and maintenance obligations in writing, including how they interact with Australian Consumer Law.

The pre-contract phase is the OC's strongest point of leverage and should be approached with discipline and due diligence. Decision-makers should avoid being swayed by low-cost or expedient proposals, or by high-pressure sales tactics, without a considered assessment of value, risks and long-term outcomes.

OCs should also ensure any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest are identified and managed, particularly where advice or proposals are provided by parties with a commercial interest in the outcome.

Appropriate governance should be maintained throughout. At least 2 committee members should be involved in negotiations, a formal record of discussions should be kept, and outcomes should be reported to the full committee to support collective oversight.

Testing suitability and value for money

Competitive tendering to compare solutions and reduce costs



At The Alexandra, the consultant ran a competitive request-for-quotation process that produced different approaches to the building's electrical constraints. This allowed the OC to compare the technical approach, cost and suitability of each option before selecting its preferred solution. The competitive process reduced the project cost by 17 per cent and supported delivery of a building-wide Level 2 charging solution.

Peer review to test value and save time



At St James Apartments, limited availability of components compatible with the ageing main switchboard reduced the value of running a competitive tender. Instead, the OC engaged an independent electrical engineering consultant to peer review and benchmark the proposed design and costs. The review gave the OC sufficient assurance to proceed without a separate tender, saving months in project delivery and enabling the EV backbone to be installed without having to replace the main switchboard.

Communication, engagement and coordination

Once an OC begins developing an EV strategy, clear communication, engagement and coordination are important to help lot owners understand how the legal, commercial and technical issues are being worked through.

How a project champion can support effective delivery

A dedicated committee member or working group can act as a project champion, coordinating information, advice and communication through project scoping, owner engagement, approvals and delivery.

Keeping lot owners informed that the OC is considering EV charging can provide greater certainty and help manage expectations, particularly for those who own or are considering purchasing an EV. The project champion should support, rather than replace, formal OC decision-making.

How and when to use surveys

Confidential surveys can help committees understand likely EV uptake, owner views and funding or charging preferences. They should generally be used after the OC has developed and communicated a clear EV strategy, rather than as a first step. Surveys should be simple, anonymous and directed to lot owners, who fund modifications to common-property infrastructure. For further guidance, see **How to design effective EV charging surveys for strata**.

Help lot owners understand and participate

Lot owners are more likely to participate meaningfully when they understand why the OC is considering EV charging and what the proposal would mean for the building and individual owners.

Communication should begin early and continue as the EV strategy develops. Newsletters, notices and information sessions can provide consistent updates and allow advisers to respond to questions.

Formal OC communication channels should be used to keep information accurate and aligned with decision-making processes.

How to use the annual general meeting (AGM)

OCs should consider EV charging and broader building sustainability matters as part of their regular annual planning cycle, and consider reporting on these issues at the AGM. This can help lot owners consider EV charging alongside other building priorities, such as maintenance planning, future capital works, electrification, energy efficiency and insurance.



Maintaining momentum through a project champion



At Fifty Albert, the OC chair championed a complex building-wide EV charging project from concept to delivery, coordinating the committee, advisers and suppliers and helping resolve technical challenges. The project made all 7 car park levels EV-ready within the building's existing electrical constraints, with approximately 25 per cent of lot owners installing final connections at the outset.

Building understanding through clear communication



At Botanica, the OC addressed concerns about fire safety, insurance and electricity costs through a scalable proposal and user-pays billing arrangements. Lot owners received information about the proposed system and potential building-wide benefits, while a survey tested likely demand and owner views. Regular newsletters kept owners informed before the proposal was approved at the AGM.

How to design effective EV charging surveys for strata

Advice for preparing surveys for OCs looking to implement EV charging

When should a survey be conducted?

Do not start with a survey until you have a strategy.

It may seem logical to begin by surveying lot owners, but doing so too early can undermine the project. If owners are asked for views before they understand the problem, options, costs and benefits, an early “no” vote can be difficult to revisit. The recommended sequence is:

- get independent advice from a registered electrical contractor or suitably qualified consultant;
- use the advice to help you develop a clear EV strategy for your building;
- communicate the proposed approach to lot owners; and
- use a survey to confirm support, understand likely demand and identify issues to address.

The survey should be used as a confirmation tool, not as the first step in deciding whether the building should consider EV charging.

Distinguish between lot owner and tenant input

Surveys about funding and common-property decisions should generally be directed to lot owners, as they are responsible for those decisions. Tenant views may also be valuable, particularly when assessing likely charging demand and user needs, but should be gathered and reported separately from lot owner responses.

Distribution, timing and participation

The OC manager should generally distribute the survey, as they hold the lot owner register and already use these channels to send formal notices and fee information. Other channels, such as newsletters, lift notices or building notices, can be used to alert owners that the survey is coming and explain why their participation matters.

Keep the survey open for at least three weeks. Send reminders after around 10 days and again in the final week, emphasising that lot owner input is important to help the OC plan and make informed decisions for the building.

Survey tools, privacy and anonymity

Use a simple survey tool such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms or a fillable Microsoft Word form.

Surveys should be anonymous. Do not collect names, apartment numbers, email addresses or other identifying information. Lot owners are more likely to provide honest feedback if they know their responses cannot be identified.

Structure the survey logically

Plan the survey so questions follow a clear sequence. A simple decision tree can help map which questions should be asked of which groups. Use branch or skip logic where possible so lot owners only see relevant questions. For example, owner-occupiers may be asked about cars parked in the building, while investor owners may be directed to questions about property value, tenant demand or willingness to support shared infrastructure.

Ask about owner type and vehicle use

Useful demographic questions include whether the lot owner lives in the building full-time, lives there part-time, or rents out their apartment. For lot owners who park cars in the building, ask how many cars they park, what type of vehicle they currently own, and their likely vehicle purchasing intentions over the next two and five years.

Ask about future demand

When asking about future vehicle purchases, focus on two-year and five-year timeframes. A car purchase is a major decision, and asking beyond five years is unlikely to produce accurate data. Use consistent vehicle categories throughout the survey to enable clear comparison of results, including the option of not intending to buy a car. To understand whether EV charging may influence future choices, ask lot owners who expect to buy a petrol/diesel vehicle or non-plug-in hybrid whether access to EV charging would make them more likely to consider a battery electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid.

Attitudinal and value questions

Include statements that test attitudes to EV charging, including:

- support for making the building EV-ready;
- views on cost and funding;
- whether lot owners think EV charging could improve property value or rental appeal;
- whether nearby public charging is seen as sufficient;
- concerns about safety, insurance, fairness or levies.

A scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree can help measure degree of support. Avoid including “no opinion” or “neither agree nor disagree” if you want lot owners to express a clear view. Example statements could include:

- “installing EV chargers is the single most important upgrade our building can make”

- "we should allocate building funds immediately to install shared EV chargers"
- "EV charging is a nice feature, but only if it does not increase strata levies"
- "having EV charging in the building will increase apartment values"
- "there are plenty of charging stations nearby our building"
- "EVs are too expensive; that is why I will not be buying one in the next two years"
- "concerns about fuel prices and security make me more likely to consider buying an EV in the near future."

Commitment and demand

To understand committed demand (not just general support), ask whether lot owners would be prepared to install a charger or final circuit within a realistic timeframe, such as the next 12 months, especially if the costs are known. It can also help identify whether investor lot owners see EV charging as improving rental appeal or future property value.

Keep the language simple and accessible

Use plain language and test the survey with a small group before sending it to lot owners. This helps identify unclear questions, check that any branch or skip logic works, and confirm whether translations are needed.

If translation is needed, translate questions and answer choices within the same survey where possible, rather than creating separate surveys. This keeps results easier to analyse.

Include one open-ended question

Include one final open-ended question inviting owners to raise any comments about EV charging or the survey. This can help identify issues that need to be addressed in future communication, such as cost, OC fees, safety, insurance or fairness. Common themes can be summarised and used to inform newsletters, information sessions or town hall discussions as the OC progresses its EV strategy.



What other OCs have learned

There is no single EV charging solution for every apartment building. However, the real-world experiences examined for this guide reveal common lessons across buildings of different sizes and circumstances. The table below shows what other OCs have learned and how those lessons can help inform an OC's own pathway.

Common approach or consideration	What the experience shows	What this means for OCs
Develop an EV strategy	OCs generally began by assessing the building's needs, constraints and options rather than starting with a particular charger or installation model. Independent advice helped turn this information into technical, commercial and legal pathways.	Develop an EV strategy before committing to a design, provider or installation. Use it to compare pathways and identify the preferred proposal, funding model and approval requirements.
Select a pathway suited to the building and its circumstances	The appropriate pathway varied according to each building's size, layout and electrical infrastructure, as well as likely demand, lot-owner needs, the OC's financial position and competing priorities. OCs used comprehensive or staged EV backbones, interim individual arrangements and, in some circumstances, deferred installation.	Consider the building's technical constraints alongside the circumstances of the OC and lot owners. Choose a proportionate pathway that responds to current needs while preserving equitable access and future options.
Plan for future access	Many OCs modified common-property electrical infrastructure to deliver an EV backbone that lot owners could connect to progressively. Staging works and using load management helped manage upfront costs and existing capacity constraints while preserving expansion pathways.	Design for likely demand over time, not only current EV ownership. Avoid one-off installations that consume capacity or pathways needed by future users or create unnecessary rework.
Choose the appropriate approval pathway	Approval pathways varied according to the proposed works, funding arrangements and building circumstances. Some projects were approved through ordinary OC decision-making, while special resolutions were used where required or where the OC sought a broader mandate.	Define the proposed technical and commercial approach before determining the approval pathway. Confirm the approvals required for both the works and funding, document the basis for the decision, and seek legal advice where the appropriate pathway is unclear.

Common approach or consideration	What the experience shows	What this means for OCs
Allocate costs and responsibilities clearly	OCs generally distinguished the EV backbone, which supported broader building access, from each participating lot owner's charger, final connection and electricity use. Agreements and user-pays billing clarified ownership, responsibilities and operating costs.	Apply the benefit principle transparently. Document who owns, funds, manages and maintains the EV backbone, individual equipment and ongoing electricity use.
Use load management to help manage electrical demand and reduce costs	Load management allowed OCs to balance EV charging against available building capacity, including by adjusting charging rates, scheduling or rotating charging between vehicles, or dynamically allocating power in response to building demand. This enabled some buildings to support more chargers without designing for the maximum combined charging load, helping reduce upfront costs and avoid or defer larger electrical upgrades.	OCs can use load management to make better use of available electrical capacity, support more chargers and potentially reduce upfront costs by avoiding or deferring larger electrical upgrades. The selected system should reflect expected EV demand, charging needs, scalability and ongoing costs.
Obtain independent advice and test value for money	Independent advice and competitive procurement helped OCs compare building-specific options, test proposed costs and reduce the risk of incompatible or provider-specific solutions.	Seek appropriately experienced advice and compare more than one proposal where practicable. Assess whole-of-life costs, compatibility, upgrade pathways, ongoing fees and supplier capability, rather than selecting solely on upfront price.
Integrate safety and wider building needs	EV planning sometimes identified existing electrical constraints or compliance issues. Some OCs combined necessary safety, and maintenance works with delivery of an EV backbone, while communications infrastructure installed for charging also supported broader building connectivity.	Assess EV charging as part of the building's wider electrical and safety arrangements. Coordinate compatible works where practical, while ensuring broader benefits support rather than determine the selected EV pathway.
Build support and retain knowledge	Projects progressed more effectively where a project champion coordinated the process, independent advice informed the options, and lot owners received clear information before being surveyed or asked to decide. Maintaining technical documentation and handover records also helped preserve knowledge as committee members and service providers changed.	Appoint a project champion or working group to coordinate advice, engagement and delivery. Explain the proposed strategy, options, costs and responsibilities before seeking owner input, and use surveys at the appropriate stage. Keep clear records of decisions, approvals, technical settings, ownership arrangements and ongoing responsibilities so future committees can manage the system effectively.



Frequently asked questions

Will EV infrastructure prices decrease over time?

Some equipment costs, particularly Level 2 smart chargers, may reduce over time. However, other costs such as electrical design, cabling, switchboard works, compliance, labour and building-specific installation costs are unlikely to fall significantly. OCs should focus on scalable infrastructure that minimises future re-work.

Can the OC recover more than the actual electricity cost?

OCs should generally recover EV charging costs on a transparent, user-pays basis, rather than treating EV charging as a profit-making activity.

This can include the electricity used for EV charging and reasonable associated costs, such as billing, metering, platform fees or administration costs. The OC Act allows OCs to provide services and recover the cost of providing those services. However, EV charging should be structured as transparent cost recovery for the benefit of lot owners and occupiers, rather than as a commercial revenue stream.

The OC should clearly explain how charges are calculated and ensure the billing arrangement complies with any applicable electricity licensing exemption, registration, price cap, consumer protection and reporting obligations. Specialist EV charging providers can assist with compliant metering, billing and reporting arrangements.

Do we need a Building Permit or Planning Approval to install EV charging?

A building permit is not required if the electrical work is undertaken by a registered electrical contractor, and it does not alter the performance of Essential Safety Measures set out in the Occupancy Certificate for the building.

A planning permit will be required if elements in the original planning and development approval are being altered. This may arise where EV chargers are installed in visitor car parks. OCs should seek professional planning advice (e.g. a town planner) before using visitor car spaces for EV charging. The OC Act requires a special before an OC makes a planning application.

Can we install vehicle-to-grid chargers?

Vehicle-to-grid (V2G) is an emerging technology and is not currently a viable standard option for most strata buildings. OCs considering V2G should seek specialist technical, regulatory and commercial advice before proceeding. Level 1 chargers do not have V2G capability.

How should an OC choose an EV charging provider?

The Victorian Government does not recommend or endorse EV charging providers or solutions. OCs should choose a provider in the same way they would for any significant building service or infrastructure project; by comparing options, seeking independent advice where needed, and avoiding solutions that appear low-cost upfront but may create higher costs, technical constraints or limited flexibility over time.

Before signing a contract, OCs should consider whether the provider has relevant experience with apartment buildings, can provide reference sites, and offers clear information about technical support, warranties, maintenance, billing arrangements, upgrade pathways and contract exit rights.

For more detail, see supplier due diligence and contracting.

Do we need a maintenance plan and how does EV charging fit in?

Tier 1 and tier 2 OCs are required to have a maintenance plan. For tier 3 and tier 4 OCs, a maintenance plan is optional but remains a useful way to plan and fund major works over time and ensure current and future lot owners contribute equitably.

A maintenance plan can include works to modify, maintain and modernise the building's common property electrical infrastructure to deliver an EV backbone to support EV charging as demand grows. These works can also help protect the building's wider electrical system and support other important building services.

An OC can adopt a maintenance plan, or amend an existing plan to include the relevant maintenance works and expected costs, by ordinary resolution. Relevant implementation decisions can then be delegated to the OC committee. For more information, see Approval and funding pathways.

Can EV chargers be installed on car stackers?

Some car stacker manufacturers offer EV charging systems, but car stackers create additional technical, access, mechanical and fire-safety considerations. Many EVs may also exceed stacker load limits. In buildings with car stackers, shared common-area charging or other managed arrangements may be more practical. Expert advice should be obtained before approving EV charging on a car stacker.

Are there locations in a car park where EVs should not be charged?

OCs should seek advice from their registered electrical contractor about the electrical suitability of proposed charging locations, including wiring, capacity, protection and safe access to charging equipment. Where there are building-specific concerns about fire safety, Essential Safety Measures, emergency access or existing building approvals, the OC may also seek advice from a registered building surveyor or fire safety practitioner. As a general risk-management measure, EV chargers and infrastructure should not obstruct fire stairs, emergency access, essential safety equipment or evacuation paths.

What about installing EV charging in shared or visitor parking?

Using shared or visitor parking for EV charging generally requires a special resolution and, in some cases, planning advice if visitor parking formed part of the building approval. Shared charging in visitor car spaces can also create management issues, including booking, billing, access and disputes. While charging in shared or visitor car spaces may be useful in some buildings, it is unlikely to be the most scalable long-term solution as EV uptake increases. OCs should consider whether an EV backbone that allows lot owners to charge in their own car spaces is a more practical and future-ready option.

How should OCs assess individual EV charging requests?

OCs should assess individual requests in the same way they would assess other proposed modifications of a lot that impacts on common property and the building's shared electrical infrastructure. The OC may require technical advice, impose conditions, recover reasonable assessment costs, and ensure any approval does not compromise future access for other lot owners.

If the OC later implements a building-wide EV strategy, approvals for interim individual solutions should clearly state whether the owner must migrate to the shared system at their own cost. This helps protect future access for all lot owners and reduces the risk of sunk costs or stranded assets.

Are EVs too heavy for multistorey car parks?

Multistorey car parks are designed to support vehicle loads, with structural loading requirements set through Australian Standards, including AS/NZS 1170. Vehicle weight has also changed over time, with many vehicles becoming larger and heavier as consumer preferences have shifted towards SUVs, utes and other larger vehicles. Some EVs can be heavier than comparable petrol or diesel vehicles because of battery size and weight, but many non-EV vehicles currently using car parks (including some large SUVs and utes) can also be as heavy or heavier.

For most buildings, vehicle weight should not be a reason to avoid planning for EV charging. The key issue is whether the car park has structural constraints, deterioration, posted weight limits, or equipment-specific limits such as car stackers.

If there is uncertainty about structural capacity, particularly in older buildings (constructed before 1969), and the car park is in poor condition, the OC should seek advice from a suitably qualified structural engineer or registered building practitioner (e.g. building surveyor). Any recommended limits, restrictions or remedial works should be documented in the EV Strategy.

Do EVs and EV charging create additional fire risks in apartment buildings?

EV fire risk should be considered proportionately. Research from EV FireSafe indicates that EVs have a lower likelihood of being involved in a fire than petrol or diesel vehicles. However, EV battery fires can behave differently from traditional internal combustion vehicle fires and may require different emergency response considerations.

Research prepared for the ABCB indicates that EV charging equipment is not expected to have a significant impact on car park fire rates or fire severity. EV FireSafe also advises that EV charging infrastructure does not automatically increase the risk of an EV battery fire where a normally operating EV is connected to compliant charging equipment installed to relevant standards by a qualified person.

OCs should ensure EV charging is properly assessed, installed and managed through their EV strategy. This includes relying on current EV FireSafe and ABCB guidance, engaging insurers early, and documenting practical safety controls such as compliant equipment, signage, isolation arrangements, maintenance, emergency information and rules for damaged vehicles or unsafe charging practices.

Where an OC has building-specific concerns about fire safety, Essential Safety Measures or existing building approvals, it may wish to seek advice from a registered building surveyor or fire safety practitioner.

Do OC committee members need training to make decisions about EV charging?

Specific training is not required to use this guide or facilitate the installation of EV charging. However, OCs operate under a distinct legislative framework. Committee members should understand their roles and responsibilities under the OC Act, including which decisions they can make and the processes they must follow.

Committee members may wish to undertake training on OC governance and legislative requirements, even if they have experience in companies, incorporated associations or other organisations. They may also benefit from information or training on the technical, safety, financial and governance matters an OC may need to consider when facilitating an EV charging project in strata. Speak to your OC manager or a relevant OC industry body about available training and resources.

Is proceeding with an EV charging project always the right decision?

Not necessarily. An EV strategy should help the OC identify the most appropriate pathway for the building, rather than assume that infrastructure must be installed immediately. Depending on the building's electrical capacity, parking arrangements, likely demand, financial position and competing priorities, the appropriate outcome may be to proceed, stage the works, adopt an interim solution or defer investment.

If works are deferred, the OC should document the reasons, consider any practical interim charging options and identify when the issue should be reviewed. Deferral should preserve the ability to reconsider EV charging as demand, technology, infrastructure or the building's financial position changes.

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