

Independence:

Our views and advice to our members are formed by OCN, based on fact-based evidence from credible sources, cited in our published material.

We do not have 'sponsors' in the commercial sense. We have partners who share our values, goals and consumer focus and help us in achieving those goals with financial support.

They take no part in our strategic planning, nor in preparing our written material. This is done by our staff and relevant experts, with final approval by our board – all volunteers. No-one derives any sort of benefit from our partners.

We ensure that any prospective partners share our values, goals and consumer focus. All are vetted by our due diligence process to ensure they do share those goals and are ethical in their consumer dealings.

One example is The City of Sydney who is a fiercely non-aligned local government body. It has a policy of outsourcing i.e. funding best positioned entities to achieve its stated goals. It provides grants to selected individual strata schemes (buildings) via its Smart Green Apartments Program to be more sustainable. It provides grants to small businesses to increase the vibrancy of its community. It has twice approved grant funding to OCN to provide specific services to strata owners, the latest being to produce an emergency preparedness toolkit (think fire, flood, power outage, heat event, and building events ala Opal and Mascot Towers).

We reserve the right to reject potential partners requests and have done so if we believe they are not up to scratch.

Our hard-won 20-year reputation rests on these decisions, so we take them very seriously.

One of the important consumer services we offer is a network of free advice to our members and our partners provide expertise are part of this advice network, on condition that the advice is general in nature. Examples of that value to our members and to the general public, include free educational webinars on topics like lithium-ion battery fire safety, EV charging, solar and water proofing, which would not be possible without this expert partner support.

Template by-laws are part of this advice network and the fees we charge cover our legal costs in establishing the by-law in the first place as well as supporting our mission. Other than the initial establishment costs, there are no kick-backs or fees paid. These template by-laws are available at a significant discount to normal established (legal) fees for the by-laws. We do not purport to provide legal advice. It is important to note that the intent of the NSW Strata Schemes Management Act in respect of by-laws is that there is no requirement for by-laws to be legalistic and any owner can submit by-laws to an owners corporation for approval. Our template by-laws are intended to help with the education process and are not legal documents until such time that the by-law is approved by a general meeting of the owners corporation and then registered by the owners corporation. We encourage owners corporation to seek their own legal advice as part of that approval process.