WINDOWLINE

Strata Window and Door Replacement Specialists

windowline.com.au

Strata Window and Door Replacement Guide

Your complete guide to strata window and door replacement projects in NSW

SP10486: 25 Marshall Street, Manly

SP1082: 1 Moreton Street, Wollstonecraft

SOME WORDS FROM WINDOWLINE:

After more than 36 years in the strata window and door replacement business, one thing has never changed: our passion for helping people create better buildings.

We've proudly completed over 9,000 projects, and while we know windows and doors inside out, what really drives us is seeing the difference our work makes to the people who live and work in these spaces.

We also know that for many owners and strata managers, tackling a replacement project can feel daunting. There's a lot to navigate; compliance, contractors, committees, and of course, cost. That's exactly why we've created this guide: to simplify the process, share what we've learned, and help you approach your project with confidence.

In the following pages, you'll find practical guidance on everything you need to know, including:

- Contractors
- Project management
- Finding the right supplier
- Selecting optimal products for building efficiency and performance
- How to save money, time and stress
- Raising funds
- Design questions
- Legal requirements
- Dealing with stakeholders

Our goal is to make this journey as smooth and rewarding as possible. You'll also discover a few "Window to Wisdom" moments sprinkled throughout — fascinating little facts that might just surprise you and keep you turning the page.

Most importantly, remember that you don't have to do this alone. If at any point you feel unsure or need advice, we're only ever a phone call or email away.

Here's to creating safer, smarter, and more beautiful buildings together.

David Lamborn
General Manager & Head of Project Consultancy

"Window and door replacement jobs can have a lot of moving parts, but they don't have to be complicated. Understanding all critical components upfront can see you moving from planning to decision making to management phases seamlessly without unnecessary headaches or roadblocks."

David, Windowline

FUTURE PROOF YOUR ASSET:

Window and door replacement projects can often be a steep learning curve for the unwary.

Before you know it, you can find yourselves up to your ears in unfamiliar topics such as finding the right solution for the location, raising funds, selecting the right supplier, design considerations, compliance issues, cost concerns, legal requirements and a whole lot more.

But it's worth pointing out that window and door replacement jobs can also be a blessing in disguise, presenting you with a priceless opportunity to maximise the performance and efficiency of the building, boost the happiness of residents and future proof your asset.

With this being the case, it's worthwhile taking the time to ensure you really understand the topic and have all available information at your fingertips.

This comprehensive guide has been specifically tailored for strata managers and owners in NSW.

In it we'll lead you through all facets of the process, appraise you of legal requirements and compliance concerns, show you how to organise contractors and keep stakeholders happy, manage any unexpected roadblocks and ask the right questions.

Hopefully, by the end of it, you will have all the answers you need to save time and money, reduce stress and give your building the quality finish it deserves.

Window to wisdom:

The Romans were the first to use glass for windows, (around 100AD), transforming what had previously been simple openings in walls into real glass panes. Before glass was common, people used alternative materials —paper, cloth, animal hide, horn, alabaster, or thin marble slices—to cover window openings.

Contents

Phase 1 - Assessment and planning **05**

Phase 2 - Compliance and contractors **17**

Phase 3 - Managing your project **26**

Phase 4 - Completing a successful project **29**

Resources and support **33**

SP 10268: 15-19Waverley Crescent, Bondi Junction

PHASE 1

Assessment & planning

To repair, restore or replace: Everything you need to know to get your project up and running

PLAN TO SUCCEED:

How assessment and planning can help you achieve a successful outcome.

We've all heard the old expression 'know before you go.' Take the time to do the research upfront and in doing so, avoid any nasty surprises, hidden costs, or unanticipated setbacks.

And this adage certainly holds true when it comes to window and door replacement.

Before you undertake a job, take the time to understand the full scope of the project.

Decide on whether you are going to repair, restore or replace, what materials you will use, what contractors you will employ, what potential obstacles you might have to overcome, and what the potential benefits of upgrading will be.

Making these decisions up front can save you a world of heartache further down the track. Not to mention a heap of time, stress and money.

Now let's do a deep dive into some of the things you need to cover off before you green light the project.

Conduct an initial assessment:

We're not talking about a cursory glance at a few windows here. We mean a thorough inspection of all the doors and windows throughout the building. This includes common areas and the apartments themselves.

Here's what you should be looking out for:

- Structural integrity: Rotting timber frames, corrosion on metal frames, cracks in frames or sills.
- Operational issues: Windows or doors that jam, are difficult to open/close, or don't seal properly (check for draughts).
- Hardware failure: Worn or broken locks, handles, hinges, rollers or stay arms.
- Seal degradation: Perished rubber seals (such as gaskets) around glass panes or between moving parts, or failing sealant allowing water in.
- Glass issues: Cracked or broken panes, condensation between panes in double-glazed units (indicating seal failure).

It's also a good idea to gather resident feedback at this stage. These are the people who live with the windows and doors on a daily basis, and trust us, they will be keen to let you know what the problems are (Particularly in winter!).

Here's some questions you might want to ask them.

- Thermal comfort: If they stand by the windows in winter/summer do they get frozen/fried? Are the apertures draughty?
- Noise intrusion: How much outside noise gets inside? Traffic, planes, building site noise etc.
- Water leaks: Is it raining inside as well as out? Water leaks seeping in around the seals etc?
- Operation: Do they have any problems opening or closing specific windows or doors?

Windowline pro tip:

If you don't want to go through the tricky task of talking to all the residents directly, you can send out a survey instead. That way you can hit them all up in one go. Make sure the survey has a simple checklist, both for consistency's sake and to help you collate the data effectively. Once you have this, you can then use it for your internal assessment and for meetings with the strata committee.

"Having a comprehensive assessment is a crucial part of any window and door replacement project. At Windowline we do offer a comprehensive assessment service but for those navigating the process alone, we created a simple survey which can be shared with all the residents to ensure all critical feedback is captured."

Michael, Windowline Consultant

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

How assessment and planning can help you achieve a successful outcome.

Defining your strata landscape - common versus lot property:

This can often be a contentious question. Is it up to the Owners Corporation (OC) or down to the individual lot owners?

In essence, what it boils down to is who's going to foot the bill?

Thankfully, there is almost always a definitive answer to this curly question, and it can be found within the specific registered strata plan or scheme's by-laws.

If you're not sure whether the buck stops with you or not, then consult a registered professional to shed some light on the matter.

While you're at it, you might also want to check in with your strata manager or agency. They can provide invaluable insights and by-law advice based on their professional experience.

You know that detailed information we mentioned at the start? Well, here's a bit of it now. But it's important information that you need to know, so we really do recommend you read it.

Schemes registered on or after 1 July 1974 [1]

For most modern strata schemes, the lot boundaries are defined by the inner surfaces of the walls, the upper surface of the floor, and the under surface of the ceiling. Under this approach, the structures themselves – including external walls, windows, and doors – are generally common property. This means their upkeep is the responsibility of the Owners Corporation unless the registered strata plan or the scheme's by-laws provide otherwise.

Schemes registered before 1 July 1974 [2]

In earlier strata plans (those registered before 1 July 1974), different rules applied. In many of these cases, parts of the building such as walls, windows, and doors may remain the responsibility of the lot owner, depending on how the strata plan was drawn up. NSW Fair Trading notes that this is one of the main exceptions to the usual rule that windows and doors are common property.

Phew, you've finished that section. Bit dry but hopefully helpful! Here's another interesting window tidbit to reenergise you.

1 NSW Fair Trading – Common property and the owners corporation

2 NSW Fair Trading – Common Property Memorandum

Window to wisdom:

The word "window" comes from Old Norse vindauga, meaning "wind-eye."

CONSIDER YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Window and door replacement affects a lot of people - these are your stakeholders. We're talking tenants, building managers, owners, investors, property managers and regulatory authorities such as insurers, local councils and governing bodies enforcing Australian Standards and the National Construction Code (NCC).

That's a lot of moving parts, and each one of them has different priorities.

For example, owners may prioritise costs, return on investment and enhanced property value.

Whilst resident owners and tenants may be more interested in improved comfort, energy efficiency, safety and security.

And then, of course, there's the regulatory authorities who come at the project from the compliance angle and are interested in building codes, energy efficiency and safety protocols.

It can be tough to try and balance the needs of these three distinctly different parties, and that's why it's essential to get buy in and trust from all of them right at the start.

CONSIDER YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

Make an informed decision on which option to choose.

Ahh, choices, choices.

You've done your thorough assessment, drawn your conclusions and got buy in from the various parties.

But now you're faced with a tricky decision. Do you repair, restore or replace?

Each option has its merits, and we'll look a bit more closely at those now.

If budget is your primary concern, then you might find yourself leaning towards simple repairs. But, before you do, consider this.

Replacement might cost more up front, but it can often yield far greater returns further down the track.

Restoration or a new window can offer you a longer lasting solution and significantly reduce the need and cost of ongoing maintenance.

So, before you make your decision, make sure you thoroughly assess the financial implications presented by each option.

HERE'S A FEW CONSIDERATIONS TO BEAR IN MIND

Scope and severity:
Widespread, severe issues such as extensive rot or major compliance failures often favour replacement. Isolated minor issues might allow for repair.

Material and age:
Older systems, or those with unavailable parts, are harder and costlier to repair effectively long-term.

Performance goals:
Replacement or restoration is usually the only way to achieve significant improvements in energy efficiency or noise reduction. Repairs rarely improve inherent performance limitations.

Compliance:
If existing windows don't meet current NCC safety standards, particularly for safety and fall prevention, replacement or restoration might be unavoidable.

Cost analysis:
Compare the total cost of ownership, thorough repairs that may recur, and the upfront cost of replacement offset by longevity, lower maintenance and potential energy savings.

Aesthetics and value:
Replacement offers an opportunity to modernise the building's appearance, potentially increasing property values.

WINDOW SHOPPING:

Finding the right window and door materials for your project.

Selecting the right material can make a huge difference to the longevity, maintenance, performance, appearance and compliance of your project. Let's take a more detailed look at some of the options available to you.

COMMON MATERIAL CHOICES: **PROS AND CONS**

ALUMINIUM

Pros
Popular choice in apartments due to strength and durability. Has low maintenance requirements and can be specifically engineered to withstand demanding environmental conditions.

Cons
Standard aluminium readily conducts heat and cold. "Thermally broken" aluminium frames incorporate an insulating barrier to significantly reduce heat transfer and boost energy efficiency. While effective, they come at a higher cost.

Combustibility consideration (NSW Class 2 Buildings)
Aluminium is generally considered a non-combustible material, beneficial for fire safety compliance.

TIMBER

Pros
Offers excellent natural insulation properties and a traditional aesthetic. It may be well suited to specialist jobs that require a particular visual or atmospheric outcome.

Cons
Requires significantly more maintenance (regular painting/staining) to prevent rot, warping, or insect attack, particularly in coastal or high-exposure environments. Higher long-term upkeep costs.

Combustibility consideration (NSW Class 2 Buildings)
Timber is combustible. Its use in external walls or elements required to be non-combustible is subject to strict limitations. Compliance must be verified for your specific building.

UPVC (UNPLASTICISED POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)

Pros
Provides excellent thermal and acoustic insulation, requires minimal maintenance and is generally durable. Often cost-effective for high energy efficiency.

Cons
Build quality varies; choose reputable brands. Colour range is typically more limited than powder-coated aluminium. Expansion/contraction needs consideration.

Combustibility consideration (NSW Class 2 Buildings)
uPVC is combustible. Its use in external walls or elements required to be non-combustible is restricted. Verification of compliance for your specific building scenario is essential.

SP2215: 122 Raglan Street, Mosman

FINISHING TOUCHES:

A few thoughts on finishes and durability:

Each of the common finish types offer distinct advantages.

Powder coating provides exceptional durability and fade resistance, often lasting well with minimal maintenance. Repairs can be challenging.

Anodised finishes (aluminium) create a protective layer that's virtually maintenance-free and ideal for coastal environments. Limited colour choices.

Painted finishes provide widest colour selection and easily refreshed. Typically need more frequent maintenance depending on exposure and quality.

Whichever frame material you go with, be sure to consider the quality and expected lifespan of the finish in the building's location. Ask about warranties.

Windowline pro tip:

Discuss with a specialist. An experienced window specialist can call on their own experience to offer valuable perspectives on the feasibility and cost effectiveness of the repair, restore versus replacement decision.

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY:

Choosing your windows and doors:

Nowadays there's a large range of windows and doors for you to look into.

Windows: sliding, awning, double hung, casements, fixed, tilt and turn and louvres.

Doors: sliding, hinged and bifold options.

Each option offers different and unique benefits such as ventilation, efficiency and aesthetics.

So, how do you know which one is right for you?

Well, first up, consider what you want the windows or doors to improve?

Is it reducing outside noise, keeping the building comfortable in various seasons, or making them easier to use and maintain?

Windowline pro tip:

Don't make material decisions in isolation. Talk to a window specialist about your building's specific needs. Everything from location, exposure and performance goals through to budget, compliance and fire safety. They will be able to draw on their own experience, give you the practical implications and help you select the most suitable and compliant options.

Window to wisdom:

The oldest known door is in a wooden tomb belonging to Djehutyhotep, an ancient Egyptian official, dating back to 2680 BCE. That's over 5,000 years old. And it's still intact!

STRATEGY:

Strata planning, approvals and funding.

Now we're deep in the nitty gritty and it's time to talk about strata and how to navigate the often-complex processes that come with it.

We're talking everything from compliance, funding options, by-laws, fire-safety, owners corporation rules and the approvals process.

Taking the time to understand all these strata-specific requirements can seem like a Herculean task, but it is one that will pay huge dividends later on.

But now for the good news. You don't have to do it alone. We recommend you seek the help of your expert strata manager. They can share important information about approval processes and bring any changes in building legislation to your attention.

WHEN OWNERS ARE DECISION MAKING:

Navigating the Owners Corporation decision making process:

Replacing windows is usually a major capital works project affecting common property (depending on your plan). And because numerous parties are involved, it can often take a while.

First up, there's the committee investigation: The strata committee will research options, supplies, preliminary costs and other variables before making a recommendation.

Then there's the general meeting resolution. Owners vote at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Depending on the cost and scheme by-laws, this often requires a Special Resolution (requiring 75% to be in favour). Check your scheme's specific requirements.

It's also a good idea if you have a thorough understanding of your by-laws as these can dictate

- Responsibility: Including clarification if windows are common property, lot owner property, or a mix.
- Appearance: Specify allowed colours, styles or materials to maintain building uniformity. Any deviation usually requires OC approval.

SP2215: 122 Raglan Street, Mosman

FUNDING FUNDAMENTALS:

Funding major works - levies and funds:

A major product can require major funding, and these usually come in one of three forms.

Capital Works Fund (Sinking Fund): This uses funds already saved via regular levies, based on the scheme's 10-year capital works plan.

Special Levy: This raises additional funds from all owners specifically for the project, often paid in instalments.

Strata Loan: Borrowing funds, repaid via levies over time.

Windowline pro tip:

Involve your strata manager early to help with procedural requirements (meeting notices, voting, levies, interpreting strata plans and by-laws correctly). Ensure clear communication with all owners throughout the decision-making process to maintain project momentum and stakeholder engagement.

Window to wisdom:

The first automatic door was invented by Heron of Alexandria in 10CE. He used steam pressure and pulleys to make the door open automatically.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Modern windows and doors aren't just designed to be aesthetically pleasing and show off the building.

They're designed for performance as well. The marriage of ultra-modern materials and cutting-edge design has led to breakthroughs in energy efficiency, acoustics, security and comfort, all of which contribute significantly to increasing the value of your building.

Here's a more detailed breakdown.

SAVE HEAT. SAVE MONEY.

Better seals and frames = better savings.

Old, leaky windows don't just lose heat and let in the cold. They also lose you money. Quite a bit of money if you factor the loss across a whole building.

This is where upgrading to new and restored windows and doors can make a huge difference by offering:

- Better seals: That reduce air leakage and drafts.
- Improved frame materials: Thermally broken aluminium, uPVC and timber are better insulators than standard aluminium.
- Advanced glazing: Double glazing (two panes with a sealed gap) is common. Low emissivity coatings reduce heat transfer.

Windowline pro tip:

The Window Energy Rating Scheme (WERS) provides ratings you can compare. Key values are: U-value (Uw) that measures heat transfer (lower is better insulation), and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGCw) that measures how much solar heat passes through (lower reduces summer heat gain, higher allows more winter sun).

BECAUSE NOISE ANNOYS

Say hello to noise cancelling windows and doors.

Noise, such as traffic or neighbours, is a common issue (and problem) associated with apartment living.

But upgraded windows and doors can help significantly reduce this sound leakage through:

Better seals: To reduce airborne noise paths.

Acoustic laminates: Designed specifically to dampen sound.

Double glazing: With an air gap that helps dampen sound. Different glass thicknesses or laminated glass further improve noise reduction.

NOT JUST PEACE AND QUIET. PEACE OF MIND.

Security, value and comfort:

Window and door replacement can also play a significant part in improving the overall security and comfort of your building.

They do this through:

- Advanced locking systems on modern windows.
- Draught reduction for greater year-round comfort.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT:

The planning phase is all about identifying any current issues and ironing out potential problems before they occur.

Investing a little time upfront to thoroughly assess the building and clearly understand stakeholder needs will help to ensure smoother project delivery and a successful outcome. Not only that, it can help save you a lot of problems and money further down the track.

Remember to always document your inspections, concerns and priorities clearly. This helps build transparency, supports informed decisions and establishes a strong foundation of trust with contractors and residents.

Windowline pro tip:

Highlighting potential energy savings or noise reduction levels can help explain investments with the Owners Corporation. Ask specialists for performance data (like WERS ratings) on their proposed systems.

SP5774: 254 Pacific Highway, Lindfield

"As a committee, we knew the planning stage would make or break our project. Working with a specialist to ensure a thorough pre-installation process—site inspections, detailed measurements, scheduling, and stakeholder coordination—meant we could identify risks early and avoid costly delays.

Guidance on developing a scope, finding the right product solutions, legislation and costs gave us complete confidence before the first window was even removed. That preparation delivered exactly what we needed: a smooth process, zero surprises, and exceptional results for every resident."

Phil, satisfied Windowline client

Window to wisdom:

Did you know that there's actually a word for throwing someone out of a window? That word is defenestration and in medieval times it was used as a way of getting rid of undesirables. Permanently.

SP35273: 8 Boorima Place, Cronulla

PHASE 2

Compliance & contractors

Improve project outcomes through due diligence and choosing the best

Compliance and regulatory considerations are really just an extension of the planning phase. With detailed foundational knowledge, you can tackle the next task of understanding what approvals and regulations apply to you, ensuring you are prepared to engage with the right specialist for the tasks.

COMPLIANT OR COMPLAINT:

Why compliance matters?

Compliance plays an integral part in ensuring the safety and happiness of your building residents as well as the performance, health and longevity of your building.

By ignoring it, you run the risk of unsafe conditions, legal disputes, costly rectifications and insurance issues.

Here's what you need to know. Yes, this is another one of those sections where things get a bit technical, so we apologise in advance but you will thank us later.

DECODING THE RELEVANT REGULATIONS: NCC AND AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS

National Construction Code (NCC)
The primary set of technical standards for building work in Australia (including the Building Code of Australia - BCA vols 1and2). The NCC sets minimum requirements for health, safety (structural adequacy, fire safety, combustible materials and fall prevention from openable windows), amenity, accessibility, and sustainability. Class 2 buildings (apartments) have specific requirements under the NCC.

Australian Standards (AS):
These provide detailed technical specifications referenced by the NCC. Key standards for windows and doors include AS 2047 (specifies requirements for windows in buildings, covering structural performance, water penetration resistance, air leakage) and AS 1288 (specifies requirements for selection and installation of glass, including safety glass requirements in doors, bathrooms, and low-level glazing). Compliance with these standards is mandatory where required by the NCC.

Windowline pro tip:

Clarify first, engage second. Navigating these pathways can be complex, and assumptions are risky. Discussing specific project scope with experienced window specialists can clarify requirements and documentation needed before you formally consult council/certifier. While specialists cannot make a formal determination - that's the council/certifier's role - their experience can guide your preparation. Ultimately, the Owners Corporation must verify the correct pathway with the relevant authority.

UNDERSTANDING THE APPROVAL PATHWAY: EXEMPT, CDC OR DA

Exempt Development:
Under NSW State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs), like-for-like window or balcony door replacement in residential buildings can often be considered exempt. This means no formal council approval (DA or CDC) might be needed if the work meets all the specific criteria outlined in the relevant SEPP. These criteria typically include conditions like not altering structural elements, not impacting fire safety systems, not being on heritage-listed properties and using comparable materials.

Important Caveat:
This exempt status can change if the replacement requires associated work on critical building elements. For example, if replacing a balcony door necessitates structural repairs to the substrate or waterproofing work, the project may no longer qualify as exempt development.

Complying Development Certificate (CDC):
If the project doesn't meet exempt criteria but fits within standard parameters defined in state policies, a CDC might be obtainable via a council or private certifier. This is generally faster than a DA.

Important Caveat:
Required for more complex projects, those involving significant changes, work on heritage items, or projects that don't meet exempt or CDC criteria. This requires assessment by the local council.

Be sure to keep records of any advice received or determinations made regarding the approval pathway (exempt, CDC, DA) for your project.

NAVIGATING THE DESIGN AND BUILDING PRACTITIONERS (DBP) ACT

This NSW legislation imposes obligations on designers and builders working on Class 2 buildings to ensure compliance with the NCC.

Applicability:
The Act applies to work involving 'building elements', including structure, fire safety systems, waterproofing, external enclosures/facades and more.

Regulated designs:
If work falls under the DBP Act (i.e balcony door replacement involving waterproofing or window replacement requiring structural modification), it requires regulated designs prepared and declared by a registered Design Practitioner (i.e qualified engineer or architect).

Building work:
The work must then be carried out by a registered Building Practitioner, who must build according to the declared designs and lodge a declaration upon completion.

Exemptions:
Simple like for like window or balcony door replacement might not trigger the DBP Act requirements if it qualifies as exempt development and doesn't impact waterproofing or structure. However, if the underlying substrate requires work covered by the Act, then the design and building practitioner requirements will apply.

Phew, that was tough, wasn't it? I mean no one loves windows and doors more than us, but even we found it a bit heavy going. Let's lighten the mood with another window tidbit, shall we?

Window to wisdom:

Did you know glass is neither solid nor liquid? It is in fact an amorphous solid somewhere between the two, with molecules in constant, very slow motion.

Windowline pro tip:

The applicability of the DBP Act depends on the exact scope. Discuss this specifically with potential specialist partners. Ask how they manage DBP Act requirements. Will they liaise with registered Design Practitioners if the Act is triggered by your project? Reputable specialists can help you understand if your project requires these additional steps.

ARE YOU COMPLYING WITH COMPLIANCE?

Where does the responsibility for compliance lie?

Well, the short answer is that it rests on different parties.

First up, the Owners Corporation has a duty of care for the safety and maintenance of the property.

This includes regular inspections, timely repairs, and ensuring the health and safety of those who use the common property.

But the installing contractor also has significant responsibilities under the Home Building Act and potentially the DBP Act to ensure the work they perform complies with the NCC, relevant standards and approved plans/designs.

Before signing any contract with a contractor, ensure that is clearly states the specialist's obligation to comply.

GET YOUR QUOTA OF QUOTES:

Multiple quotes help you find the best contractor.

You want the best person for the job, but how do you know who they are?

The cheapest rarely equates to the best and the quickest may often cut corners to achieve a speedy completion. That's where multiple quotes come into play.

It is considered best practice to obtain a minimum of three quotes as a means of identifying the best contractor for your job. And if the cost is over $30K this becomes mandatory due to the Owners' Committee's duty of care obligation.

It is recommended that quotes be obtained from licensed specialists with proven experience in strata window replacement. Please remember that strata projects are different from single home projects and that not all specialists and contractors are created equal.

Some will be specialists in strata buildings whilst others are experts in residential. Bearing this in mind, it is worth taking a bit of time with this stage to ensure you get the right contractor for the job.

Windowline pro tip:

Be prepared before getting quotes. A clear, detailed scope of work document is the foundation for truly comparable quotes. Liaise with your chosen specialist or consultant to develop this scope before going out to tender.

CONTRACTOR OR COWBOY?

Why is it important to choose a licensed contractor?

A licensed contractor will meet legal and industry standards, observe compliance issues and ensure that all installation meet industry standards.

An unlicensed contractor? Well, not so much. Yee-haw.

Using an unlicensed contractor can endanger the health and safety of your residents, jeopardise the structural integrity of your building and leave you open to a whopping lawsuit should anything go wrong.

All most unpleasant, we're sure you'd agree.

That's why in NSW, any tradie or builder carrying out residential work valued at more than $5,000 must be licensed by NSW Fair Trading.

This license holds contractors accountable to ongoing regulation and compliance checks and ensures they maintain up-to-date knowledge and adhere to industry best practices.

Owners can verify a contractor's license via the NSW Fair Trading website or by calling 13 32 20.

NOT JUST BUILDING PROPERTIES, BUILDING TRUST:

Why it's important to choose a registered building practitioner.

Three simple words. PEACE OF MIND.

If your building practitioner is registered and accredited under the Design and Building Practitioners Act (DBP Act) then you know they have the necessary qualifications and experience and are accountable to industry regulators.

Plus, you have the reassurance of knowing that any building work is going to be performed to the very highest standards, minimising the risk of poor workmanship and legal issues.

And that's something you can't put a price on.

"At Windowline, we understand that navigating compliance requirements for your building works can be complex and we are available to guide you on this journey. We have a deep understanding of the misconceptions and impact of the Act on window and door replacement projects."

David, General Manager & Head of Project Consultancy

DIFFERENT SCOPE = DIFFERENT QUOTE:

What's the best way to obtain comparable quotes?

You've got a number of different contractors quoting on your job and they have all come back with wildly different figures. And, for the life of you, you can't figure out why.

Well, perhaps we can help. You see, having quoted on over 9000 projects, we have become experts at the quoting game.

And one of the most important things we've learned is that variable quotes occur because contractors are asked to quote on different scopes and specifications.

Or, to put it in layman's terms, you are comparing apples with oranges.

If you want to get comparable quotes, then you have to ensure that each contractor is quoting on the same job, with exactly the same scope and specifications.

A well-detailed quote will clearly outline materials, products and installation methods. This will give you greater confidence in the outcome and help you make an informed decision.

In addition, it should go beyond basic pricing and include specifics about window types, glass specifications, installation methods and what's excluded from the work.

And that brings us to price.

Now obviously, while price is a key factor, it doesn't always mean that the lowest quote is going to be the best value.

You need to consider a host of other variables such as long-term durability, energy efficiency and ongoing maintenance requirements.

By factoring these in, you will be able to make an informed decision that balances upfront cost with long-term performance and peace of mind.

Start by ensuring that the quotes are itemised and cover every aspect of the project.

We're talking

- Product details: Window and door types and configurations, material, specific glass type, hardware, insect screens, materials and finish coatings.
- Scope of work: A clear description covering removal of old windows, installation of new ones, replacement of architraves, making good (patching/painting around frames), site clean-up, waste disposal.
- Exclusions: Often it is just as important to know what isn't included in the quote. This be anything from internal blinds/curtains removal and reinstallation to major structural repairs or site clean-up and removal.
- Performance requirements: Including wind and water ratings, energy efficiency and acoustic performance.
- Compliance statement: Confirmation that supplied products and installation will meet BCA and relevant Australian Standards.
- Access costs: Any costs for scaffolding, elevated work platforms, or specialised access.
- Timeline estimate: Indicative start and project duration.
- Price: Total cost including GST, validity period of the quote.
- Warranties: Ensure that the specialist partner has warranties for both workmanship and products.

OK Timeout. You've got a lot of information rattling round in your head right now. So maybe take a break.

Make yourself a cup of coffee/tea, (or something stronger if you're feeling overwhelmed) and rest the eyes for a minute. You've earned it.

BEFORE YOU LOOK AT WHAT THEY CAN DO, LOOK AT WHAT THEY'VE DONE.

Assessing specialists' suitability for strata work

A specialist with a strong track record of successfully completed projects in strata buildings is going to be more likely to prioritise quality workmanship and long-term relationships.

That's because they have an ongoing reputation to uphold, making them more invested in delivering consistent and compliant results.

So, before you commence work with a potential specialist, evaluate their experience, procedures and site management approach for occupied buildings.

Think about how each contractor's proposal fits your building and residents' needs. For instance:

- Will the proposed windows suit the building's appearance?
- Does it meet your scope of work?
- Are the windows easy to operate and maintain?
- What are the performance requirements of your building? (wind and water ratings?)
- Do the materials offer durability and element exposures?

CREDIBLE CREDENTIALS:

The importance of verifying licences, insurance and testimonials.

Look, we're not saying go all Sherlock Holmes on your contractor. But you do owe it to yourself to ensure that they are legitimate.

So, take the time to check their credentials. Because a little bit of effort upfront can save you a lot of pain later on.

- You can start by checking licenses. Request current Certificates of Currency for Public Liability and Workers Compensation insurance. Confirm HBCF eligibility for projects over $20k.
- Check they are registered building practitioners. Any work that falls under the scope of the DBP Act must be undertaken by a registered building practitioner. This will ensure you stay up with the requisite standards and regulations and safeguard the quality and compliance of your project.
- Check the specialist holds Contract Works Insurance, which covers damage to the works or site during construction. Verify they are a registered building practitioner, as this guarantees they meet industry standards and hold the correct licenses.
- Ask the specialist for testimonials from past clients and building owners. Word of mouth is a tried and tested means of finding the best person for the job, and specialists who do good work will have no problem sharing the contact details of past clients.

Window to wisdom:

Doors as spiritual and cultural symbols: In ancient Egypt, doors represented gateways between the mortal realm and the divine. In various cultures today—like in Hinduism, Jewish observance (mezuzah), Feng Shui, and Moroccan traditions—doors carry symbolic meanings of protection, energy flow, and transition.

NOT JUST INSURANCE. REASSURANCE.

A note on Home Building Compensation fund. (HBCF)

In NSW, Home Building Compensation Fund (HBCF) cover is a mandatory insurance for residential building work valued over $20,000.

It protects homeowners against financials loss due to incomplete or defective work if the builder is unable to fulfil their obligations due to death, insolvency or disappearance.

Think of it as a safety net for homeowners when builders fail to complete a job or if the work is defective.

HBCF covers both structural and non-structural defects as well as incomplete work.

It is managed by icare and is a legislative requirement for residential building contracts exceeding $20,000.

SAFETY NET:

Will your contract catch your fall?

You know those trapeze artists who do crazy somersaults and catches at great heights?

Well, you know what gives them the confidence to do it? The knowledge that there is a safety net below that will catch their fall should things go awry.

And that's how you should be thinking about your contract.

A contract is designed to support both you and your specialist partner. For work over $5,000 in NSW, it must be written and comply with the Home Building Act.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Why a compliant contract is essential:

Your contract sets out the rights and obligations of both parties, defining every detail from scope, price and timeline and providing a vital framework for resolving issues.

Using a non-compliant contract or no contract leaves the OC highly vulnerable.

DISSECTING KEY CLAUSES

Price, payments, scope

- Price: Must be clearly stated, or if an estimate, the basis for calculation must be clear. Beware of "cost-plus" contracts as these require careful management.
- Payment schedule: Must be detailed, linked to specific completed stages or invoiced costs. Deposits are capped (usually 10%). Avoid large upfront payments.
- Scope of work: Must precisely match the agreed quote, including plans and specifications. Ambiguity here can lead to misunderstanding, scope creep and budget blowouts.
- Potential additions: The contract must provide a clear way forward for managing variations and extras that might crop up.

Windowline pro tip:

Look beyond the verification of documents. Consider the specialist's overall approach and willingness. Are they happy to guide you through regulatory complexities? Do they coordinate with building management and residents, offer expert advice and provide ongoing support?

BE AWARE OF YOUR WARRANTIES:

Statutory versus manufacturer.

Statutory warranties (Home Building Act): These are implied into every contract and should include work being done with due care and skill, using suitable materials, and being fit for purpose.

Warranties last 6 years for major defects and 2 years for all other defects from completion. These rights pass to subsequent owners.

Manufacturer warranties: These include separate warranties offered by the manufacturers on their products, such as frames, coatings, or hardware.

These are additional and have no statutory warranties.

KEY EXPLAINERS: NEED TO KNOW

The role of the variations clause

The contract must state that any changes/ variations must be in writing and signed by both parties before that work is done. This prevents disputes about agreed changes and costs.

The Consumer Building Guide requirement

The contractor must give you the 'Fair Trading Consumer Building Guide' before you sign the contract. This must include a checklist confirming you received it and that you answered 'yes' to key questions within it.

Home Building Compensation Fund insurance explained

The Home Building Compensation Fund provides a safety net if your contractor dies, disappears, becomes insolvent, or fails to comply with a court/tribunal order regarding defects.

For projects over $20,000, the contractor must give you a Certificate of Insurance before taking payment (including deposit) and before starting work. It covers losses from incomplete through to defective work.

BE AWARE OF YOUR WARRANTIES:

Well, it's been a journey, hasn't it? But we're finally at the end of the compliance and contractors section.

Hopefully by now, you realise just how crucial the role of compliance is to the project and how a failure to follow it can result in litigation, prohibitive costs, injury or worse.

Just as importantly, hopefully you've realised it pays to take a bit of time and effort to get the right contractor for the job.

Doing both of these things correctly from the start will ensure your project runs smoothly without any nasty setbacks, surprises or serious issues.

And who doesn't want that?

Windowline pro tip:

Before signing, ensure the contract accurately reflects the agreed scope, materials, price and timeline discussed with your specialist. Don't hesitate to ask them to clarify any clauses you don't understand or to seek legal advice for significant contracts.

SP10486: 25 Marshall Street, Manly

PHASE 3

Managing your project

Put planning into practice:
Crucial considerations you may not have thought of

EXPECT THE BEST BUT PLAN FOR THE WORST:

How good project management can prepare you for all eventualities.

Mike Tyson once famously remarked that 'everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.'

Whilst we're 99.9% sure your project won't end up coming to blows, it's still a good idea to make sure that you've planned for any contingency.

Here's a few considerations you should bear in mind to help you tackle the unexpected.

TAKE TIME TO MAKE TIME:

Establishing clear timelines, communication and site management.

Good project management ensures a smooth process, minimal disruptions and a happy outcome for all concerned.

Here's a few tips on how you can get there safely and painlessly.

TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU NEED

A starting point for timeframes:

Timeframes vary based on the size and complexity of the project, but as a guide:

- Check measuring and sizing: Each window and door is custom measured to suit its specific opening, ensuring a proper fit for your building. This process will require access into every apartment to measure each window individually.
- Manufacturing lead times: These can vary significantly depending on the window system, selected finish and glass selection.
- On-site installation: This can range from a few days to several months, depending on the size and complexity of the project.

BE ON THE SAFE SIDE

Managing site logistics and safety:

Site management is a crucial part of any project.

To ensure there are no unforeseen accidents, meet with the specialist partner to discuss any potential complications or issues and to outline best working practices.

These should include:

- Working hours: Adhering to council or strata by-law restrictions
- Access: How contractors access apartments and common areas.
- Material storage: Designated areas for materials and waste skips.
- Safety: Site safety protocols (such as scaffolding and working at heights).
- Protection: Measures to protect common property (lobbies, lifts, gardens) and residents' belongings.
- Exclusion zones: Sometimes it may be necessary to restrict access to certain parts of the building. Notify residents via the OC.

EXPECT THE BEST BUT PLAN FOR THE WORST:

How good project management can prepare you for all eventualities.

Strata buildings can be difficult beasts to manage as they are usually full of residents who require extra attention and consideration in key areas.

As with many situations, the key to a successful outcome is communication.

Work closely with the contractor to establish:

- Advance notice: Residents need ample notice before work starts on their apartment or affects access/noise levels.
- Outlined schedule: Provide a clear schedule, even if it's only indicative, as to when different floors and apartments will be worked on.
- Contact person: Assign a designated site contact for residents' immediate queries or issues during work hours.
- Regular updates: Keep residents in the loop at all times. Set up a workflow to provide progress updates to the strata committee and manager.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR THE UNEXPECTED:

Set realistic expectations:

It is important to have an agreed upon timeline everyone can work to. But it's also smart to have some wiggle room for potential delays like weather or unforeseen site conditions.

Maintain a clear dialogue with the specialist for a clear view into how the project is progressing. And insist on regular site meetings or updates involving the strata representative to help address issues proactively.

THE PROJECT MAY HAVE FINISHED. THE SUPPORT SHOULDN'T.

Ensuring the continuation of good after sales service.

The project is done and dusted. Everything is as it should be. So, what happens now?

Aftercare is a vital consideration that you need to build into your plans. How will your chosen specialists continue to support you after project completion?

Good after sales service should include regular maintenance, check-ins and post-project surveys.

Basically, think of it as a proactive and ongoing relationship that helps you maintain and maximise your investment.

Windowline pro tip:

Think of the residents. Window replacement involves the removal of old windows, which can be disruptive and messy. Dust, noise and temporary exposure to the elements are all part of the process. A well-organised specialist will have systems in place, such as protective coverings, efficient debris removal and staged installations, to keep disruption to a minimum and ensure residents can remain in their homes safely.

SP 4430 – 3 Campbell Parade, Bondi

PHASE 4

Completing a successful project

Putting the win in your next window and door project

SP 2291 - 102 Spit Road, Mosman

Want to guarantee a win with your next window and door project? With top quality results, minimal disruption to residents and long-term durability and compliance? Then be sure to bear the following considerations in mind.

Minor issues can sometimes arise as windows and doors settle. Common post-installation concerns include:

- Minor adjustments needed: Windows may require slight realignment or hardware tightening after initial use.
- Condensation or ventilation concerns: New windows can alter airflow - understanding ventilation options can help.
- Warranty and follow-up support: Owners should confirm the process for lodging any warranty claims or requesting post-installation adjustments.

Proactively addressing these issues ensures the long-term performance of the windows and doors while maintaining resident satisfaction.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS:

Measuring project outcomes for performance and compliance.

How do you assess whether a project has succeeded? By stress testing every part of it and ensuring it has delivered across all key areas.

This includes:

- Testing and inspections: Conducting final checks to ensure proper operation, sealing, and installation quality.
- Certification & compliance documents: Obtaining compliance certificates verifying structural integrity, waterproofing, and glass safety standards.
- Performance gains: Review improvements in thermal efficiency, sound insulation, and security.

The indicators for a successful project will reveal results that meet or exceed industry standards while delivering practical benefits to residents.

Window to wisdom:

The entrance doors of NASA's Vehicle Assembly Building at Cape Canaveral measure approximately 139 metres high. This makes them the largest doors in the world.

PAIN FREE:

The key indicators for a well-executed window/door replacement project.

While there are many factors to consider, here are the top indicators of a successful project:

- Seamless installation: Windows and doors operate smoothly, align correctly and have clean finishes with no visible defects.
- A clear approach: The project followed a structured timeline, with clear communication to residents about access and scheduling.
- Compliance and certification: Work meets AS 2047 & AS 1288 standards, and any necessary compliance declarations are properly lodged.
- No water or air leaks: Windows and doors are correctly sealed, preventing water ingress and drafts.
- Resident satisfaction: Owners and tenants notice improved thermal comfort, noise reduction, and ease of use.

A PICTURE OF PROJECT HEALTH:

Regular maintenance extends the life of your windows/doors.

You've just replaced your windows and doors.
The last thing you want to do is have to do it all again in a couple of years.

That's where regular maintenance and upkeep come into their own, preventing costly repairs and extending the life of your installations.

Here's what you should be looking for in a good maintenance plan:

- Cleaning and lubrication: Keep tracks, hinges, and seals free of dirt to ensure smooth operation.
- Seal and weatherproofing checks: Inspect caulking and seals for wear and replace if necessary.
- Hardware maintenance: Check locks, handles, and rollers for any signs of wear or misalignment.
- Glass and frame care: Use appropriate cleaning methods to protect coatings and prevent damage.

Windowline pro tip:

Ongoing maintenance ensures your windows and doors remain in top condition. Keeping a simple maintenance plan in place helps preserve their performance and longevity.

YOU CAN'T SPELL WINDOWLINE WITHOUT WIN:

Partner with us for a successful project every time.

As you've probably realised by now, window and door replacements in strata buildings require a lot of time, effort and coordination.

Everything from navigating building regulations to technical requirements and strata approval processes.

And that's why it's a good idea to partner with a specialist team who knows the business inside and out.

A partner that can offer you:

- Complete solutions: Proven experience in everything from repairs, restoration, replacement, recertification and reports.
- Peace of mind: A reputable, trusted team known for their commitment to producing great results.
- Trusted heritage: A business backed by years, if not decades, of industry-leading expertise.
- Strata-specific expertise: A professional team with a deep understanding of strata compliance and regulations.
- Proven quality: Practical, cost-effective solutions and effective customer service.

Windowline boasts over 35 years of experience in both the technical and compliance aspects.

That's over 9000 projects that have finished on time, on budget and on-compliance and have delivered against safety standards, energy efficiency goals and local building codes.

We know all there is to know about the complexities of compliance, the importance of safety standards and the intricacies of energy efficiency.

Come to think of it, you could say we wrote the book on window and door installation.

ACCREDITED COMPANY 2025-2026

GET IN TOUCH

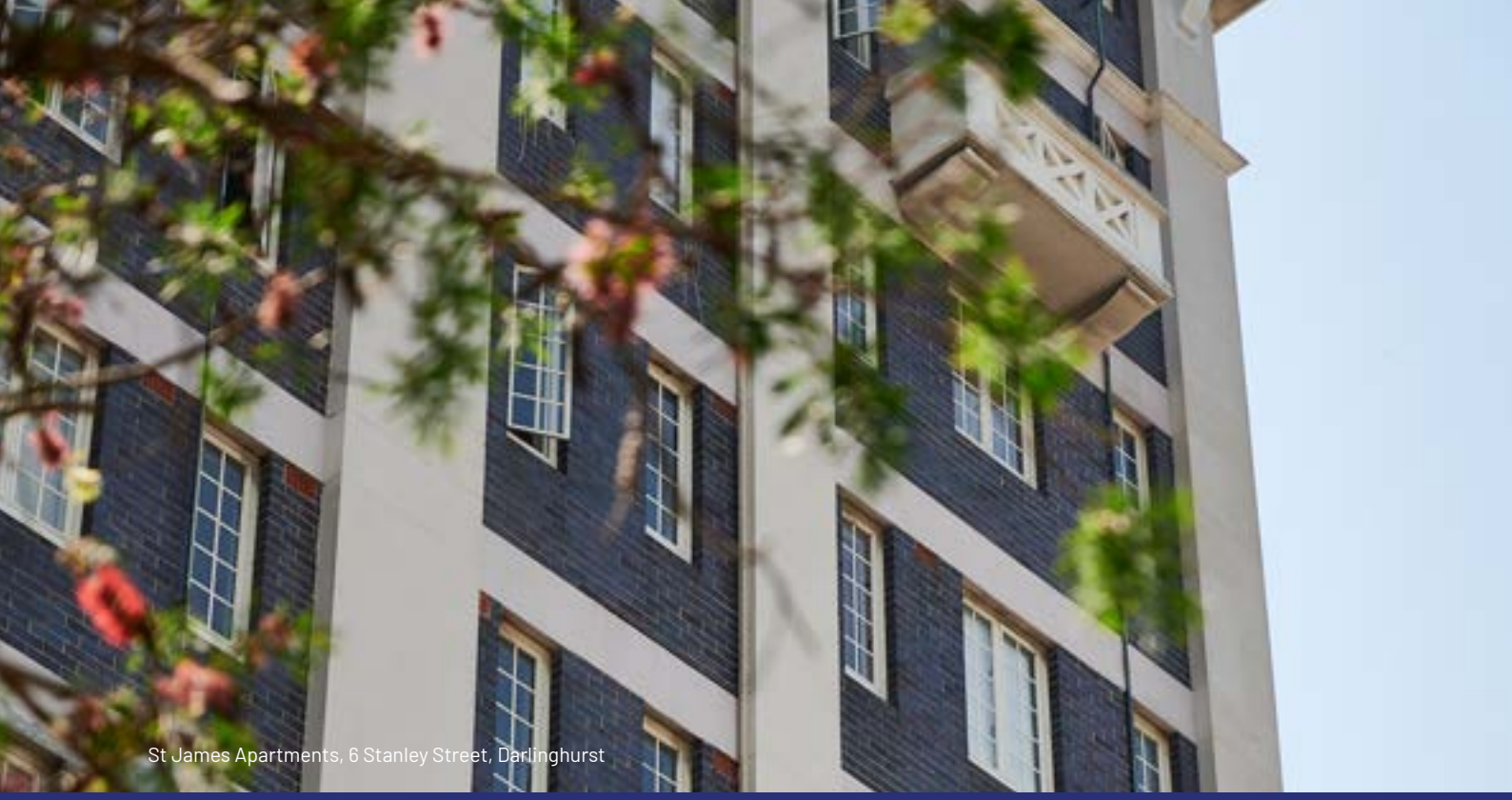
02 8304 6400

info@windowline.com.au

windowline.com.au

WINDOWLINE

Strata Window and Door Replacement Specialists



St James Apartments, 6 Stanley Street, Darlinghurst

Resources and support

There are many parties involved in a successful window and door project. Here's an overview of where to go when you need further assistance.

YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK:

Having talked at length about the need for ongoing support after a project is finished, we can't very well leave you hanging now you've finished our guide.

So here, in the spirit of ongoing support and customer service, is a useful collection of resources, support options and general tips.

Navigating a major project involves various parties. Understanding who does what ensures you know where to go when you need outside assistance.

YOUR WINDOW SPECIALIST

Your primary partner for project scoping, technical advice, product selection, installation, compliance assistance (liaising with designers/builders if needed under DBP Act) and initial troubleshootin

OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES

Fair Trading, Building Commission, Council, Certifiers provide regulatory oversight, consumer protection, licensing, formal approvals (DA/CDC), dispute resolution and definitive rulings on compliance.

Industry and strata bodies (AGWA, SCA, OCN) offer technical standards, industry best practices, strata-specific resources and owner advocacy.

NSW Fair Trading

Your primary resource for consumer rights, understanding contract requirements, the mandatory Consumer Building Guide, and formal dispute resolution services. Essential first stop for issues.

Building disputes

https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/building-and-renovating/resolving-building-disputes

Contracts guide

https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/trades-and-businesses/construction-and-trade-essentials/guide-to-home-building-contracts

Building Commission NSW (via Service NSW)

Responsible for licensing builders and tradespeople. Use their online tools to verify a contractor's licence is current and check for any disciplinary history before signing contracts.

Building and trade licences and registrations

https://www.nsw.gov.au/business-and-economy/licences-and-credentials/building-and-trade-licences-and-registrations

Australian Glass and Window Association (AGWA)

Peak industry body. Their members are expected to adhere to codes of conduct and technical standards. Choosing an AGWA member can provide some assurance of quality and compliance.

https://www.agwa.com.au/

Strata Community Association (SCA) NSW

Peak body for the strata industry (managers, suppliers). Offers resources and information relevant to strata management and governance, which can be useful for committees.

Resources – Strata Community Association (NSW)

https://nsw.strata.community/information/

Owners Corporation Network (OCN)

An independent group advocating for and supporting strata owners. Offers valuable educational resources, fact sheets, and guidance specifically for owners navigating strata issues.

Expert Strata Living Support and Advocacy – Owners Corporation Network

https://ocn.org.au/about-ocn/

NSW Planning Portal and Local Council

The Planning Portal provides information on state planning rules (SEPPs) relevant to complying development (CDC). Your local council website is the source for local environmental plans (LEPs) and Development Application (DA) requirements specific to your area. Check your specific council website

https://ocn.org.au/about-ocn/

Regulatory and compliance checks

NSW License Check
Verify contractor licenses and credentials

https://ocn.org.au/about-ocn/

Regulatory and compliance checks

NSW Planning Portal
Building regulations & compliance documentation

https://ocn.org.au/about-ocn/

Consumer Building Guide

Government-issued guide for residential building work

http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/building-and-renovating

Windowline pro tip:

Don't overlook the details. Use the official resources listed to help understand your rights and obligations and verify information. Don't hesitate to contact them for specific regulatory queries, guidance or formal dispute resolution.

Window to wisdom:

The very first patent for an insulated glazing design—involving two glass panes separated by a spacer—was filed in the United States by Thomas D. Stetson in 1865. It was a notable step toward today's double-glazed windows but didn't lead to mass adoption at the time.

PROUDLY DEVELOPED BY

WINDOWLINE

Strata Window and Door Replacement Specialists

Windowline's expertise in both the technical and compliance aspects of window and door replacements in strata buildings guarantees that your project will be on time, within budget and compliant with all regulations, from start to finish.

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