

Twelve months to get it fixed: the DLP, used properly.

The defect liability period is the owner's one window to have the builder fix things at the builder's cost. Most buildings waste it — nobody inspects, defects surface as complaints, and month thirteen arrives with the list half-logged and the leverage gone. **This guide is the plan for not wasting yours.**

01 What you should have received at handover

CHECK THIS FIRST

- ☐ **The completed defect register**
Every defect from construction: raised, priced, closed, verified. If you didn't get one, ask why — today.
- ☐ **The outstanding-works schedule**
Anything carried past PC, with owners and dates. This is your first chase list.
- ☐ **Certificates and manuals**
Fire, essential services, warranties, as-builts. Gaps here become compliance problems that land on YOU.

02 The 12-month battle rhythm

DIARISE IT NOW

- ☐ **Month 1: baseline inspection**
Walk the building and log everything — including what looks minor. Late-logged defects get argued as wear and tear.
- ☐ **Months 2–10: log, report, chase**
One register, everything through it, monthly reports to the builder in writing. Complaints in emails are not claims.
- ☐ **Month 11: the final defect inspection**
The big one. A full independent inspection before the window closes — this list is your last free fix.
- ☐ **Month 12: close out in writing**
Agreed items completed and verified; disputed items documented with evidence before the period expires, not after.

03 The defects that hide for months

WHERE TO ACTUALLY LOOK

- ☐ **Water, always water**
Balcony thresholds, planter boxes, shower hobs, roof penetrations. Small stains now are big claims later — photograph and log immediately.
- ☐ **Fire and life-safety certification**
Door closers, penetration seals, dampers. Invisible day-to-day, catastrophic at audit time.
- ☐ **Mechanical performance, not presence**
The lift works — but to spec? The ventilation runs — at design rates? Performance defects need testing, not glancing.
- ☐ **The common-area finishes trap**
Owners fixate on lobby scratches while the waterproofing clock runs. Cosmetics are the cheapest category on the list — prioritise by cost.

04 Owner-corp specifics (NSW)

DEADLINES WITH TEETH

- ☐ **Statutory warranty windows are hard deadlines**
In NSW, major defect claims run to six years, other defects two. The DLP is your cheapest window, but not your only one — know both dates.
- ☐ **The 'developer's building manager' handover**
If your BM was appointed by the developer, get independent eyes on the register before the DLP closes. Incentives matter.
- ☐ **Keep the evidence forever**
Register, photos, reports, correspondence. If anything ever escalates, the owners corporation with records wins.

THE SHORT VERSION

1. **Baseline in month one** — late-logged defects lose.
2. **One register, everything in writing** — complaints aren't claims.
3. **Independent final inspection in month 11** — your last free fix.

Want the DLP run for you? Group 4 manages defect liability periods end-to-end — baseline, register, builder chase-up, final inspection: group4consultants.com.au/engage