WOLLERMAN SHACKLOCK
Lawyers

Your voice through our values of equality, respect and integrity

NEWSLETTER
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Limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

2026 New Year Checklist!

- Check that your Estate Plan is current.
- Check that your business succession plan, shareholder or partnership agreement is current.
- Review Commercial Leases to ensure details have not changed.
- Review your Trust Deed to ensure you remain complaint.
- If you own property that is on a lot of 3 or more properties ensure that you have the required Owners Corporation Insurance if there is no appointed Owners Corporation Manager.
- Obtain pre-contact advice before you purchase any residential or commercial property.
- Ensure you are aware of your Short Stay Levy and Vacant Residential Land Tax obligations if you own property.

If you need any assistance with any of the above, please be sure to contact us today!

WELCOME

Happy New Year and a warm welcome back.
We hope you all had a wonderful break and enjoyed time spent with family and friends.
We look forward to a great 2026!

Have you seen our new website?

https://www.

wslegal.com.au

Reminder

🔔 Vacant Residential Land Tax 🔔 Reminder

From 1 January 2025 Vacant Residential Land Tax (**VRLT**) applies to residential properties anywhere in Victoria if the land was vacant in the preceding calendar year. For example if you own residential land anywhere in Victoria that was vacant in the preceding year, e.g. 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, you may be liable for VLRT in January 2025. VRLT is assessed by calendar year (1 January to 31 December) and is in addition to Land Tax.

VRLT may apply to:

- Residential land with an existing home on it that is vacant for more than 6 months in the calendar year preceding the tax year;
- Residential land with a home on it that has been under construction or renovation for 2 years or more; and
- Residential land with a home on it that has been uninhabitable for 2 years or more.

VRLT is calculated on the capital improved value of taxable land. This is displayed on the council rates notice for the property.

The following exemptions may apply to your property:

- Properties that change ownership during a calendar year are exempt from VLRT in the following year;
- During the preceding calendar year any land that becomes residential land is not subject to VRLT in the following year;
- Holiday Home exemption;
- Work accommodation exemption; or
- Principle place of residence exemption.

If you are liable for VRLT, you must notify the State Revenue Office (**SRO**). It is your responsibility to notify the SRO. You can use the SRO online portal for notification. If you are required to notify SRO but miss the 15 January deadline you can notify SRO about vacant property as soon as possible through the portal.

Please note that you do not need to notify the SRO every year, unless your circumstances have changed. If your circumstances have changed then you will be required to notify the SRO.

Failing to notify the SRO that you own vacant residential property is a notification default under the Taxation Administration Act 1997. When this happens, you will be liable for penalty tax on the amount assessed in accordance with the SRO revenue ruling on penalty tax and interest.

Remember the onus is on you to notify the SRO. You **will not** receive correspondence from the SRO with a reminder or advice to do this.

WOLLERMAN SHACKLOCK
Lawyers

Our Services

- Property Law & Conveyancing
- Wills, Powers of Attorney & Deceased Estates
- Commercial Law & Business Law

Property Law & Conveyancing

- Adverse Possessions, Easements & Covenants
- Lease Agreements, Renewals, Disputes & Variations
- SMSF Sale & Purchases
- Property Sale, Purchase and Transfers
- Subdivisions & Consolidations
- Loan Agreements & Mortgages

Wills, Powers of Attorney & Estates

- Will Disputes
- Probate & Letters of Administration
- Estate Planning
- Applications by Personal Representative & Surviving Proprietor
- Wills, Powers of Attorney

Commercial & Business

- Business Sale & Purchases
- Franchise, Shareholders & Partnership Agreements
- Advice on business structures for your needs (e.g. joint ventures)
- Companies & Trusts
- Business Disputes
- Bank Guarantees/Solicitors Certificates

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Cyber Security

how to protect yourself

Law firms and their clients are targets for cyber fraud including email compromise, payment redirection fraud and ransomware attack. Here are some precautionary measures we can all take to ensure the security of your information and money transfers.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Tell you at the start of a matter what our payment details are and not change those details unless we speak to you first. We will never notify you of a change in bank account details only by email.
- Always authenticate and verify email instructions from you that direct where money should be sent by speaking to you in person or by phone.

WHAT YOU MUST DO

- Before transferring money always call or visit the person handling your file or another known contact at the firm to verify you have our correct account details.
- Never respond to an email that purports to be from us requesting you to pay money to a bank account that is different from the account that we gave you at the start of the matter.
- Contact our office by telephone or in person if you receive any unexpected or suspicious email purporting to be from us.
- Follow some basic cyber-crime prevention steps including:
    - keep all software on your devices up to date with all updates and security patches installed
    - have different passwords for everything. Make sure they are at least eight characters long, and contain capital letters and numbers, and change them at least every 12 months
    - keep an eye out for phony or fraudulent emails. Don't respond to emails that ask for personal information as legitimate companies will not use email to ask for your personal information
    - don't open attachments or click on links embedded in emails from people you don't know.
    - implement multi-factor authentication for all devices
    - check your email rules regularly to make sure any rules that are there have been created by you and not a cyber-criminal who has gained access to your emails.