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YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 144. 5 highlights from 2018

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Intro: Welcome to Your Strata Property. The podcast for property owners looking for reliable, accurate, and bite-sized information from an experienced and authoritative source. To access previous episodes and useful strata tips, go to www.yourstrataproperty.com.au.

Amanda Farmer: Hello and welcome I'm Amanda Farmer and this is Your Strata Property. Welcome to this first episode for 2019. Happy New Year to those of you who are listening to this bright and early in the new year. I hope that you are still taking some time to relax, rejuvenate. Strata management offices are probably still closed around this time and I hope our committee member listeners, strata owners are enjoying our beautiful summer weather, here in Australia, spending time with friends and family. It's certainly what I have been doing and reflecting perhaps on the year that was and the year that is to be.

A great time to think about the achievements of the past year and plan to ensure that you have an even bigger perhaps if that's what you're into. An even better year filled with all of those things that make you happy. Now around this time of the year, I do like to go back through the previous podcast episodes from the year before and pull out some highlights for you. I did this back in [Episode Number 093. 5 highlights from 2017](#).

And today I have for you 5 highlights from 2018. The 5 podcast episodes which I think you should either go back and have a listen to if you are a long time loyal listener and you're up to date or, if you are new to the podcast, you're wondering what this podcast is all about, what kind of stuff are we talking about, what is there to learn, what is there to know, then these review episodes are great places I suggest you start to learn a little bit more about what we're doing here, get used to me, get used to Reena who joins me as my co-host every couple of weeks.

And dip your toe into this podcast as a new resource, a new easy way of finding out a little more about strata living. Now I always find it really hard to choose just 5 highlights from a jam-packed year. And I have just sat here spending much more time than I anticipated choosing these next 5 episodes for you. I'm incredibly lucky to have such great guests who put their hand up or accept my invitation to come on the show.

Reena and I regularly cover off important hot topics that you, our listeners have asked us to cover off, questions that you have asked us, issues that we have come across in our day to day practice of strata management in Reena's case or strata law in my case. And it's really hard to just pick out those few to share in this summary episode because I know that so many of you every week get so much from every episode.

Now in case you're not sure, you can find all of the podcast episodes over at yourstrataproperty.com.au/podcast, they are all numbered in number and date order. I started this podcast almost 3 years ago, we will soon be coming up to our 3 year anniversary which is kind of shocking to me that that time has passed. It has passed by in a whirlwind and as I've said before, I do enjoy every minute of recording this podcast and bringing this information to you.

And it's when I do hear from you letting me know that you're getting such great value from the content and that you appreciate it in your inbox every week, that really drives me forward and is what will continue to drive me this year. Okay, so the 5 highlights that I have picked out for you from the 2018 episodes.

I'm going to start with [Episode Number 097](#). Now, this was an episode with Carlos Flores from NABERS and that is N-A-B-E-R-S. It is an acronym which stands for The National Australian Built Environment Rating System. And we talked about why NABERS is a game changer for the residential property market. Now if you haven't heard about NABERS, it is a rating system that has helped the commercial building sector in Australia reduce, energy and water consumption at an unprecedented rate over many years.

And NABERS has now entered the domain of residential apartment buildings. So Carlos was on the show to let us know all about NABERS and how they intend for it to operate in residential apartment buildings. Go back and have a listen, [Episode 097](#), in short NABERS is rating the energy and water efficiency of services on a building's common property. So they've got some really



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interesting stats on their website, which Carlos talks about in the episode.

When you're looking at common property in a strata building, apparently the energy used on the common property can account for about 60% of the building's total energy consumption and that's about 25% of your admin fund levies going to pay for this common property energy usage. So there is huge value in having that energy usage assessed and seeing if it can be improved, in order to get yourselves an excellent NABERS rating.

Now since I spoke to Carlos back in [Episode 097](#), NABERS for apartment buildings has since been launched, I attended the launch last year. And 60 buildings have been certified with a NABERS rating based on energy and water efficiency which is a really, really great start. I know as they have done in the commercial building sector, they will continue to do great things in the residential building sector and I'm really looking forward to watching the in roads that they can make there.

So that's [Episode 097](#), my first pick as one of the highlights of 2018. Next pick, [Episode 103](#). Lynda Kyriadakis and I discussed how we've reduced the hysteria around combustible cladding. Now this was the second time that Linda had appeared as a guest on the podcast, and this time she was sharing her expertise on what I called, no pun intended, the hot topic of combustible cladding in our apartment buildings all around Australia.

I've picked this out as a highlight because I felt that Linda was able to articulate in a really clear, really understandable way, what the problem is, what kind of material we're talking about when we talk about combustible cladding and what steps you should take, you should be advising your buildings to take if you're a strata manager, if you think you might have combustible cladding installed somewhere on your building.

Now is a really good time to go back and have a listen to this episode, [Episode 103](#) because I know particularly in New South Wales, there is deadline coming up to register your building if you do have combustible cladding installed at the building. We have new legislation in New South Wales which requires owners of buildings with combustible cladding to report the combustible cladding to the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment.

And at the time I'm recording this, that report needs to be made before the 22nd of February 2019. And it's just a matter of heading over to an online portal that the New South Wales government has set up and registering your building as a building that has external combustible cladding that is made of a particular material. So you'll need to have a look at what those requirements are, what the identification of that material is and see if your building fits into that category.

So more information on that you can go over to claddingregistration.nsw.gov.au and that page will give you some more information about what kind of buildings need to be registered and remind you of that deadline which at the moment is 22 February 2019. So a good time to head back to [Episode 103](#) and have a listen to what Linda has to say and be very clear on the steps that you should be taking to find out whether or not your building is fire safe and legally compliant.

My third highlight, [Episode 111](#), Sam Reece joined me from Australian Apartment advocacy and we asked the question, what would happen if people could sample apartment living for a month? Now Sam at the time was coordinating an innovative trial of apartment living in Perth CBD and she shared with us the reservations that some people have when thinking about apartment living perhaps for the first time. Thinking about downsizing, there may be empty nesters, kids have moved out, thinking, should we go and try this apartment lifestyle?

What if there's not enough space? What if it's too noisy? What if we don't like living perhaps in the middle of the city? And Sam was able to set up this trial with the help of Perth developers and she has since expanded this with the help of the state government to track and report the results of people trialling apartment living for a short time. And I just checked in on her website earlier today and I've noticed that her company has now partnered with the Department of Communities as well as IKEA and Key Start Home Loans to offer first homeowners to win a 1-month free stay in the Arbor North Apartments in Perth from February 2019.

And I just love what she is doing over there in WA when it comes to putting the spotlight on apartment living, promoting apartment living and all the good stuff that comes from living in an apartment, in a high-rise community. And I just found her to be a breath of

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fresh air when often what you hear in the media is the negative, the problems, the disappointment that some people find when they make the switch to apartment living and it's important that we also focus on and publicise the good stuff. So that's Episode 111 with Sam Reece.

I also really enjoyed Episode number 128, with Jasmine Sliger. Jasmine is an organisational psychologist and she had been working for about 12 months with a large strata management company in Sydney. And she had real insight into strata managers building their resilience. So we talked about how to be a resilient strata manager, the tough gig that is strata management and the toll that it takes on many of our managers.

A really important issue to be putting out there in the spotlight. I often say it, strata management is not a job that I envy at all. I am consistently astounded by the amount of work that our strata managers have to do, the number of buildings that they service, the emergencies that they are dealing with sometimes every hour on the hour from their clients. The number of emails that are in their inboxes, I am sure it is particularly overwhelming.

But the good news is, there are strategies, there are tips that you as a strata manager can benefit from and Jasmine shares many of those in this episode. And we did get quite a lot of feedback from listeners saying how much they enjoyed that episode, if only because it was starting the conversation. We were talking about this issue and giving strata managers the acknowledgement that this is a tough gig and it can be rough sometimes.

And just knowing that others are recognising that, are talking about it, and giving you if you're a strata manager a window to consider and discuss these issues with your colleagues, I know many of you really benefited from that episode. So that's one I do want to highlight, head back to Episode number 128 to learn how to be a resilient strata manager. And the final highlight that I want to bring to you today, a more recent episode, [Episode 139](#).

Reena and I discussed how buildings fund upgrades that only benefit some owners. Now as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, Reena Van Aalst joins me every couple of weeks to share our wins and our challenges in strata, these are some of our most popular episodes. Reena bringing the perspective of the strata manager and me bringing the perspective of the strata lawyer.

And this episode, 139, in particular, was quite popular because we seemed to touch on an issue that many buildings come up against at some stage in their life when there's a plan to do work, renovation work, that is going to benefit some lots and not others. How does the building fairly and legally, pay for that? So the example that Reena and I covered off in Episode 139 was work where a building was installing balconies.

And some lots were going to have the balconies and others weren't. And of course that is a massive benefit to those lots getting the balconies, a huge increase in their value and their amenity and the obvious question, well why should the whole building for that yet some owners are not getting that benefits others are? And if there is a decision that only some owners should pay for that, those getting the benefit, then how is that done it legally?

And a bit of a complex situation, but in this episode, I shared with Reena some of my ideas about how that might be done legally and I know Reena was heading off to share some of those ideas with the building that she's working with. In that episode we also talked about security screen doors and whether or not they are fire compliant. We had a reminder about the role of a chairperson and the responsibilities of the chairperson. Always good to revisit those.

And we discussed the building that wants to donate to charity. Very, very interesting and again another positive story coming out of our day to day strata experience which is always a lot of fun to share. So that's just 5 episodes that I suggest you revisit from 2019 or go and check out if you're new to the podcast and haven't listened to any episodes yet. Episode 97, episode 103, 111, 128 and 139.

I will make sure that there are links directly to each of those episodes in the show notes. Head over to yourstrataproperty.com.au/podcasts to access all of the podcasts including this one. Reena and I will be out next week with our very first episode for the new year discussing our wins and our challenges. I am looking forward to another exciting year in strata.



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Looking forward to seeing so many of you, hearing your feedback, having listened to the podcast episodes, listening to what it is that you want for 2019.

Always feel free to shoot me an email, amanda@yourstrataproperty.com.au I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with members inside the Your Strata Property online membership community. I do get questions about the membership, the doors to membership are currently closed, but if you want to be the first to know when those doors open again, you want to go over to yourstrataproperty.com.au/membership and there you can join the waitlist.

So those who are on the wait list will be the first to know when they can sign up for membership. The feature of the membership is the online Q&A forum where members can log on and ask me and my experienced strata law team their most pressing strata questions. There are hundreds and hundreds of posts inside the Q&A forum which is a searchable database, a knowledge library if you like of all things strata and strata law, that's where we dig deeper into the topics that are discussed on the podcast, and it's a place where I can help members one on one in a way that is not costing hundreds and hundreds of dollars an hour which is otherwise what I charge as a strata lawyer.

But still providing that same result of giving you the guidance and the information that you need to be able to live more peacefully and profitably in your strata apartment. Members also access all templates including by-law templates and eBooks for free. And a new member feature that I introduced last year was the one on one member call which we just kicked off a few months ago.

And through the call members have the opportunity to chat one on one with me for up to an hour about a specific issue that they need help with in their building or for one of the buildings that they manage and that call is recorded and made available exclusively to members inside the online community. So we can all be learning from the experiences of others. So they're just some of the benefits of the membership and I'll give you now a little sneaky tip. The membership doors will open again in 2019, the first half of 2019.

So if you are on that waitlist, excellent, you'll be the first to know and there'll be a little something special for you if you take our membership. If you're not on the waitlist, that's where you want to be, yourstrataproperty.com.au/membership. Okay, that's it from me this week. I'm looking forward to chatting with you together with Reena next week. Happy New Year everyone, I'll catch you next time.

Outro: Thank you for listening to Your Strata Property, the podcast which consistently delivers to property owners, reliable and accurate information about their strata property. You can access all the information below this episode by the show notes at www.yourstrataproperty.com.au. You can also ask questions in the comment section which Amanda will answer in her upcoming episodes. How can Amanda help you today?

