

Publication Date: 12 November 2019
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 187. Why buildings must pay more attention to their books and records

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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. Michael Ferrier is the founder and MD of Eyeon Property Inspections, home of the open access inspections model. Michael has over 30 years of experience across government policy, financial services, banking, franchising, building small businesses, and, of course, property. A keen golfer and rugby nut, Michael says that he likes problems, because it's fun to find solutions. The challenge is to find solutions that also provide good business opportunities. Today, I am delighted to welcome Michael Ferrier of Eyeon Property Inspections. Welcome Michael.

Michael Ferrier: Morning. Amanda, how are you?

Amanda Farmer: I am doing very well. It is a pleasure to have you with me today on the show and I'm pretty sure that you are our first strata records inspector, or a property inspector on the show. But it's something we talk about so much, inspecting books and records and the importance of those documents. So I'm really excited to have you here.

Michael Ferrier: Well, I'm glad to be here. It's a very interesting area and even though I don't personally inspect records much, because I've got some good people that do that most of the time, it's been a very topical area lately, and there's a lot of areas we can talk about.

Amanda Farmer: Definitely. Yes, we have in New South Wales just had our new Building Commissioner, David Chandler, come out and say that it is Buyer Beware when it comes to purchasing apartments and we've had a fair bit of media about that. So it's definitely a good time to be talking about this. The angle we're going to take today in particular, relates to inspection of books and records, which from my point of view, as a lawyer, as someone working with new purchases, new owners, the importance of that exercise cannot be overstated.

But I'm going to ask you, Michael to kick off and share with us exactly what it is that strata records inspectors do. What is it that your company does? What would a records inspector working for you be doing day to day?

Michael Ferrier: So, it's pretty simple really. We make appointments for them, to attend strata managers mostly. They still mostly go to the strata manager's office. In a few cases we can get remote access to their portal, to access their record system. But normally, we have to go to the strata manager's office. We need to make an appointment with them and then our inspector will turn up at their office, and be allocated some time, usually it's an hour. Sometimes it goes longer than that, but usually about an hour to get access to their system, and that can be in front of a terminal sometimes.

It can also be still physical paper records, to go through and look at all the documents relating to a strata plan and apartment building, usually. And then they collect the information from those records, and then turn that into a report, which covers a whole lot of different categories about strata buildings. And then the source documents are also attached to the report. So the report itself runs to about 16 or 18 pages of information. And then, depending on the building, there could be about 50 to 500 pages of attachments. Just depends what's going on, in that particular strata plan.

Amanda Farmer: And who is your client in this exercise? Who are you doing this for?

Michael Ferrier: Our ultimate client, in all cases, will be people looking to buy property. But, a lot more commonly, you mentioned in the intro about our open access service. That service is specifically designed to get the vendors involved in the process. The reason we started that service was that, it continues to be expensive for buyers and often they're up against time pressure.

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Michael Ferrier: And so scheduling is a big problem. By getting the vendor involved, it means you can have a report available to buyers immediately, and also you can reduce their financial risk a little bit, by making the report available to those buyers more cheaply.

So probably, these days, almost, in the majority would be the work that is initiated through the selling agent, or the vendor directly. We obviously also do work directly for buyers, buyer's agents, law firms. All of those people who are directly representing buyers, where we don't already have a report available on the building.

Amanda Farmer: Mm. That is certainly something I have seen change over recent years, that we are seeing more strata inspection reports being commissioned, if you like, by vendors, who are selling and want to be able to provide a report quickly and easily to purchasers. I'm not sure that we were seeing that, maybe 5, 10 years ago. From my perspective...

Michael Ferrier: Yes.

Amanda Farmer: ...that's becoming more popular. And what I am interested to hear from you, Michael, do you receive instructions from vendors to produce a particular type of report, to maybe take things out of a report, that might not be so flattering about the building? How do you deal with that, if you get those requests from your clients?

Michael Ferrier: Look, it's very straightforward. We won't do it and we have to remain independent. We have to be able to provide professional and timely advice to people who are looking to buy property. And look, that would be unethical, of course, for us to do that. Our inspectors don't know who they're doing the report for, or who commissioned the report.

Amanda Farmer: Uh-h.

Michael Ferrier: So, to them, every job is the same. So, they get paid a fee to do the work for us. But they don't know. That's one of the things that I think, where we're a little bit different, is we control all of the customer relationships. We make all the bookings at the strata managers offices, et cetera. They attend, prepare the report. They don't really know who the original client is. And when buyers download the report from our website, then they follow up with our team, in the first instance, in our office, and so they get direct advice from our customer service team.

All of the reports that we do are audited, if you like, before they go on our website. So there's a quality control process they go through. And that means that our customer service team, are well and truly on top of what's happening in strata reports, and can give good advice to buyers straight away. So, we think that's a very, very important part of the process. And when we developed the product, and I'm pretty sure we were the first people to do it, we were very, very concerned about this perception that those reports may not be independent. And so we spent a lot of time on our system, and a lot of time on our processes, to make sure that we'd be happy that they were getting exactly the same service, and report quality, that they would if I commissioned the report directly, that buyers who took them.

Amanda Farmer: Mm, good to hear. You mentioned there Michael, the access sometimes is to hard copy books and record, sometimes it's via a portal. No doubt you're seeing more and more of these portals. What's your view on the portal? Does that work well? Is that more difficult? Is it harder to get good information? Do you prefer that?

Michael Ferrier: I think, to step back just a little bit, the first comment to make is that the quality and access of records with strata managers is very varied. And there's a lot of poor record keeping. And it doesn't matter whether this system is a remote portal, or whether it's all electronic, or whether it's all paper. Sometimes it's difficult to find records. Sometimes the quality of the record keeping is poor, and the level of information is low, and that's an ongoing issue. It's an issue that I've written a little bit about in the past, because there's been a lot of media coverage about the quality of the buildings themselves, in terms of construction defects. But I think that the issues with strata record keeping are just as bad. And they're not as high profile, but there's big issue there.

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Michael Ferrier: Yes, so it's an issue we face every day. And you can log into a portal, and get very good information, and find the information easy to find. You can attend an office and find the information isn't hard to find. And the level of support that you get from strata managers, is also sometimes an issue. Some of them don't want to answer questions. They get very concerned about having an impact on the sale of a property. Others are quite helpful. So again that's to be fair.

Amanda Farmer: Mm. I imagine the reception that you get when you sit down to do a records inspection, might be a little bit different to the one that I get, when I sit down to do a records inspection. Often I know the strata managers in the company that I'm attending, and the word gets around the office pretty quickly that Amanda is here doing an inspection. I wonder who she's suing.

Michael Ferrier: Right.

Amanda Farmer: So I know that feeling of asking questions and not being able to get answers, but I suppose fair enough when it's a lawyer asking them.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, yes. Well it shouldn't make any difference of course. Who's looking at the records. You're there because you've been given authority to search the record by an owner. So are we. Ultimately that's an important point with strata inspections, is that you can only get access to the records with an authority from the owner, or the owner's agent. In our case, both would come from the selling agent. But you need that, so you really have to get in there on the owner's permission anyway. Whether or not you're directly doing the report for a buyer, or it's a seller who's initiated the process.

Amanda Farmer: And we are going to get stuck into perhaps difficulties that purchasers can face, if they don't search the records, or perhaps the records are not accurate at the time that they had a look at them, and they've gone ahead with a purchase and there are some surprises. But first of all, just in case anyone listening is not sure about this. I know your view, Michael, is that it is just critical for people to be doing these inspections. Why do you say that? Why do we all recommend, those of us who are experienced in this industry, recommend that purchasers, looking at buying strata properties, should be doing these professional inspections?

Michael Ferrier: Well, I think the most important way to look at it, is that when you're buying into a strata plan, you're buying into a community. Now, it could be a small community of a few apartments, or it could be a much larger community. And if you're buying into a community, I think it's really important to know what that community is like. Whether it's financial, whether there are issues, whether there's issues with the building itself, or whether there's issues with the community in terms of problems in the building, whether there be harmony, or whether there's disputes going on between owners in the building. That type of thing. I just think it's essential that, whether you're an investor, or whether you're an owner occupier, that the quality of that community, and it covers a whole lot of facets, is going to be an important aspect of your purchase and your investment.

So I just think that, why would you make such a big investment without understanding what are these you buy into? A lot of people don't understand strata very well either. So they're not really clear on what it is they're buying into. In fact, what they are buying. You know, they think they're buying part of the building. Well they're not really. That their buying that air space between the walls in many ways. But, while they're only buying that, they also had buying into their share of the obligations of running and maintaining that building.

So, yes. I mean, it's always struck me as slightly odd that people who will spend many hundreds of thousands of dollars or more on a property, but they don't want to spend a few hundred dollars, in the worst case, to find out what's happening in that building. And I think in many cases people are really surprise what they can find out from strata report as well.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. And I think there's a lot to be gained by going and having a look yourself. If you are the person purchasing, and you might not know anything about strata or strata law. But having a look yourself, assuming that the records are there and there's enough records for you to get a picture. You're going to get some benefit from that. But I do often say, you may not know what you're looking for, or what to look for, or perhaps more importantly, what's missing. Unless you have someone who's experienced at doing this job, go and do it.

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Amanda Farmer: We know what it is that the legislation requires to be kept by the owners corporation. And if, for example, we have 2 years worth of email correspondence, that just doesn't exist. There's nothing from 2018, nothing from 2019, then we're going to be asking that question. Whereas somebody who was not across the requirements of what should be on the records, may not even notice that. And I find that what's set out in emails, to and from the strata manager, is often the most enlightening correspondence.

Michael Ferrier: Look, you're absolutely right. And you're talking about email correspondence missing. One of the issues that comes up very commonly, and I hope I'm not jumping ahead here, is in the situation where the strata plan had changed strata managers, and so, the new strata manager takes over, but the records from the old strata manager sometimes almost disappear into the ether. Or there's only very limited records. And that can mean that there's limited records from six months ago, which is a real problem. And there doesn't seem to be enough care taken through these change of strata manager, to make sure that the integrity of the records is maintained. And that is a big problem, because they've all got their own system. They don't match up. And, so when we change strata manager, they often finish up with a disk or a stick that's got thousands of files on it. And it, sort of, just gets put in a drawer and they really try to integrate it into their own system very well. I'm sure that's not always the case, but very often is, and it's a big issue. Yes.

Amanda Farmer: It is. I've definitely experienced that where the strata manager will say, here's the USB that I got from the former strata manager. You'll open it up and it'll be a shemuzzle of files, with odd file names and a software program that just cannot open those files. And often there's no real response to that, or concern about that, or understanding that this is not a legal way to keep the owners corporation's books and records.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, that's right. I think the owners corporations don't think enough about this data. So, essentially they're outsourcing their record keeping to the strata manager. But at the end of the day, it's their records. They're not the strata manager's records. They're the building's records, and the owners should be taking more care, and be more insistent that those records are kept and that indeed, they have their own copy of those records. So, you think technology would be assisting here, but so far I'm not seeing a huge amount of evidence that they do so.

Amanda Farmer: Mm. Interesting from your perspective. Can you share a story or two Michael? Perhaps a client that you've worked with, whether it be a good or a bad, maybe one of each. Where a records inspection has had a role to play in an outcome?

Michael Ferrier: Well, there's many. What's been interesting recently, since the Eiffel towers and Mascot towers buildings has come into focus, is that, a lot of people are a lot more aware. And so, what I find interesting, is that we can do a report on a building that's clearly had issues and many newer buildings. We could talk for hours about the types of issues we see in newer buildings, and mostly they revolve around defects and so on. What I found really interesting is that people look at the building, they obviously like the apartment. They'll then look at the strata records report, and they'll contact us because they are concerned about what's in it, and we'd spend a fair bit of time explaining to them the issues that are they. Many people are still looking to say, okay, but I still like the place. I'd still like to buy. And they get focused perhaps on the financial issues. So there could be potentially millions of dollars in unfunded rectification works, that ultimately the owners will have to pay for through special levies.

But they don't think about the disruption and the impact, whether they are living there or investing, on the quality of life, during what could be years, to have this work done. And I still feel that people get a bit emotional about, I like this building. And sometimes you think they're looking, well maybe I'll get this a little bit of a bargain, because there's some issues in here. And I still don't think they're thinking through the issues closest. And so I think that's a common thing, where we spend time with people just explaining to them, not just the current situation, whether that be a financial situation, or whether it's the type of defects that are in your building. But I think we can assist them by explaining to them, just giving them a heads up a little bit, that don't forget there are other issues here that you need to clear up.

So we say that quite a bit. At the other end of that, sometimes you'll see a building that had a lot of issues. But now those issues are largely behind the building, and so people can feel a little bit more confident.

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Michael Ferrier: And perhaps feel that the risk is lower coming into this building, because it looks as if most of those issues are resolved. I can think of one building that had massive issues and it was probably a no-go zone for buyers. But the owners corporation got hold of those issues. They worked very hard to get them resolved, and now, 3 or 4 years on, when you see the records to that building, it actually looks a really good and well run, well managed, building. So buildings can turn around. So they can change over time. But...

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Ferrier: I hope that gives you a little bit of flavour for a couple of areas at least.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, for sure. And such an important point that I'm sure is overlooked by so many. The value that your records hold and how you can improve or increase the value of your investment, simply by tidying up your records. And it might be, yes, as you say Michael, there are things to do around the building. I've certainly been involved with buildings like that before, where there's a number of projects on this, and litigation, that needs to be resolved, this rectification work needs to be done. We need to get the by-laws in order. We need a new strata manager. Whatever it is, tick those things off. But our building could be operating wonderfully, but if your records are not up to date or don't exist, then your potential purchasers are not even going to see that. And you're not going to have that best building in the street mentality, if you like, when people are coming to have a look. So yes I really love that point about the value that's in your records.

Michael Ferrier: Yes. And so I think the other thing about records to say, this is again from the owner's perspective, is I think that there's a real shortage in detail often. You'll have seen this yourself many times. You look at the minutes for meetings and the one line resolutions, with no real information. They're quite important resolutions. We're writing a special levy for million dollars, but you know they don't even really tell you much about why. What's the rationale? What's the longer term plan? And other buildings, you'll get really quite detailed reports from a building manager, or a treasurer, or something like that. Will explain, look, we're in this situation. This is how we're going to manage it going forward. And as a reader, or potentially as a buyer, that might it much easy to get you head around.

So you can understand the issues, and you can see they have a plan to resolve it. And they being open with the other owners about it. And I think that that actually creates more confidence, even if there are issues in the building. That, by actually working together to solve these things now. In other cases, there're issues going on, and you can't really see what their plan is. And in some ways you almost get the impression they don't want to say very much. Because saying more might impact the value of the properties in the short term.

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Ferrier: There might be a perceived short term benefit, but in the longer term, I just don't think that's a good way to manage a building.

Amanda Farmer: Mm, I agree. There is a lot to be said for the regular newsletter, or chairperson's report, that happens before each annual general meeting, that goes out with the agenda. Regular committee meetings. Because I agree, minutes of meetings, agendas for meetings, often don't reveal too much. It's the once a month update that's going out to all residents, that's really going to fill in those gaps and make that purchaser comfortable and confident that nothing is being hidden, which is important. Also, that is why I always go first to the correspondence file and look for the emails. Because nine times out of ten we're communicating by email now, and it never ceases to amaze me how much people will put in an email. What they will say about others in the building, about the strata manager, or about their fellow committee members, and thinking that it's not going to form part of the records. It absolutely does.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, that's right. Yes.

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Amanda Farmer: And you can gain great insight from that every day correspondence. So that's always an important folder, I think, to find. If you can find it.

Michael Ferrier: If you can find it. I was just about to make that point. Absolutely. That sometimes it's quite hard to find those emails. And the other thing that you often don't know when somebody turns up to the strata manager's office, is whether there are files sitting on the strata manager's desk...

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Ferrier: That are never even offered for inspection. And they could be an issue. It could be a legal issue. Or there's a current issue that they're dealing with at the time you go to the office. And you may never even see those files. And that's a problem too, because then the files aren't all in one place. If in a box with all their file, but except for the three files that are sitting on the strata manager's desk. And they're probably the most important current issues.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, for sure. Have you ever had the experience Michael, of a client who has overlooked the existence, or the operation, or the effect, of a by-law. And perhaps the agent might have said to them, you have the use of this part of the property. This is your court yard, or this is your terrace. And of course not being educated in strata matters, the purchaser has not realised that A, it's not marked on the plan and B, there's no by-law. Or the by-law doesn't actually say that I have the exclusive use of that area, or it's a different area. I find those kind of revelations that can occur only by looking at the books and records, are some of the most valuable, if you like, when it comes to a purchaser's understanding what it is they're buying. And if they don't look properly at the contract, and certainly properly at the records, not understanding what's going on in the building at the time that they're purchasing, those kind of rights can be lost, or misunderstood, or overpaid for?

Michael Ferrier: Yes, that's true. Look, sometimes we're a bit blind to those things. Because we'll get a request to search not for strata plan 1, 2, 3, 4, for example, which will be the apartment they're buying. They think they're buying that apartment and perhaps part of a roof top terrace, or something like that. We've got no knowledge of that, and we don't see the contract, so we'll go and do a search based on the information we're given. And so we're not aware that the agent is saying, you've got exclusive use of this area. So, unless the buyer comes to us and says, look I can't see this. Why am I paying levies for this as well, or whatever it is. Or I can't see a by-law for this. Then I think that that's an area where we don't necessarily know what's happening on the other side.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, and there's a big role there for conveyances and lawyers who are acting for purchases on these contracts to, I believe, sit with the purchaser, look at the strata plan, say, this is the area that you're buying. Does that look like what you inspected? And I believe to have a look at the marketing that's being issued by the agent and that your client has been relying on, and to make sure that that too matches what's shown in the strata plan. And in the by-laws. I don't do any conveyancing anymore. I did back when I was a baby lawyer. But I know that that process is becoming cheaper and cheaper, and more competitive. And I think that's pretty scary, especially when it comes to buying strata properties.

Michael Ferrier: We had an example, just a couple of weeks ago with having some new by-laws passed, about the exclusive use for a couple of units in a strata plan. And one of those units was being sold 12 months afterwards. And the strata plan had not been updated, 12 months after they'd passed the resolutions to change the unit entitlements and so on.

Amanda Farmer: Oh dear.

Michael Ferrier: And so. It caused an issue for the vendor. Because the vendor knew that what they were selling included this, but when we came to search the records, the unit entitlement hadn't been updated. And so the information in the records didn't reflect, and obviously we saw the resolution in the meeting, but the other documents didn't match up. And they just hadn't gotten around to it. So yes. It got resolved. But it's a similar issue that you're talking about. And again, it's just another example of poor record keeping.

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Amanda Farmer: Yes, and you can see how this process of Buyer Beware, and the education that these purchases have to undergo, is coming from various different angles. It's coming from their lawyer, or their conveyancer that they've engaged. It's coming from the person who's preparing the strata records inspection. It's coming from the agent. It's coming perhaps from the strata manager. Gathering as much information as you can so that you're then attuned to the issue when the information doesn't match. It's going to be really important.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Amanda Farmer: Michael, have you noticed some common or recurring problems that strata buildings face, when it comes to keeping and maintaining accurate records, and have you got any recommendations for how they might overcome those problems?

Michael Ferrier: One of the important things that we're always looking at are financials, and associated with that, we're always looking for when any large items of expenditure, that may indicate potential issues in the building. Often the description of expenditure item is vague, at best. And this is an area where I think records could be improved dramatically. If they just took a little bit more time, to put a bit more detail into the information, in the financials. Because often if you say a expenditure for \$20,000 for consultants, or you say \$20,000 for legal fees, then it's a red flag, because why are they in? Because the consultants is often a code for structural engineer, and the legal expenses thing, well you know, who are we taking legal action against? Or who's taking legal action against us? But it's hard to find the information sometimes. So it highlights an information gap, both in terms of the physical records, but there's a big information gap there in the financial records in sense of the way they describe things.

So I think that's an area that many strata managers, or strata owners corporations, could improve the records just by better description. There's a little bit like what we talked about earlier, with minutes as well, is putting a little bit more information into the minutes, makes a massive difference to the understanding of what's going on. And I think creates better transparency. And I think better transparency can lead to better confidence about the people buying into the building. But also I think better outcomes for people selling. I think there's a pervasive view that sometimes less information is better. But yes, that's not my view. So certainly that's one area. And as I mentioned before, if the owners corporation decide they want to change strata managers, then they should be on the front foot about managing that process and the impact it has on their records.

They should be aware upfront that that could mean an issue, and they should be making an allowance to insist. So, all I meant by an allowance is that, to make sure that the new strata manager does spend the time to integrate the old records into their system. Now that may cost the owners corporation some money, but I think it's money well spent, so that the information becomes complete. As I said before, it's the owners corporation records, not the strata manager's records. And I think that that's an issue. So why do people change strata managers? Well, it could be that the individual managers just hasn't done a good job for them, but it also could be that they are looking to save a bit of money on strata management fee. And again that could be a short term saving, but ultimately you could finish up with worst records and perhaps a worse strata plan.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, a really good tip and I agree. And all of our owners listening, should bear that one in mind. That you are in control and you are in control of giving that instruction to your new strata manager, to make sure that the records are in order. And yes, if it means paying a bit extra for an assistant to go through all of the unnamed electronic files, and sort those out, it's going to certainly save time and money down the track I believe.

Just on the technical side, do the various companies who produce software for the strata sector, do they ever consult with you or with people like you about what you're seeing in these records? What is it that is hard for you to read, to understand? Because I know when I raise these issues, when I look at financials and say, okay, why do we have a lump sum 250,000 here that just says special levy, it doesn't actually say what it's for. And often the answer I get is, oh, the system doesn't allow us. Or, that's what the system provides for. Whether you accept that or not is one thing. But I could see great benefit in people who are producing this technology and these systems, and I know there are various options out there, and new things happening all the time, to be talking to people like you, and understanding what the problems are, so that they can build a system that solves these problems.

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Michael Ferrier: Yes. I've had a few conversations with businesses that have created the strata portals. And on paper they look very interesting, you know, where the opportunities are. And it's exactly in the areas you're talking about. About better detail. But also helping to manage the change. So, I think with some of them, in theory you could change strata manager. But the records, there should be nothing happens with the record. The records stay with the same portal and the different managers look after them. So you get that continuity.

Amanda Farmer: I can hear all the strata managers going, No! Can you imagine what they would do to us?

Michael Ferrier: Exactly.

Amanda Farmer: But yes, I understand the logic.

Michael Ferrier: Another area that came up was to do with buildings insurance. And, so, there'll be documents in the records that could actually help owners corporations get better insurance rights. So I've been a big believer for a long time, that if you look after your building, then why can't you negotiate a better insurance rate? And insurance, as you will know, is usually the biggest expense that a strata plan had. If you can demonstrate that you're actively looking after the building and that there aren't any issues there, why aren't you a low risk? So I hear that these portals are talking with insurance companies about some of this stuff as well. And of course that can work the other way, that if there's issues in the building, then the insurance companies might look at them and say, well yes, it's a bit more risky.

It's a much broader topic. But yes, look, I definitely think there's areas where technology can help you.

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Ferrier: But it just seems to me an industry that moves incredibly slow. And many of the big strata managers have legacy system and more than one, in many cases. And those systems don't communicate very well. But on the other hand, so we had an example just on Friday, where we were trying to speak to somebody overseas to bid at an auction on Saturday. And the only way that we could get somebody to inspect those records, was for them to be able to access them at a remote location, from where the physical strata manager was. So, in the same group, but at a different office. And they're technology enabled us to do that. So we were able to get in, do the inspection, get this report out on Saturday morning as it turned out, so that they could bid at auction at 11:30. So there the technology helped. But in other cases, you know, just not. It's harder.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, and I know that we have a lot of innovative people who listen to this podcast, and a number who are building software to assist strata schemes in all different respects. So when I ask for you to give your details at the end of this discussion, Michael, my suggestion may be taken up and you'll be flooded with some requests for coffees. Sorry about that.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, that's fine. I don't mind that actually, because I actually find that it's good for us, to understand what's happening in the industry.

Amanda Farmer: Mm-hmm.

Michael Ferrier: And I'm quite interested to throw my 20 cents into the conversation. Because, I think ultimately it can only improve, what I think, that... Well I've already said I think it's a pretty poor system at the moment, overall.

Amanda Farmer: And thank you. We are lucky to have your two cents. I'm going to shift gears now, Michael, and ask you about books. Every guest on the podcast gets this question. What books have had the greatest impact on you, and why?

Michael Ferrier: I recently read a book, by this guy, Ray Dalio, who runs Bridgewater Associates. It's the biggest hedge fund in the world.



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Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Ferrier: And, you have to be careful about these books, that they're written by people who've had fantastic success and you don't see too many of the story. But I think that the reason I found that book very interesting, was that success. I'd got overnight success after 20 years, or something like that.

Amanda Farmer: Hmm, exactly.

Michael Ferrier: What it highlights is, that you do need to just keep doing the small thing well, and ultimately they can turn into be a success. So I found that book quite interesting.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, I think that's Principles. Ray Dalio's Principles, is it?

Michael Ferrier: Yes. Principles. Sorry, I was struggling to remember the name.

Amanda Farmer: No, that's okay. I had it on audio book. It was very good for getting me to sleep at night. I'll say that. Lots of detail in there and you can understand why they have this guy became as successful as he is.

Michael Ferrier: Yes.

Amanda Farmer: But you're exactly right. It's all about, the small things, and, the each step at a time, and the principles.

Michael Ferrier: Yes, yes. Precisely.

Amanda Farmer: Thank you for sharing. I am going to ask you how listeners find out more about you, Michael, and anything you'd like to add before we wrap up?

Michael Ferrier: Well, they can obviously just come to eyeon.com.au.

Amanda Farmer: And I'll just spell that. It's E-Y-E-O-N.

Michael Ferrier: Yes. Thank you Amanda.

Amanda Farmer: eyeon.com.au

Michael Ferrier: Yes. And so there's information about all our services there, for vendors, and for buyers. About how they work. Any reports that we've done are accessible directly through our website. We encourage people to call us if they've got any questions, if they're thinking of buying or thinking of selling. We're more than happy to provide support to people on the phone, whether or not they're using our service. I think ultimately that works for us in the long term. So, if people out there, owners who are thinking about selling, or people who are thinking to buying into an apartment at this time, please call us.

We've also got quite a lot of articles and blog posts on our website as well, with talk about some of these issues, including the issues around buying and selling apartments. I've written some articles about record keeping, which we've been talking about today, which are there as well. And so, yeah, there's a fair bit of information there and the phone is also there for people as well.

Amanda Farmer: Excellent. It is such an important topic and we have talked around, it, alluded to it, mentioned it on the podcast so many times. So I'm really grateful to have the opportunity to have this in depth discussion with you, Michael. And, there's a lot more in my notes here, but we are running out of time, so it may be part two down the track for us if you've got time.

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Michael Ferrier: Yes, lovely. Enjoyed it Amanda and loved to do it again.

Amanda Farmer: Excellent. Thanks Michael.

Michael Ferrier: Thanks very much.

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