

Publication Date: 23 June 2021
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 268. Cladding, committees and the other C word:
Tom Bacon on VIC OCs

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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.

Amanda Farmer: Hello and welcome to this week's podcast episode. I am your host Amanda Farmer and my guest today is Tom Bacon, the Principal Lawyer and CEO of Strata Title Lawyers. Tom's team specialises in acting for owners corporations in New South Wales and in Victoria. Tom has over 15 years experience across Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific and the Caribbean. He has been involved in some of the leading cases decided in Australia and internationally setting precedence to clarify the duties, the powers, the functions and obligations of ominous corporations and he is indeed regarded by his peers as one of the leading experts in our field. Tom practised as a barrister and a solicitor in New Zealand between 2006 and 2010 in environmental law, building law and insurance law acting for government clients in New Zealand's superior courts. Tom founded Strata Title Lawyers in 2013 with offices in the Sydney CBD and the Melbourne CBD. Tom is also an accredited mediator.

Now this podcast interview was recorded prior to the live chat I had with Tom just last Friday over on the Your Strata Property Facebook page. If you like what you're hearing here and I know you will, go ahead and check out the replay of last Friday's live chat I'll pop a link for you in the show notes. Tom and I cover a lot of ground in this upcoming podcast conversation including what to expect from the new Victorian legislation starting in December 2021. What's wrong with the Victorian government's response to combustible cladding and why do Tom and I think that strata communities may be becoming a little complacent in the face of the virus that just won't go away. We ran out of time to cover everything we wanted to cover in this chat which is part of the reason why we continued over on the Facebook page last Friday so do head over and check that out too. But right now I'll take you on over to my podcast chat with Tom Bacon of Strata Title Lawyers. Tom Bacon, welcome to the show.

Tom Bacon: Thanks, Amanda. Lovely to be here.

Amanda Farmer: It's a pleasure to have you on the show. Tom, you are somewhat of a unique strata lawyer in my mind anyway or perhaps a better word is brave. I think you're brave because you practice in two different jurisdictions. You're in both New South Wales and Victoria. I want to start by asking you how did this come to be? How did you come to be a cross-jurisdictional strata lawyer? Did you start in Vic or did you start in New South Wales? Tell us the Tom Bacon story.

Tom Bacon: No, you flatter me Amanda and the Tom Bacon story is one of my favourite stories to tell but I'm sure your viewers don't want to have the entire podcast dedicated to that. It's just simply that maybe I can't stand still for too long, maybe I've always got to be on the move but I've always loved Victorian strata law, as well as New South Wales strata law it's such a unique, practise area to be in and I find it fascinating. I'm very passionate about Victorian strata law because in my mind the Victorians are a little bit behind where we need them to be and it's been almost a bit of a missionary calling in a way to try and help the Southern natives progress. I've been practising in both jurisdictions since 2013. I love them equally and I don't really get too confused between the two jurisdictions even though the laws are quite different. It hasn't happened yet but maybe as I get a bit older and more **dotely** maybe that time will come but I'm still going strong.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. I have had to dip into the Victorian legislation every now and then as I help our Victorian members that I have inside our online community. And it is one of those jurisdictions that I've found is somewhat different to what we have in New South Wales including the terminology. I understand the term strata is not used in Victoria is that still correct?

Tom Bacon: That is correct. I mean different is good. There are some excellent differences with the Victorian legislation but yes, strata, the word strata isn't really used. We have in New South Wales the very common strata manager and it's the owners corporation manager and it's known as owners corporations down there or body corporates and so strata isn't really a common term you're right. Getting better.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. And you do have some new legislation that I understand has been made and is due to start at the end of this year, we're definitely going to get into that. But at the time we're recording this, there's a bit going on in Victoria keeping our

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residents not just inside but perhaps more concerned for themselves and each other as we might be in other parts of the country as our pandemic continues on. Tell me this, how has lockdown version 3.0, I'm calling it, being treating apartment residents in Victoria?

Tom Bacon: It's tough, Amanda, it's tough work there's just no denying that. As you point out this is the third lockdown that Victoria has had and the claustrophobia if it hasn't descended as well and truly settling in into the four walls of all of these apartments. Because of course we do have some very small apartments down in Melbourne and it's only been in February of this year where planning minister, Richard Wynne made an announcement to create some new design rules so that apartments are better able to access sunlight to minimise shadowing from balconies. And it was only two years ago in 2019, where the new rules came out about increasing the minimum apartment size. We do have thousands of these very small, very dark apartments all throughout Melbourne. And you can imagine how the residents living within this would feel nonetheless of having been sequestered in their own homes due to this pandemic and the public health measures. But when you're living in a dingy little dark apartment as well on the 16th floor of the building and it's rattling with high winds, it's not a very nice place to be.

And this is what happens really on a macro level when you incentivise builders and developers to build these massive developments and remove maximum building heights and reduce red tape. And Victoria has made a lot of stamp duty revenue over the past 15 years but at a great social cost. And so we have an anxious bunch of residents down here in Victoria and you couple that with the fact of the cladding crisis, the combustible cladding prices down in Victoria with over 1600 privately owned buildings with combustible cladding. And so you can imagine for all of these residents that would be in such a building if you're living in a building 24/7 and there is a slight fire risk then not everyone's going to be loving that.

The Lacrosse building fire in Docklands was started by a cigarette butt. We do have a very anxious bunch of residents down in Victoria and I'm glad to see that some of the restrictions are easing now and hopefully when this podcast is broadcast hopefully they are all removed. But private outdoor recreation has been limited by the state government of course but we have the pools and the saunas and the gyms within these complexes that have all been closed off for quite legitimate reasons. But it's just meaning the Victorians aren't getting outside to play and was it, Jack Nicholson, in *The Shining*, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

Amanda Farmer: Yes indeed. And at the time that we're recording this, there has been news of a transmission event occurring inside a low rise, a townhouse complex as I understand it in Melbourne. This is the first unless I missed it, this is the first that we've had reported and I've said to media recently that I'm surprised that we haven't had one at least not reported until now. How are you taking this news as really it's breaking as we're recording this Tom? Is this a building that has become complacent do you think or just exhausted by the lockdown and having to consider these issues?

Tom Bacon: I don't have any knowledge of the building itself but it's certainly... I'm quite flabbergasted in a way that it could happen to a townhouse complex. You could imagine that this could have easily have occurred in a 100 unit apartment building complex, perhaps with a couple of elevators and a narrow lobby entrance but a spread out townhouse complex in South Bank is very odd. And the health minister has made a statement by saying that the community transmission occurred using shared facilities. Now that just throws up more questions really because when we talk about shared facilities, are we talking about a handrail on a staircase? Are we talking about an air conditioning vent? Are we talking about a front door gate? Or are we talking about a gym or a pool or an elevator? Without that really sort of in-depth detail, we can't speculate but it does mean that this poor old complex being shut down for 14 days and who knows if there's going to be some more cases that will spring up over the next two weeks with it.

This is something which could have happened in any strata complex anywhere in Australia it's just bad luck that it's a Victorian one of course. But this won't be the last that's for sure and I think there's a lot of learnings to be made out of this. And in my view, the health officials should be very forthcoming with whatever data they can glean from this because we want to be able to learn like all the public health officials. And those of us in the strata sector we have good communication databases and the means to get it out there so I think there's real opportunity to help other complexes and we really should get to the bottom of it.

Amanda Farmer: It's something that I'm committed to talking about here in Sydney because I think we've been lucky or spoiled

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perhaps and indeed I have seen some buildings becoming complacent. I'm sure it's the same in places like Queensland, WA where this time last year we were on highlight, we were very vigilant. We had increased our cleaning schedules, we were getting those door handles and lift buttons cleaned three or four times a day. We had the hand sanitiser in the foyer, residents were using elbows and keys and things to press buttons and I'm concerned that that may not be happening anymore because we've all relaxed a little bit. And what's happened here in South Bank is a reminder for the rest of us to keep up those schedules, keep up that additional attention to our cleanliness and hygiene around our common areas because you never know. And just because you're in a low rise townhouse complex doesn't mean you don't have, as you say to Tom shared facilities.

Tom Bacon: Absolutely, Amanda. We all have to remain vigilant and certainly, I am aware that in Victoria the facilities managers there have been excellent at arranging for the stronger antibacterial cleaning products and for extra cleaning staff to come on. But certainly, as perhaps restrictions have eased and now flared up again but during that time when restrictions eased, maybe that coincided with perhaps the cleaning standards going back to normal levels when perhaps what we needed was that extra vigilance to keep going with that. Have those extra teams of cleaners on-site, it's a massive cost for the owners corporations but now's not the time to be pinching pennies.

Amanda Farmer: But you can see how the residents' managers, facilities managers would become exhausted by all of this that's only normal. Let's switch gears a little here Tom, you did mention earlier combustible cladding and that is indeed a particularly, a hot issue mind the pun in Victoria. You've said that there are 1600, I think I heard you say privately owned buildings with combustible cladding. Are you doing a lot of work with these buildings? What's happening in Victoria to deal with that?

Tom Bacon: It is an evolving story, Amanda. The Australian Financial Review recently revealed that there are 1,610 privately owned buildings in Victoria that have the aluminium composite panelling cladding that we now know to be the most combustible. There are other materials out there that are also known to be combustible but just with the ACP. Certainly out of all of the states in Australia, Victoria by far and away has the largest exposure to this issue. And there's been a lot of media attention given to the fact that the Victorian government has announced a \$600 million fund to fix Victoria's buildings. But like a lot of government policies, the devil really is in the detail and when you break down beyond that headline and that good news story, what has been revealed is that \$300 million has been set aside for publicly owned government buildings and council-owned buildings to be fixed as part of this fund.

The full amount isn't going to private buildings and 300 million, the other half of the fund is to come from a developers' levy that is taxed on developers when they are building new developments over the next five years. What we're having now in Victoria is that we've got very little funding actually for privately owned buildings and what the Cladding Safety Victorian task force which is the government department that's been set up for this has really had to prioritise only the most extreme risk buildings that it can find. They identified a list of 50 and is working with those 50 buildings to enter into agreements for cladding to be rectified, to be removed and replaced with non-combustible materials. And yes, I've got a number of those buildings that are on my books at the moment. And while that's welcome news that's only 50 buildings and none of the CSV officials can really say with any certainty whether there will be funding for the other buildings beyond this because it will be up to state parliament to access more funding. It's clear that it's a crisis and without further funding that's going to come in, there'll be at least 1000 buildings that will be left behind which is just awful news for Victorians as if they don't need another punch in the guts right now.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, true. That's certainly the situation as I understand it that many New South Wales buildings are in, not having the access to any funding as I understand it at this stage.

Tom Bacon: You're right, Amanda. Project Remediate which is the New South Wales state government's response that's a wonderful initiative but it certainly doesn't provide any funding as such. It will allow for loans which is not the same as funding but it will only be on some very strict criteria where the owners corporations will use a whole army of building professionals to go through and to make sure that everything is done, strictly by the book but by the same token. Perhaps overdesigning and overdeveloping so it becomes almost a Rolls-Royce job to fix up the building in New South Wales. And there certainly are all sorts of other options available for an owners corporation that has combustible cladding. Ripping off the entirety of the cladding and replacing it with non-combustible material is just one option available one to the building code.

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Tom Bacon: And I could go on and on about it here but it suffice to say that good fire engineers will be able to recommend some deem to satisfy solutions and alternative solutions under the building code, that will allow for combustible cladding to remain insitu on the building as long as there are appropriate fire breaks such as sprinklers or other forms of non-combustible material placed around the elements so that the fire doesn't spread vertically up through a building. There are all sorts of creative opportunities there it doesn't have to be as binary as the report declared enough but it's an evolving story.

Amanda Farmer: And something that I heard recently from a podcast listener I believe it was, was about their building that is replacing their cladding and they are having difficulties deciding on an appropriate replacement product at the moment. Because there is a group of owners that would like to see the facade of the building ultimately look the same, have the aesthetic effect that the cladding gave it. However that solution in let's call it non-combustible form is incredibly expensive. And the question that is arising is what is our obligation to replace this product with a similar product that ultimately looks the same if we want to spend less money but achieve the same safety results? Are we failing to meet our legal obligation to properly repair like for like? Is this coming up for you Tom with your clients, whether in New South Wales or Victoria, residents who want a particular standard of product and they say that is the necessary repair even though it may not be required?

Tom Bacon: I haven't come across this particular factual scenario Amanda but that is fascinating. I would speculate that certainly in New South Wales where the state government has gone so far as to name a list of four or five materials which they consider to be approved as able to proceed, then that would be an opportunity for the cladding to be done in that scenario. However, if you contrast that with Victoria where such an approved list by the state government hasn't been forthcoming, then it will really just be up to... If the state government is going to provide the funding then it will just be that their project managers will decide the material and that's that. Or if it's the owners corporation that has to fund it themselves then it will just be done on a majority in an ordinary resolution. Majority rules is so often the catch cry in strata these days.

Amanda Farmer: Indeed it is. Do you have the same rule in Victoria where if the common property is being enhanced, improved, upgraded a higher threshold of approval is required?

Tom Bacon: Of course, in New South Wales we know it's a special resolution and in Victoria it is a special resolution as well but the key difference is what is a special resolution? In Victoria it actually means 75% of the total unit entitlements that must vote. It makes it exceedingly difficult when you have a 100 lot building or Plus plus we get these very large four or 500 apartment buildings down in Victoria. And to get 75% of them to turn up or to send in a voting slip, particularly when a large majority might live overseas it just doesn't happen. In Victoria what they have developed is the requirement to get an interim special resolution which is 50% of the unit entitlements. That's regardless of whether they're financial or not and then if no more than one quarter, so an extra 25% come in and petition the secretary over a 28 day intervening time period then the interim special resolution can become a special resolution. You can see how convoluted it is and requires a lot of administration. And I could probably count on one hand the amount of specialist solutions I've had able to get past in a building in Victoria over the last eight years. There's been more than say 50 lots it's quite extreme because people are...

Amanda Farmer: You have to have at least 75% turn up and vote in favour for a Victorian special resolution to pass, is that right?

Tom Bacon: That's right. Yes.

Amanda Farmer: Okay. And just in case anybody is unsure in New South Wales the situation is quite different. A special resolution will pass in New South Wales if no more than 25% vote against the special resolution and that's calculated on a unit entitlement basis. You actually have to have active votes against in order for a special resolution to fail and have more than 25% of the unit entitlement actively vote against. If people aren't turning up to a meeting then they're not able to vote against then the special resolution is likely to pass even if you don't have too many in favour. Very different situation and still called a special resolution how confusing.

Tom Bacon: Very confusing.

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Amanda Farmer: Now you do have some new legislation on the horizon I mentioned earlier and if you would like to get into that Tom, I'd love to hear the good, the bad and the ugly of these reforms. Is this a full-scale review? Do we have a completely new owners corporation act or just a few amendments? What are we talking about here?

Tom Bacon: It's exciting in a way Amanda because this legislation has been on the back burner for so long and the process started with consultation back in 2014, in 2015. The legislation was drafted by the end of 2016 and inexplicably it's remained on a dusty shelf in parliament until earlier this year when it was finally got around to be passed. And it will take effect on the 1st of December and it will come into being just before the Christmas holidays which has welcomed news, however, you're right to ask the question is it a new act? It's not. It's simply an amendment of the 2006 legislation. And because in my view it started back in 2015, it's almost out of date now because we in strata industry know how dynamic and fast-evolving strata landscape is. And to have this legislation just sitting around for so long it was a golden aged opportunity for the consumer affairs department, the equivalent of fair trading to actually give it a bit more ventilation and do some more updates but they haven't seen the need to do so.

But I do call it the good, the bad and the ugly. There are some excellent things well overdue that we'll finally have introduced into to Victoria. In terms of the good, we are going to move to five different tiers of owners corporations. And that is a good thing because those five different tiers will have varying levels of requirements in terms of legislative requirements to have audits and to raise levies and to maintain and repair their properties. The five tiers are basically 100 plus lots and then 50 to 100 and then 11 to 50 and then between two and 10 and then all the two lots of divisions get their own tiers as well. And that's a two lot owners corporation and a 350 lot owners corporations are completely different based. It's wonderful to actually see a difference in the legislation and to provide that greater flexibility so that's an important and excellent initiative that needs to be done.

Another good initiative is that developers will no longer be able to designate as a private lot what would normally be common property or services. Down in Victoria for years dating back to the Subdivision Act 1988, we've had developers that have been creating the roof as a lot in and of itself so that the developer can own that and can then have income stream coming off it for cell phone towers and any other infrastructure up there. They've also been able to create air space lots and so they can actually extend all the way up so that if an owners corporation ever wants to redevelop or if they ever want to block another development from building up into their view space then the developer has been able to exercise some rights over that. And it's quite common down in Victoria for developers to create the building manager's office or the caretaker's office or the concierge office as a privately owned a lot that thinks it's sold to the service contractor and that makes it incredibly hard to get rid of that service contractor. And it also allows for the developer to have an income stream because they can rent that back to the owners corporation.

So you've seen that play out and it's good that the Victorian government is bringing that to an end. There's also a requirement that you only have 7 people on the committee. It used to be 12 unless you pass a resolution at the meeting to increase the number. And we're getting the end of proxy farming which is something which we have had in New South Wales for the last few years. But now in Victoria, no one owner is going to be able to hold more than 5% of votes when they come to a meeting that's if there's more than 20 lots. And that's wonderful because I've had a few meetings in Victoria where a lot of owners turned up with 100 plus proxies and has been able to really run the show so it's great to see the end of that.

Amanda Farmer: All sound like good changes to me. You have just triggered a question for me there Tom about committee elections. I did know that the Victorian committees were set at a maximum of 12 or at least are at the time that we're recording. Because I had looked that up recently for a member who also asked me, "*Amanda the process of electing the committee members if you have more than 12 nominations, is there a clear process for that in Victoria?*" And in New South Wales we certainly have some instructions in our regulation for how you conduct a ballot when you have to have an election. You've got more nominees than you do positions but this member was asking me the question because they're owners corporation manager, to use the correct term, was conducting the ballot by way of a preferential voting system. The person that you listed higher up on your ballot form their vote was given greater weight and I was being asked the question, "*Amanda, is this legal? Is this how we do run committee elections in Victoria?*" Because in that case, it did change the outcome. And I couldn't find anything that said you have a preferential voting system or indeed that you are to conduct your ballot in any particular way. Have you had any hands-on experience with that Tom to put you on the spot?

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Tom Bacon: No, it's that situation you just referred to Amanda is quite an extraordinary one. I've never heard of a preferential voting system such as that. You are right to say that you can't find any type of instructions. It is left up to the individual owners corporation to set its own procedure for determining these matters. It gets very complicated when you're holding an annual general meeting by via Zoom or electronic means and that makes it even more difficult to try and vote for particular persons that you want on the committee. But certainly what I'm familiar with is that there will be instructions that are written on the annual general meeting agenda. They will be set in place by the committee and by the owners corporation manager. And it will usually be that you can vote for any number that you choose if there are more than 7 or are there more than 12 nominees for the committee. And then you can put a circle around however many of the people that you wish to vote for or none as the case may be and it will just simply be done on whoever gets the most votes.

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Tom Bacon: That's the normal process but I guess there's no restriction on this other type of preferential system. But certainly, I think that that would be something which could be challenged in VCAT on the grounds of whether the instructions were clear enough and did people know what they were doing.

Amanda Farmer: Often comes back to transparency, doesn't it? In our work Tom. So that's the good in the new legislation. You've mentioned some bad and some ugly take us there.

Tom Bacon: Absolutely. Access to legal services is still a big problem in Victoria and strata law. Because if you're in a large tower and if you have to sue the developer or the builder or the architect or the certifier for building defects, then you still need to pass a special resolution in order to bring that cause of action. And as we know in Victoria it's exceedingly difficult to pass those special resolutions because you're needing 75% of the unit entitlements to actually turn up at a meeting or vote in favour by sending in a ballot to do so. And when you're talking about spending money on litigation it is a risk and if owners are looking to be conservative with their votes then they just simply won't participate in that. And that will mean that owners corporations are unable, even though we have 10 years to access building warranties down in Victoria but that time can slip away and builders and developers are very much aware of these time limitations.

And the whole system really is set against a large owners corporation tower from accessing quality legal services and actually holding builders and developers to account so that remains a large problem down in Victoria. The other interesting thing that's been dressed up as a reform but it was actually quite bad is the three-year limit on service contracts that are entered into by the developer. When the building is completed, the developer cannot enter into a service contract with a cleaner or concierge or a building manager or fire services contractor or an OC manager beyond three years. But the requirement on the legislation is that this only bites if it's stated that the service contract is going to benefit the developer. Now that's a level of proof. How would an owners corporation know if a service contract is going to benefit the developer?

Because it's hardly going to be said within the terms of that contract that the developer gets a secret commission or a finder's fee or some royalties on this. And if the developer doesn't own up to it themselves then really the owners corporation can't do anything with that. These 10 years, 20 year sometimes even 50-year building manager agreements will still exist in Victoria beyond these reforms. That's something which hopefully the Victorian government starts listening to the owners' advocacy groups about. And when we talk about the ugly as well, the ugliest non-reform that's come out of this new amendment act is that it's just stone-cold silence from the Victorian government on reforms to the short-stay accommodation sector. Victoria is the 6th biggest market in the world for Airbnb behind London's, Paris, Barcelona, San Fran, New York. Sydney is seventh and Melbourne is sixth.

And at the moment in Victoria you can short-stay your apartment 365 days of the year. If your guests have a party then after the fact, the host can be taken to VCAT and can be fined. And if the apartment has more than three parties in a 12 month period then they can be blacklisted from the site for a period of time. It's never been done in Victoria and that's because quite simply that's just slapping the accommodation host with a witness paper. It's hardly a good compliance tool and most AirBnB hosts will simply see that as a license to operate. We have been told that this regulation in Victoria just simply will not be touched by consumer affairs it's here to stay. It's a slam that all policy that will be around for the foreseeable future and when we talk about the livability of

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Melbourne which has been their marketing slogan for so many years, we just really can't take this line down. Those in the Victorian owners' accommodation sector really need to continue the fight because the short-stay accommodation sector simply has better lobbyists at the moment and that needs to change.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. And you're referring to... If I remember correctly was it 2018 you had these short-term accommodation amendments to your owners corporation act and that's what introduced this blacklisting. And I remember at the time talking about it as we're regulating the outcomes we're not putting in place any prevention which we've seen a little bit of in New South Wales but we have more flexibility to actually ban the practice in certain buildings for certain apartments not all of them. But am I hearing that this new legislation that started in Victoria is fairly toothless and you haven't actually seen any cases go through VCAT that have relied on it?

Tom Bacon: Yes. There have been inquiries that have been made through VCAT and there are no completed cases available either reported or non-reported so we don't have any case study to lean on as to what one looks like.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. That is disappointing and do you have a strong owner advocate group in Victoria? We have the OCN, the Owner's Corporation Network in New South Wales that I think because of its work and its voice has achieved some intervention there in the face of the very powerful, very wealthy short term accommodation sector. Do you have a similar group if not the OCN itself in Victoria?

Tom Bacon: The OCN is a fantastic organisation, I'd encourage everyone to join it all of your listeners. In Victoria, there isn't an owner's corporation network but there is a wonderful advocacy group called We Live Here which is run by the very impressive Barbara Francis and her team. And they are an advocacy group that really seek to take down the short-stay accommodation influence in Victoria. They've got around 500 buildings that are members throughout the Melbourne metropolitan areas and growing in influence every day. So it's an organisation to watch out for it's still in its infancy but it's getting stronger and more influential every time. So We Live Here you can find them welivehere.net.

Amanda Farmer: Excellent. Thank you very much for sharing the good, bad and the ugly of your pending amendments to your Owner's Corporation Act Tom, we will see how that plays out next year. We always say that where we have significant reforms to legislation strata and owner's corporation, body corporate legislation the strata lawyers remain busy for the next 5 plus years I think. We will check in with you again soon.

Tom Bacon: Yes. If I'm not too busy with all of the extra litigations-

Amanda Farmer: With all those tiers of owners corporations-

Tom Bacon: That's right.

Amanda Farmer: That'll be interesting. I am sure that if I was to sit down and write out my list of questions about Victoria and strata law it would run to a few pages. So we might have to get you back for an ask Tom anything session whether that's a podcast or a live chat let's have a think about that. Plenty of Victorian and listeners I know and they have I'm sure been helped by what they've heard today. Let us know Tom before we wrap up how our listeners can find out more about you and your practice and get in touch. And if I've missed anything that we must cover do let us know.

Tom Bacon: Absolutely, Amanda. If you can get in touch with me it's just simply on stratatitlelawyers.com.au. I'm always available and coming down to Victoria as soon as the borders restrictions are lifted there. It's always great to catch up with my Victorian clients and although it's been easy over the last year running everything via Zoom including VCAT and the courts there is no substitute for face-to-face. I'm looking forward to getting back down and reconnecting with all of the lovely Victorians down there and hopefully, they're all allowed out to play.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. And hopefully we will see each other in person again soon. We do tend to catch up at least once a

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year at our annual Australian College of Strata Lawyers Conference but we've missed that this year we had our online conference, hopefully, next year fingers crossed.

Tom Bacon: Absolutely. Looking forward to it.

Amanda Farmer: Thanks for your time today, Tom.

Tom Bacon: Have a lovely one. Thank you, Amanda. Thank you.

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 comments section which Amanda will answer in her upcoming episodes. How can Amanda help you today?