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YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 331. "If you can't repair it, don't own it" - Michael Teys

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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 this week is Michael Teys. Michael is a corporate advisor, a researcher and a training presenter who works with property professionals, institutional property owners and property managers navigating complex issues relating to strata title property.

Michael works with City Futures Research Center at the University of New South Wales, having been awarded an Australian Research Council scholarship. His current research areas are strata decision-making, building defects and non-conforming building products as well as urban renewal of mixed-use developments.

Now, this chat is an edited version of a live chat Michael and I had over on the Your Strata Property Facebook page. Michael was my special guest for my Friday live segment. And this was such a popular chat, an interesting chat and an important chat that I have decided to bring a version of it here to you on the podcast.

You can catch the full version as it went out live. Over on our Facebook page, there is a link for you in the show notes. Michael shares with us proposed new laws for New South Wales that were released for consultation earlier this month.

The aim of the law to hold New South Wales owners corporations to their repair and maintenance duties. And interestingly, perhaps controversially, the man at the centre of these reforms is our building commissioner David Chandler.

As we go to air with this episode, there's still time to have your say on the proposed new laws. There's a link for you in the show notes. They're over under the episode at yourstrataproperty.com.au/podcasts. I'll take you over now to my chat with Michael Teys. Hey Michael.

Michael Teys: Hi Amanda. Thanks for having me.

Amanda Farmer: Pleasure to have you here with me today. It's lovely to have someone along for the ride as my special guest. It's been a little while since we've had a guest on Friday live, so I'm thrilled that you are here with me.

And I reached out to you this week, Michael, when I read your post, very informed, very to the point post on LinkedIn about this mysterious new legislation that is proposed for New South Wales and hoping that you can help me out, help our audience out here today to know what that is and understand what its impact is.

Michael Teys: Sure. It's certainly one of many bills floating around at the moment in reforming building and strata issues and it's almost a full-time job keeping up with the pace of reform at the moment.

But this is a really important one and my post on LinkedIn received more than the usual share of attention because it really shines a light not only on developers of strata buildings but also on the owners and the owners corporations.

And I think that's where it's going to really cause a bit of a shake up because owners corporations that have been shirking their responsibilities or spinning their wheels and not getting on with the job are really going to come under some pressure if these laws are passed.

Amanda Farmer: So let's talk about that. These owners corporations not necessarily in brand new buildings, in older buildings shirking their responsibilities, spinning their wheels. What do you mean when you say that? What's going on in these older buildings?

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Michael Teys: Well, I think what's going on in all buildings and you and I have seen this for many, many years is that the pace of fixing a problem in a strata building is always been slow. Now there's a range of reasons for that and the latest reason as one of your viewers mentioned just in the opening is some complications with the Design Practitioners Act.

But if we put that aside and go back over the life of strata since I've been around 35 years, strata organisations have always been slow to act on repair and maintenance issues. Increasingly they'll last for more quotes, more opinions and other report, we'll put it off until after Christmas. We'll put it off until after our annual general meeting.

There's a myriad of reasons not to do something, particularly if it's a nasty piece of work and it's going to cost a lot of money to do. And what this legislation is designed to do is to give the building commissioner, David Chandler and his organisation the Construct New South Wales powers, quite extraordinary powers over all existing buildings as well as those that are under construction.

So at the moment, his focus has been on getting developers to build better buildings and he's been quite effective at that. But this bill, if it is passed, will give him powers to enter the fray and become part of the owners corporation affairs and relationships.

So if a lot owner is cranky with an owners corporation because something's not getting fixed, at the moment may think the owners corporation is taking too long, the typical redress is to issue a letter, get a lawyer, go to NCAT, but that can cost a lot of money and it takes a lot of time.

And in the end, can be quite difficult to actually get something to happen even after you've got the NCAT order if you've got a really stubborn owners corporation that just refuses to do the work or to accept responsibility.

Under these laws, the building commissioner can enter any building at any time, inspect, ask questions, demand answers in writing, undertake destructive testing, take samples away, all sorts of things.

It's quite incredible. It's the same power that in fact he now has over developers to go onto a construction site. But now it turns around and it says, "Well, we're going to start doing this on existing sites."

Because it's his view and the regulatory impact statement supports this that many owners corporations are not taking their responsibilities seriously enough and doing repairs and maintenance when it needs to be done.

Amanda Farmer: We do have a link to a copy of the bill for anybody here who wants to go and check it out. We'll post that here in the comments. It is lengthy and it does deal with various different types of buildings in different situations and this is just one aspect that Michael is highlighting here, but it's certainly an important one.

You said extraordinary. I've read some other articles talking about these powers being draconian. Surely our owners, our volunteer committee members are in a different position to professional builders, developers who are constructing buildings for commercial gain.

There can be any series of reasons why repair and maintenance work is not done quickly or done properly, perhaps. I'm already seeing some comments here on Facebook talking about the lack of available trades. It seems incredibly invasive that the building commissioner would have these powers in a residential building against residents, people who are volunteer committee members. What are your thoughts on that?

Michael Teys: Well, I have a different perspective, I suppose, and it comes from I recently turned 60, I'm getting crankier. I've been around a long time and I've seen a lot of people do some pretty terrible things to one another.

And I think it's time that we had a very grown up conversation and I'm very happy to have it with you, Amanda, as one of the few grownups in this space. I think it's time we had a very grown up conversation about the role of an owners corporation as a corporate citizen.

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We have very high expectations of the public sector, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and yet we have very low expectations of the strata sector. The strata sector as we know is getting larger.

And increasingly researchers are starting to, all around the world, are starting to recognise the impact that these things called owners corporations or bodies corporate have not only on their own property but also on the rest of our built environment and our society.

And I'm a little tired; I'm a little tired of hearing the volunteer thing. Yes, people on committees are volunteers, but that's not relevant. What's relevant is that they are property owners and they have property ownership responsibilities. So when something is broken, it's their responsibility to fix it.

And the court's been very clear about that and it means fix it and fix it now. Not when it suits you, but fix it now. And that necessarily comes from being part of a collective entity. When you buy into an apartment, whether you knew it or not, you are necessarily surrendering some of that freedom to act individually that you have if you live in a detached house or a farm.

So people have bought into these things and whether they know it or not, they are in a dualistic situation where they have control of their own property, but they have a responsibility to the collective as well. And if you just scroll through, I made a list of the significant world events that are impacting on buildings.

It's almost each year now, but you start in 2014 with the Lacrosse fire in Melbourne where 12 and a half million dollars worth of property damage was done. 2017 Grenfell cladding, 72 people died. The Opal Tower evacuation, \$42 million worth of damage there. The Mascot Tower building likely now to be demolished.

And then the Champlain Towers in Florida where 98 people have died. Now that case in Florida is a worst case scenario, but I suspect that most strata lawyers in this field have acted in buildings that it could have been that building.

We've all been in cases where matters have gone on for 10 years and owners have kicked the can down the road and said, "Oh, well, really doesn't suit us to do it at the moment. We'll do this later. We'll do this later."

And here we have a case that starts with some building defects from a developer. Investigations are still going on, of course, but it looks like it starts with some defects from a developer 10 or so years ago and then is just compounded by a series of bad and irresponsible decisions or decisions not to decide. And the result is 98 people die.

So it's time we started getting serious about this. And I think we should start talking in terms of strata health and safety in the way we talk about workplace health and safety. Strata health and safety is a real issue. It comes with COVID, it comes with mould and water leaks that are such an important and looming issue.

And so for people to say, "I'm a volunteer and isn't it sad," bad things happen to people and it's very sad that some people have bought an apartment that's defective and I have the greatest of sympathy for them, but it doesn't change the fact that they are property owners and they have a responsibility to keep their property safe.

And that property duty is owed to not only the people in the building but also the community at large. And I think it's time to rethink this. And these laws and these powers, I think will make an interesting example. Because David Chandler is no shrinking violet, as you would know and as anyone following him in the press.

Now, if he gets these powers, and I think it's likely that he will, if he gets these powers, he's going to exercise them. And I think the pace that he will start will be with the cladding. I think Chandler's going to use these powers to get into some of these buildings and say, "Well, look, I've had enough of this."

You've got a building that's covered in petrol and it's unsafe and you are not being responsible. You're not taking steps to fix it yet

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we've given you this great package of assistance and I'm going to force you to get on with it. And here's a notice and I want a report within 30 days about what you're going to do." So I think-

Amanda Farmer: So you think it will be primarily used in the situations of buildings with cladding, at least at first?

Michael Teys: Well, I think that's an obvious area where it could be used. Now I say this because Project Remediate is David Chandler's project. It's a project that he got up, it's got a 3-year life, it's already into the second year. And as of April when the auditor general did an audit of the program, nobody had signed up to the program.

There were people in the process, but no one had actually started and were getting work done. Now that might have changed between April and now, but there's nothing in the press about it.

And I'm pretty sure given the way David's office works if there was something happening, he would've let us know about it. So I'm, for the moment, assuming that we're still in a position, we're two years into a 3-year project.

People haven't signed up for it despite the fact that it's a generous package and it seems to have thought through every conceivable issue, save for the fact that the owners have to pay for the repair and that's the pill that strata needs to swallow and it simply isn't going to change.

So you have to ask yourself if you are the chairperson or on a committee or an owner in a building that is been classified as high-risk, and we have 250 of them in Sydney, and you haven't done something to fix it, you are not being socially responsible, you're not being a good corporate citizen, you're putting people's lives at risk, you're breaking the law and you have a responsibility to fix it.

Amanda Farmer: There's a lot of comments coming through, certainly on Facebook here, Michael, on this topic. And I've noticed one in particular, Sean McNamara, who is often typing what I am thinking has mentioned we need better education for all owners so they understand that they have to act collectively.

You've laid down some pretty scary, I think, obligations, responsibilities for our strata owners and committee members that I think a lot of those who are tuning in, a lot who own in strata may not realise they have, for some may not accept that they have those responsibilities-

Michael Teys: They may not.

Amanda Farmer: but understanding what collective ownership, and that's what it is, collective ownership property brings with it is essentially.

Michael Teys: And to Sean's point, and I don't know Sean, but I've been hearing we need better education since 1985. Since 1985 I've been hearing we need education. And some governments have done it very well. The Queensland Education Program for strata owners is pretty good. The Western Australian one is excellent. There are programs around and there's information around.

The fact is, Sean, people don't really want to be educated. They don't really want to know the truth. And the truth is that they have responsibilities as owners. And when it comes to writing the cheque for 25,000 or \$40,000 per apartment to fix some cladding, we're really at the pointy end of understanding responsibilities as property owners.

This is the point. And I don't think education alone, sure, I support education, I'm fanatical about education. I think education's incredibly important, but it alone is not going to change the dynamic. And I think what I see in these proposed laws, although from a civil libertarian point of view, yes, you could describe them as draconian.

I think in my post I describe them as greater than the police have to prevent crime. He has more powers than the police. But I do

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think there's come a time where we need really something to shift the game because we've been treading water for too long.

And for too long owners corporations have been quite irresponsible and quite foolish a lot at the time in terms of the way they've struck levies, for example. We seem to have got to a point where we equate keeping our levies to the same as they were last year as good governance. It's anything but good governance, it's terrible governance.

Everything in the world's going up. I'm paying way more for my avocado than I used to pay. How can I not be paying more for my levies? I mean, that is just a terrible policy. So when owners corporations are saying and doing these things, I've lost patience with them.

And the good position that I'm in at the moment is I don't care what people say or think because I'm completely free as an academic. I'm not selling them legal services. I'm not selling them strata management services. I'm not selling them insurance.

I've done all of those things in the past, but now I don't. And so I can say the truth and the truth is owners corporations need to have a good hard look at themselves and they need to step up their corporate responsibility.

Amanda Farmer: Well, I can say, Michael, you can still be free to say what you think even when you are selling services because I've made a career out of that. There is definitely a problem.

It's a problem that especially around the time that the Champlain Towers collapsed, I was talking about here on live and on the podcast about this responsibility that our owners corporations do have. Very clear, very strict, as you've said, legal duty unavoidable to repair and maintain the common property.

And a lot of my work is with owners in the tribunal trying to get their owners corporation to comply with that responsibility and spending tens of thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars-

Michael Teys: And not getting that back.

Amanda Farmer: ... on that exercise and not getting it back. And all you have to do is scroll through the comments here and I just wanted to take us over to some of them because there's a lot of people sharing their experiences. Henry I know is in Victoria and he's saying he's going through a water ingress at the moment.

The main issue is deciding who's responsible. It becomes a lawyer's picnic or in my case a lawyer's 10 course digger station banquet with vintage wines, our favourite, Henry. Joanne is saying that she's been suffering 8 years of water ingress.

There's certainly a problem that needs to be addressed. I am fascinated by the proposal that is now on the table to address this problem. I'm not sure, you tell me, you often have a seat at the table, you tell me if it's a surprise to others.

But to put these powers in the hands of our building commissioner who has been doing the type of work he's been doing with builder developers and to now give him those same powers with our residential owner corporations, to me, is quite shocking.

And I had expected perhaps a different approach in improving the position of Fair Trading and our tribunal and perhaps being able to fast track some of our applications that are before the tribunal. I don't know if any of that's been considered, but we've just gone, Mr. Chandler, here you go.

Michael Teys: Right. I should say, I write and speak a lot about David Chandler. I've never met him. So I know people that know him, but I'm a pretty keen and astute political watcher. I understand the politics of New South Wales pretty well, and this is how I see it.

The present government is at risk of losing government in March. The fact that 9 sitting members have indicated they're not

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running at the election would indicate that they've seen the internal polling and they know that they're likely to get clobbered.

So this government wants to post a few wins and has got a limited amount of time to do so. David Chandler, I would've thought wants these powers so that he can continue with his work. And it's a very personal campaign and crusade that he's on.

And you only have to watch his social media accounts to know how personal he has invested in writing the wrongs of the last 30 years in terms of the atrocious buildings that have been built. He's going to put a lot of pressure on the government to get this through before March.

It's a pretty short consultation time, November, so it could still go through before parliament rises for the election. And then the question is, if the government does change, what happens then? But I think it is more likely than not that these laws will get passed.

Other bills that he has put out or been responsible for that have gone out, they've been tweaked, but they've gone through. And this has been put in the form of a fully drafted bill, the regulatory impact statement's been written. All the ducks are lined up. All the ducks are lined up and now it's just a matter of getting it through the house.

I don't know what the opposition's position is. I don't know what the crossbench's position is on it yet, but I think it's more likely than not that the politics are he's holding the political capital at the moment because the way in which he was treated by the former minister that was then sacked.

He resigned of course and then he has come back. You can bet your bottom dollar that he extracted some pound of flesh for getting back on the team. So I think that's where the politics sit.

Amanda Farmer: I just hope that our owners are not going to become victims of that politics because there are so many layers to this. And some of them are being pointed out in the comments here. I'm going to show this comment from Phil who says, "Great sentiment and fully agree, the OC responsibility is unambiguous."

"But we have chronically leaking units with specialist building engineers, plumbers, roofers, waterproofers, disagreeing on cause and effect. One will say it's the roof, one the wet seals around the glazing, one on the balcony above rising moisture from a slab issue."

"To make it worse, many of these 12-year-old units have already had 25,000 in repairs by trade and are still leaking. So it's slowly and carefully approached. I'm not sure I've got all of that filled."

I have my own personal experience in my own building where we have been working for months to simply get an engineer to site to be able to go through a number of units and diagnose a problem.

From the owners perspective, from the committee member's perspective when you are doing the best you can, I can understand the fear, the anxiety, the uncertainty around hearing that the commissioner and his group will have powers to come into your building issuing fines of up to \$2,000 a day for failure to repair and maintain.

Michael Teys: I checked on those fines by the way and it's \$2,200 a day, maximum of \$22,000 for an owners corporation.

Amanda Farmer: Yes.

Michael Teys: So let's just go back a bit. Any regulator, David Chandler included, that comes and sees a group of people who are being responsible and are taking steps and doing their best is not going to be slapped with a \$22,000 fine. That's not going to happen.

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He wants solutions to problems, but he does want to change behaviour. So it's the owners corporations that have been neglectful, irresponsible, recalcitrant, refusing to accept advice, refusing to get on and do the job. It's those that are at risk and it's those that he will take.

And if he approaches this in the same way that he has approached developers, he will take the biggest and the baddest and he'll deal with them first and he'll send a signal that this is what happens if you don't play the game correctly.

And I suspect he probably knows already which buildings he's going to go to where we've seen the worst behaviour by an owners corporation shirking their responsibilities. So I think any owners corporation that is genuine about doing their job and strata managers that are genuine about helping them are going to be fine and they will work with...

It might bring a bit of focus to it and a compliance notice that says you've got to do this work and you've got to do it within 60 days like a court hearing date brings people's attention to something and might stop the 8 years of naval gazing and arguments about between consultants and experts.

I mean, you know and I know if you set people down and create a deadline, in the past all we've had is court hearing dates, but now we have a regulator with a far more flexible set of enforcement tools to do, including accepting undertakings from people to do things in the future.

So really brings some focus to the matter and I suspect we'll see his department intervene to help people mediate their solution and to help experts get on the right track if the experts have got it wrong.

One of the things that needs attention by the strata community, and I hold myself in that category, is we need to get better at reading strata plans so that some of the time and arguments that we have about whose responsibility it is to fix these things evaporates.

I mean, it's either lot or common property. There's only two things on the strata plan and yet we as a group of professionals seem to find any number of reasons to argue about these things. And I think we need to get better at that.

And we need to train, if there is a need for education, I think the education needs to be going somewhere into the allied professions like property managers and plumbers and carpenters so that when they're on site, they can help the parties determine where the problem is.

Is it on lot property or on common property so that we just get smarter about finding out who's responsible for these things so that we take months and months and months and tens of thousands of dollars out of the equation because the current system we're having is letting people down.

It's causing too many people to have to go to lawyers and spend too much money and too much time for a pretty weak result at the end where you might get an order, you might not, depending upon whether the person at the tribunal knows what a pipe is or not. The quality of tribunal decisions, particularly in the jurisdictions that don't have dedicated strata lists is pretty poor.

So I think it brings another way to solving that problem. And I think that anyone that's doing the right thing, genuinely doing the right thing is going to be fine. My point, Amanda, is that I think we've been too soft on the owners corporations that just haven't played the game fairly.

And they're the ones I'm talking about. I think there's more of them than we'd probably admit to and they need to understand in uncertain terms that they are corporate citizens and they have responsibilities to community.

And even though they're not paid for their time on the committee, that's their choice to be there. And if they're not going to have a committee, well, then they have to pay for an administrator. But when you are an owner of property, it comes with responsibilities

and it's time to take those seriously.

Amanda Farmer: And I suppose from another point of view if you are a committee member struggling to convince your fellow committee members or you're a committee struggling to convince your owners at a general meeting that work needs to be done, that levies need to be raised, that maybe we need to take out strata loan so that we can pay for this work to be done urgently, then this is a great tool to have in your tool kit to be able to say, we now have a chance now.

Michael Teys: You will now produce a template letter that somebody who's a lot owner, who's really been treated very badly is going to be able to write straight to the commissioner's office and set out the history and that body corporate or owners corporation will be on the list.

And that's a wonderful thing. I don't think fair minded people, I don't think people who are serious about their job and serious about their legal responsibilities would be afraid of that power being invested in the government department.

Amanda Farmer: And that raises an important issue that David here has touched on in the Facebook comments. He says, "Love David's work, but does his team have the infrastructure to carry out his plans? I've sent a few defective buildings off to his team and was advised to take the matter to NCAT. Are they prepared?"

I mean, we're here, we have hundreds of comments here on the Facebook page. We have thousands of people watching every week. They're all saying the same things. Is he ready for what's come in his way if this legislation passes?

Michael Teys: Well, look, I'm told that his team is a very good team and that he does have the backup that he needs. What he'll do, and I think this has been his signature, and I think it's been part of his success, and the reason why perhaps David's cases haven't been taken up is he'll focus on the very worst.

He'll focus on the very worst and he'll hit them very hard because he's all about changing behaviour and the most effective, it's the oldest trick in the book for a regulator is to take the biggest, baddest bully out there given one between the eyes and hang the carcass up to be seen by all. And that's what he'll do. So he'll be strategic about it.

And again, this is all predicated of course on these laws passing, but assuming that it does pass, assuming that it does pass in his remaining time as the commissioner history would tell us that this is what he's going to do. And I think it's a game changer. I'm excited for it.

I think it's the jolt that we all need to change our way. We think about these collective enterprises. And if I could say something about strata managers, while you've got me here, Amanda, and I know you'll have a lot of them online, I feel for strata managers because they're often punished, they're the meat and the sandwich.

They get a poor decision from the committee or a poor decision from a general meeting not to do something or not to take advice or to get on and do work. They have to break that news to the lot owner. They take the brunt of that. The Google reviews reflect the fact that they're being shot as the messenger.

So I think strata managers, I would hope look at this reform with a positive attitude to it, not a negative one because I think it's going to help change behaviour. And if it changes behaviour, then some owners corporations who are really just not behaving properly will be held accountable.

And I think so I hope it will be embraced by the strata management community as a interesting, innovative exercise in doing something different that might just make a difference to people's lives in a very material way.

Amanda Farmer: Well, it was only this week on the podcast that I was saying, in a different context, but it applies here that sometimes it takes an extreme view to start an important conversation or in this case to affect some really necessary change.

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Michael Teys: Yes. Where would feminism be without the burning of the bras? It was a moment in time. It was a moment in time, where would we be if Rosa Parker didn't get on the bus? It's a moment in time and not that I for a moment equate repairs and maintenance of common property with either of those two issues, but to make the point that in change there's always an event, there's always a lightning rod.

And I think here this could be it. And I hope in 10 years' time before I retire we have another chat and the strata world is a better place because people have started to take their collective property responsibilities seriously.

Amanda Farmer: Well, you're certainly getting a lot of support here in the comments, Michael, a lot of people supporting what it is that you are saying and especially the call for education, for knowledge, for people to understand their obligations.

I'm just pulling out Shauna's comment here. She was saying, "Yes, Mr. Teys, we all need this education to avoid the time, the arguments and the lawyers, all absolutely unnecessary." I think I saw someone else comment later, present company accepted.

Michael Teys: Well, thank you Shauna for referring to me as Mr. I'm tickled by that. But I think education is one thing. But the other thing I think, Amanda, and this is why I welcome the opportunity to be with you today, is we need some plain talking about this. We need some plain speaking about this.

I see a little bit too much weasel speak out of the strata industry because there's so many vested interests. Strata managers are in that space where they've got developers on the one hand who give them new work. They've got committees who renew their contracts.

They've got lot owners who have got mushrooms growing their apartments. It's a difficult, complex, conflicted position they're in. And I say that without disrespect, it's just the fact. The of the matter is that there's a very complex web in which a strata manager finds themselves and there are a lot of people they're trying to keep happy.

But what we need is some more plain speaking about responsibilities and get away from this notion that all unit owners are oppressed, that all unit owners are suffering unfair levies. You own property, you have a duty to repair and maintain it. If you can't repair it, don't own it.

It's as simple as that. And we need sensible people to get involved and make better decisions like set realistic levies so that you don't traumatise people with special levies down the track. Stop this nonsense about cutting the levies or keeping it down, or let's put less in the reserve fund because the admin costs have gone up.

I mean, that's just nonsense. And somebody needs to be saying get real, get real. Property is expensive to hold and maintain, particularly in Sydney so get real.

Amanda Farmer: Eileen has posted here, estate agents need to get on board. It's a good point, Eileen. I was talking to Michael just off air about the work that I'm doing with conveyancers and helping conveyancers to better understand strata and community titles so that once a purchaser has come to them saying, here's the contract, this is what I want to buy, then they're able to get some education at that level.

Estate agents, I assume you mean selling agents who are actually showing these properties for sale. That's an interesting concept. I have in the past approached a couple of sales agencies with a proposal to educate in the strata space. And at that stage they weren't all that excited about receiving that education.

Michael Teys: Yes. Well, I did a training program in Queensland a couple of weeks ago for some real estate agents, and it was the first time I'd done it. I haven't trained real estate agents for 20 years. So it was interesting to go back into that space. A couple of things I learned, first of all, nothing is on offer to them. Nothing is on offer to them about strata.

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And I had this really interesting half day work session where you could see just with property managers, not with real estate agents, that's another problem, but I wanted to start with property managers who are at the interface and are in the crossfire with strata managers and saying, "Well, how can we make a 9-month fix come down to 3 months," was the exercise that I challenged them with.

And we looked at some case studies and we looked at the way they'd communicated with the strata manager and the way the strata manager had communicated back and what it showed me, it was a really interesting day. What it showed me was that if we put a little bit more work in upfront to these problems, we can save a lot of time.

So if the property manager can be more descriptive about what's happened, rather than saying there's water damage in Apartment 4. Well, that then spirals into another 4 weeks of conversations to actually define what the problem is.

So if the property managers can put a bit more effort into defining the problem, if the strata managers could be a little bit more assertive and competent in reading strata plans so that they can say to their committees, Hey listen, this is for us, this one. 90% of them are going to be for the owners corporation anyway. So the default position is the owners corporation should be paying. So let's get to that faster.

So that was an interesting exercise. So I think estate agents do need training. Strata managers and strata lawyers I think need more training on how to read strata plans. And I think surveyors could play an important role in that. But sitting through a presentation from a surveyor is probably something I no longer have the patience for. But you might be-

You might be able to find an entertaining surveyor that can keep me interested, but I think we need to hear from them about their strata plans and how to read them.

Amanda Farmer: Well, there are comments here, Michael, I think from Shauna saying she has a, oh no, Joanne, I think has a strata crush on you now. And Joanne's also saying, "I hope Mr. Teys is consulting the government. They need him." On that note, where can our viewers find you? Connect with you, find out what you are doing?

Michael Teys: Thanks, Amanda. So my own website is michaelteys.com. That's quite simple. And there you'll see my blogs and any news that I have about what I'm doing. I've just launched a new website called stratainstitute.com.au, which I am going to use as a training portal. And it's going to be a pay for training site.

It's going to be unashamedly expensive because it's going to be really detailed and useful. So when I say unashamedly expensive, it's going to be a fair fee for really, I think, quite solid training information. And I'm focusing on strata managers as well as other allied strata and property professionals.

So people like planners need to know more about strata, valuers need to know more about strata, property managers in real estate agencies need to know more. So I'll be running training courses for them, for architects, I might even do one for surveyors.

Amanda Farmer: We will make sure those links are here in the comments for everybody to have a look at. This has been a fantastic conversation. Thank you, Michael. I know so many of viewers here have enjoyed it.

I'm going to be heading over looking through those comments later this evening. If you are here and you have enjoyed listening to what Michael's had to share and demystifying this new legislation, please hit that share button, hit that like button. Give us a love heart, give us a thumbs up.

The more of that that happens on Facebook in particular, the more people we can reach with this important information and it is incredibly important. I hope you are planning a restful weekend, Michael. I know you often have a lot on your plate, and I thank you for making the time to be with us today.

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YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 331. "If you can't repair it, don't own it" - Michael Teys

Michael Teys: Thank you Amanda. It's been a pleasure to be with you.

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