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## YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 360. New CPD requirements for strata professionals

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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'm your host, Amanda Farmer, and my guest this week is Sasha Boe. Sasha is the Managing Director of Real Estate Training Solutions. Established in 2003, Real Estate Training Solutions or RETS for short, is an ASQA registered training organisation providing accredited training to New South Wales property agents. RETS is thrilled to be celebrating their 20th anniversary this year. Sasha believes in giving back to the sector as such she is the longest sitting director on the ACF IPS, Industry Training Advisory Board and is the current Vice Chair. She's also the current Property Training Industry Representative on the Property Services Expert Panel, a ministerially appointed advisory group working with the property and fair trading commissioners in New South Wales. Both of these appointments allow Sasha to help drive the property training agenda in our state, increasing professionalism and providing information and advice through to state government on skill shortage areas, funding needs, and generally assisting in the navigation of the property training sector, which has become a little more complicated over the last few months. We have a new CPD that is continuing professional development regime in New South Wales for our strata managing agents just commenced in March 2023. Sasha's here to explain it all to us. I'll take you right on over now to my chat with Sasha Boe.

**Amanda Farmer:** Sasha Boe, welcome to the show.

**Sasha Boe:** Thank you very much, so nice to be here.

**Amanda Farmer:** Great to have you back and I've got you back because we've got some changes again happening in the regulatory space for our strata managers who are keeping up to date with their education, their training, their skills. What is going on Sasha? Maybe we'll start here. What were the CPD requirements for New South Wales strata managers last year?

**Sasha Boe:** Last year, all right, so I'll talk about the requirements in relation to types of license. So you've got your three types, you've got your assistant agent or your certificate of registration holders, your class two and your class one agents. So we'll start at the class ones, so the top of the tree, so usually licensees in charge. The last CPD year, had to complete nine hours of CPD. So there was three hours of compulsory CPD they needed to complete as mandated by New South Wales Fair Trading. There was three elective units they could do, which was quite open-ended. And then they had to complete three business units, so related to running a business, essentially, so those sorts of units. So they had to do nine hours across the 12-month CPD year, which ends on March the 22nd every year. So that was the class one. Your class two agents which is sort of probably the majority of agents out there, had to complete six CPD hours. So they had to do the three compulsory hours as well, as mandated by Fair Trading. And they had to also complete the three elective hours. And that was pretty open-ended as to what they could do there. And I should probably add there, they had to do it with a provider that had been approved by New South Wales Fair Trading.

**Amanda Farmer:** That's with respect to their mandatory hours.

**Sasha Boe:** Sorry, correct with their compulsory hours. Correct, yes.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yep, compulsory hours, got it.

**Sasha Boe:** All right. Then we've got the assistant agents. Now, they're a little different in their requirements annually, and these changes haven't changed. So the assistant agents still have to do what they have to do since 2020. So if prior to 2020, someone was a certificate of registration holder and they rolled into becoming an assistant agent, They have to be working towards a certificate four qualification by 2024. So from 2020 to 2024, they've had to be working towards completing a certificate four qualification. Minimum requirement is completing three units of competency towards this qualification annually. So Strata agents should have been doing, if they're an assistant agent, three units every year or just knocking over their full certificate IV completely. If you've become an assistant agent in the meantime, let's say you became an assistant agent last year, you've got four years from 2022 to complete your certificate for qualification.

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**Amanda Farmer:** And can I just clarify when they complete their certificate for qualification, does that mean they become a strata manager?

**Sasha Boe:** Class two, yes, strata manager, yes. Before that, assistant agent. Yep, so four year pathway, get it done. I must say we've been speaking to some strata businesses and people haven't been completing their three units per year as assistant agents. If they get audited by Fair Trading and they will be out and about, there'll be fines both for the assistant agent who hasn't completed their work. and to the licensing charge. So really, really encourage everyone to get it done. And if you were registered as a certificate holder prior to 2020, you must complete your certificate four by 2024, which is pretty much this time next year, March next year, you must have your certificate four qualification completed. So that's the assistant agents that hasn't changed.

**Amanda Farmer:** Got it. So what has changed for our licensees in charge, first up?

**Sasha Boe:** Yes licensees in charge now, the class one and the class two agents have the same requirements. So their requirements are they must complete four compulsory hours of CPD annually. So it has reduced quite considerably, particularly for those class one agents who were doing nine hours last year, we're down to four hours of CPD. So your class ones and your class twos...

**Amanda Farmer:** And can I just jump in there, with agents who are members of SCA? Am I right that last year or last CPD year, those nine or six hours, depending on whether you're class one or class two, they were actually doubled in order to meet your professional standards obligations as an SCA member. Am I right about that?

**Sasha Boe:** Yeah, that's a membership issue, requirement, professional standards. So it really has nothing to do with the professional standards. It has nothing to do with fair trading requirements, the bottom line. So yes, if you're a member of SCA, you'll have requirements to maintain your membership. But Fair Trading State, four hours last year, nine hours, six hours. And I know they do require a bit more CPD if you're a member of SCA. But yeah, completely different things here. Once you're filling membership, once you're filling regulatory requirements. So yeah.

**Amanda Farmer:** Fair enough. So now down to four hours of compulsory CPD for both class one and class two.

**Sasha Boe:** Correct. You must complete it with a provider who's again approved by New South Wales Fair Trading. So the list from last year has reduced quite considerably. They've become a little more stringent with the requirements to deliver the CPD. So the best place to check out who provides the CPD, apart from Real Estate Training Solutions, is to have a look on the New South Wales Fair Trading website. There's a list of providers there.

**Amanda Farmer:** Yep, and we'll make sure that we have a link to that page. Now only four hours, all mandatory, not elective. That means there are specific topic areas, am I right, that Strata managers must cover in the CPD year?

**Sasha Boe:** Yes, yes, there's specific areas. And look, I might just highlight too, some strata managers also hold a real estate license. And if that's the case, they need to make sure that they're covering off on both real estate based CPD and strata CPD. So for example, let's just say you're a class two agent and you hold a real estate license and a strata license, you'll have to complete four hours of CPD plus an extra one topic to cover your strata requirements. So there's a list of the compulsory strata requirements. You need to make sure that you complete those if you're a strata agent. And if you're a real estate agent, you need to complete the real estate specifications as well. So just if you're a double license holder, just go to the Fair Trading website and have a really good read or give us a ring and we can talk you through it. But you need to make sure you're covering off both licenses. Most strata agents are just strata agents. So they need to make sure that they're completing the strata related CPD topics.

**Amanda Farmer:** Now, Sasha, it seems a little counterintuitive to me that at a time when we are trying to focus on increasing the skills, the education, the knowledge, the professionalism of our Strata managers, we're actually requiring them to do less CPD hours in a year. What's all that about? Have you got any insight into why this change has been made?

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**Sasha Boe:** Look, it depends which hat I'm wearing. Personally, I believe that that's not enough. That's just my personal opinion. I was talking to my council lady, she's a bookkeeper. She has to do 30 CPD hours a year. So we're only getting our licensed agents to do four. But look, the reason that the change has occurred is the commissioner, the property commissioner basically listening to industry and industry saying it's too much. So trying to get a balance there and I know we go round and round and round. Look watch this space though too don't be surprised if it changes again for the next CPD year. So trying to find a sweet spot don't know what that is we sort of go from way too much to way too little so not quite sure where we are in that balance at the moment. But yeah the reason it's changed is because of feedback from the sector that it's too much and we look I know the commission is really keen to make sure people are doing stuff that's relevant. And that they're doing it properly.

So what you'll find in these four hours that people need to complete is it must be completed interactively. What does that mean? There's a cap now on how many people can attend a live CPD session. So if you're running it in the classroom, 40 people are allowed to attend that session because they wanna make sure, fair trading, wanna make sure that people can't duck out the back and not come back and then get a certificate for completing four hours of CPD. If you're doing it in a webinar or a Zoom session, Again, it needs to have some type of interactive component, and there's a cap of 25 people allowed to do any one Zoom session.

The alternative is that you can do 10 hours of CPD online. Now, you have to complete all the compulsory topics in your area, so in strata, and then there'll be elective topics that you could pick and choose from. Most providers will have it. range of things I'll offer. So that is the other alternative. You can sit down and just chip away at 10 hours over 12 months and you don't have to do it live or in an interactive way. But if you wanna just knock it over in those four hours, you'll need to find yourself somewhere to sit in a classroom for four hours or jump onto one of the Zoom sessions that people will be running over the next 12 months.

**Amanda Farmer:** Well, look, I mean, better quality and better assessment processes I think are always a good thing.

The people who are listening to this podcast, strata managers who have listened for years and years, I know I'm not the kind of people who need to be told that upskilling, making sure that your education is up to date is an important thing. because they wouldn't otherwise be listening. And I know there are so many managers out there who are constantly looking for more and better ways to understand what it is that they need to know when it comes to strata law and strata practice and procedure. So with those kinds of people, I'm sure that they will be doing hours and hours of education.

**Sasha Boe:** More than enough, yeah.

**Amanda Farmer:** More than enough is the word, yes.

**Sasha Boe:** Can I just add Amanda to, I probably need to talk a little bit more about the Class One agents and the Licensees in Charge in particular.

**Amanda Farmer:** Go for it.

**Sasha Boe:** There's a new requirement, that they need to complete a training plan. Now there's a formula or a template, sorry, on the New South Wales Fair Training website in relation to what that looks like. And again the Property Commissioner is wanting to make education and training front and centre of the Licensee in Charge's mind. You know how are we going to improve our staff? More professional sector, educate them with all the changes, because we all know there are so many changes in the Strata sector annually right across all the different regulatory regimes and we need to keep on top of that stuff. So what the requirement for licensee in charge now is they need to fill in a training plan and it needs to talk about each staff member, the class of license they hold, one, two or an assistant agent, and the planned CPD for that person or professional development for that person over the next 12 months. It's a live document, it could change, you might plan something in September and you know, I don't know, something happens and you can't run it, so that can be changed. But if Fair Trading come in and do an audit, they will want to see a copy of that training plan and probably some evidence that it's been executed. So it's all well and good to say you're running something in May, but if there's no proof that's actually been completed, that could be an issue. So, need to be mindful now, licensees in charge,

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that you will need to put that training plan together. Shouldn't take you too long, it's not a huge cumbersome document, but it's making licensees in charge, who are responsible for all staff in their office, making them consider a little bit more about training for their staff over the 12 month period of CPD.

**Amanda Farmer:** One more thing for our busy licensees in charge to be doing.

**Sasha Boe:** Yeah, I know. Yup.

**Amanda Farmer:** Something that I have been asked about, Sasha, by strata managers in the past, and you might be able to touch on this for us, is the supervision guidelines and how a licensing in charge might make sure that they are across those and complying with those. Are you able to shed any light on supervision guidelines for us?

**Sasha Boe:** Yeah, look, the supervision guidelines are currently being looked at as well. So that's just a little bit of background. They're a bit archaic. And I think there's recognition that they're not very strata relevant. And look, even to the point, they're not very property management relevant. They're very sales sort of focus, the supervision guidelines.

**Amanda Farmer:** So what are they exactly?

**Sasha Boe:** You basically need to have a set of procedures that reflect the supervision guidelines and cover off on all the bits and pieces that are in there. And it's basically very procedural. You need to show that you've got procedures that cover off on each of those guidelines. So for a strata agent, it's just a matter of grabbing those guidelines out, especially licensees in charge, because it's their guidelines, and making sure that you're fulfilling all those requirements and that you have procedures that reflect those requirements. And I think if you're running a best practice business and you can show that they're actually, you're following those procedures. So there's evidence to show that, you know, just, you know, this procedures aren't just sitting on the shelf ready to be pulled out for an audit. They're actually live documents and things that you're using every day. So that's really the expectation around what those supervision guidelines are. And the supervision guidelines are there. So if someone comes in to do an audit, there is one person responsible for everyone in that office. So they can't be finger pointing, you know, it was his job and he hasn't done it. It all comes down to the licensing charge. to make sure that those supervision guidelines are being fulfilled, reviewed, looked after. There's a continuous improvement process there where you're looking at them maybe annually as part of your operations. Yeah, they're really important. And I think moving forward, they're gonna be beefed up and become even more important.

**Amanda Farmer:** And Sasha, am I right for anyone who's wanting to learn more about supervision guidelines or is hearing this maybe for the first time or thinking, oh, I really need to get across that? Am I right that it is supervision guidelines themselves is one of the compulsory topics in this CPD year? So you can go and do a CPD hour all about supervision guidelines.

**Sasha Boe:** Yep, correct. You can. It's one of the areas that covers all sectors. So the property management, sales, strata agents, buyers agents, everyone has to do as a compulsory topic that the supervision guidelines. Yeah, so it's there for everyone.

**Amanda Farmer:** Excellent. All right. So where is the best place for our managers to go to find out more about these requirements and those who are ready to take action on this right away get signed up for their CPD education for the year. Where should they head to?

**Sasha Boe:** Jump onto our website [rets.com.au](https://www.rets.com.au) and have a look at the CPD pages. We have already started running face-to-face courses. So we have agents we've been training for years and years and we go into their offices every year. So we're already rolling out some of that from some of our strata offices as well. We'll be putting our Zoom sessions up in the next couple of weeks. So we're timetabling those out at the moment. at the moment scheduling those out. So jump on probably in the next couple of weeks. And if you wanna do a Zoom session, you're an individual and you just wanna get it done. You can jump into one of our public sites, specifically for Strata, we'll have that there for them too. Otherwise, the 10 hours of online CPD will be available in the next couple of

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weeks as well. So we're pulling all that together. We only got approval a couple of weeks ago. So it was a little bit slow to get the information out from the regulator. So we are just putting the finishing touches on our online course. So, but yeah, stay tuned. If you're interested, just shoot us an email at admin at rets.com.au. We can put you on the waiting list, but we'll let you know. Not too far off now.

Amanda Farmer: Excellent. So that's RETS, R-E-T-S dot com dot A-U to go and find out more. And I know from knowing Sasha for many years, working with Sasha for many years, she and her team are always available to answer your questions about what CPD you might need, what all of this means, just putting some clarity on what to be honest is not that clear process, especially when they change it all the time. That's not fair. Is it?

Sasha Boe: That makes it challenging for everybody.

Sasha Boe: Can I just add too, look, fair trading are out and about. And they are starting to look a little more closely at the strata sector. So don't quote me on these numbers, but end of last year, they did some audits and there was 44 strata agents that were audited and of the 44, 40 of them had some non-compliances and got slaps on the wrist. Some of them got fines. And what I'm hearing is one of the biggest issues was lack of supervisory guidelines. So if you need to go and do your CPD on that, do it sooner rather than later. But you really need to have a look at that, especially if Fair Trading come in and want to check. They're going to want to see that you're doing that. So make sure you've got your supervisory guideline procedures sorted and that you've got your head around it. So that's what they're looking at in the strata sector.

Amanda Farmer: Good tip. Thank you very much, Sacha Boe, for joining us to demystify CPD for the 23-24 year. I'm sure we'll have you back this time next year for the next update.

Sasha Boe: Thank you. Yeah, probably.

Amanda Farmer: Have a good one.

Sasha Boe: Excellent. Thanks for having me. 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 via the show notes at [yourstrataproperty.com.au](https://yourstrataproperty.com.au).