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YSP Podcast Transcript: 415. Cash is still legal tender in strata...isn't it?

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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. I'm Amanda Farmer and I have with me today, Reena Van Aalst from Strata Central. Welcome, Reena.

Reena Van Aalst: Hi Amanda, how are you?

Amanda Farmer: I'm great. I've been looking forward to our chat. Couple of challenges backing up in our spreadsheet here. And we were just saying off air that once again, we were digging around for the weeks win, but we found one. Absolutely that we will get to jump in with your challenge for me this week.

Reena Van Aalst: Well, Amanda, this is probably a challenge that may not apply to many schemes generally, but any of the schemes where an entity is part of what we call a building management committee, which you've spoken about before in our podcast. So basically a building management committee exists when there's two entities that would share one or more shared facilities. So you think about these multi-faceted developments where you have perhaps a public car park that's owned by an entity. You might have the residential up top and a hotel or shops in the middle or offices. So that's pretty much the typical type of scenario. But sometimes you may only have one thing being shared or two things being shared. So in these cases, a building management committee is established to document for the strata management statement. And we've also talked about how these sometimes can be unfair in their allocations.

But recently I've had a problem with a BMC that we manage where we're sorry, we don't manage a BMC. We manage two of the subsidiary strata schemes. This actually has six entities in this particular BMC. We have some commercial entities and we manage residential schemes. And what's happening is that the BMC manager is directly communicating with the BMC members, not copying us in the emails.

And so I had an owner that wanted to do a strata search. And of course, you know, the amount of information that I had was very limited. And I kept on saying, I have to keep asking the members for copies of things, which I shouldn't really have to. And sometimes they share with me, sometimes they don't, or it just depends if they remember. And, this is actually becoming quite problematic because in anyone that's part of a BMC, the insurance of the building is always going to be held with the BMC. It's never going to be at the strata plan or the stratum lot entity because the building has to be insured as one. You can't just split up a building into bits and pieces for insurance purposes. And therefore, normally the BMC budget is usually the highest in any strata scheme because the insurance policy is held there. And then you've got usually fire and other bits and pieces.

And so apart from the fact that we need to understand how the BMC is working, owners have a right to see how that money is being spent at BMC level if they wish to find out. Now we have committee meetings and the BMC member always gives an update and he's very thorough in what he provides to the strata committee. But the only people that are copied in on the communications are usually the BMC rep and the alternate rep because most strata management statements do allow for another person to attend if the main representative is unavailable.

So it's actually becoming quite problematic and I kept on saying to the BMC manager, "Can you please make sure you copy me in?" And so sometimes I do sometimes I don't but you know, I was just sort of wondering in terms of strata managers like in the training It's like well if managers were trained correctly, they would know that the entity is the member it's not the individual. So really, they should be copied in, I should be getting everything. But yeah, I was just wondering, Amanda, if you have if you've had this experience in any other, like any clients have come to you or any other schemes that have experienced the same or similar situation.

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Amanda Farmer: Yeah, it's a really great point. And, coincidentally, just within the last couple of weeks, I have actually had a client of my legal practice come to me. This person owns a property, I'll say, I'll leave it at that to protect their identity. They own a property that is part of a BMC structure. And this person is actually the BMC rep.

So they're attending BMC meetings. They feel like they're involved in the discussions that are going on and they're pretty much up to speed. And this is a complex where the strata manager for the residential, the strata manager for the commercial, and indeed the manager for the BMC is all the one company. So one manager holding all records for everyone. And this client had said to me, "Amanda, I would really like to access" exactly what you're saying, Reena. "I'd like to access invoices. I'd like to know how these big lump sums of money that we're talking about during our BMC meetings, how they're being spent". And I sort of gave the off-the-cuff response. Well, you know, you're a BMC member, you're entitled to that. And I went, hang on a sec. Where's the law that says that? Because unlike strata schemes, Our BMCs are governed by, as you said, the strata management statement. That is a document. It's a contract. There is no provision aside from provisions for the establishment of a building management committee. There's no provision in the legislation giving BMC members rights to access records and access documents. Unlike in strata where we have a really clear regime for records inspections.

And when I had that discussion with this client, I said, look, let's start from a place of just asking the strata manager, can I please have the following things? And hopefully there's no issue with that. And the material is provided because I don't know how otherwise. You compel this production. I suppose if you are the member itself, it's a little bit easier. As you say, Reena, you're the owner of that stratum lot. You are the BMC member, but if you were a lot owner in a strata scheme. Wanting access to BMC records. I don't know how you would go about that or indeed whether you could insist on that.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, that's a good point, Amanda. In this particular SMS that we had that I'm referring to, it actually does allow lot owners to be able to make an application through the entity itself to access the record. So it's actually quite an unusual SMS where it does have that. But if you think about it, Amanda, if the strata scheme is a member of the BMC, then it should have access to all the records of the BMC. And therefore, probably indirectly, the lot owners should be able to, because that record, if you're paying all these bills and your members are approving budgets and being directed at at the BMC meeting to make certain decisions or to approve certain decisions that are being put forward by the collective, then I think that using that analogy of saying, well, this is part of the records, those records, you know, obviously we don't get copies of all the invoices. I don't think a lot of people could probably ask that, but I think we as the member who are contributing to those bills can ask and therefore indirectly they can be made available then for a strata search.

I think a lot of people don't understand how BMCs work. I think a lot of managers don't even understand how BMCs work and therefore that whole notion of keeping records and what you can ask for and can't ask for is another sort of, I think, quagmire. And it's also when something goes wrong and there's that litigation between, I mean, there are many disputes in BMCs because of unfair allocations from the beginning, which again, people only realise over the affliction of time that, hang on, we're paying this much. And at the beginning, it may have been a small amount because new buildings don't require it. As buildings age and they need to have more money spent on them, those physical amounts become much larger. And I think it's a very sort of vexed issue, I think, in terms of cross-ownership between different entities, different members. You've got the strata scheme management within your own thing. Then you've got another piece of legislation that you will that affect the other part. And you've got other members and other agendas, other commercial and retail. And yeah, it's a bit of a minefield.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah. But I do like that as a bit of a rule of thumb, if you're a BMC member, if you are the strata scheme, if you are the owner of the Stratum lot, then you are directly entitled to these documents. Your agent is just an agent. They are not the principal. They are holding your documents. And then where an owners corporation may access documents in their capacity as a member of the BMC, they are then holding those records. They become records of the owners corporation and they should be made available for inspection under the Strata Schemes Management Act. I love that. Do you think that it is better to have a single manager across the entire complex or to have different manager for the BMC, different manager for the individual strata schemes? What's been your experience?

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Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, well, I've actually had experience in both scenarios. So I've had it when I was the manager for all entities and I've had it when I was the manager for some of the entities. And it depends, I think, on what is happening between the entities. When there's harmony, there's no conflict, there's no issues in terms of legal battles or whatever, then it's good to be the same manager because you're across everything. So if you go to a meeting for the commercial, you know what they've decided and why.

So you actually are there hearing what's being agreed to. So then when you're at the BMC meeting, you will know if the rep is actually doing what they were supposed to do. Because as we all know, there have been times where people have voted in accordance to their own wishes and not the wishes of their own entities. So that's a good thing when you're the manager for all of them and you can see, and you also understand where each entity is coming from. Because sometimes that is not imparted perhaps in the same way that the members at the meeting were really discussing.

On the other hand, when there's conflict, then you become like the meat in the sandwich in some ways, because you're trying to, you're acting for each member and you're acting for their own interests. So you're advising them all separately. This is not good for you. But then on the other hand, you ought to say, well, this is in a sense, you're in a bit of a conflict when there are issues arising between members. So that's, I think the only thing that I would say, Amanda, in terms of advantages and disadvantages of being a single manager versus being just a manager of some of the entities. But even some of the entities may not agree. Like I'll give you an example. I had one where we managed, I think, three of them, and it related to some infrastructure that one entity wanted to install and the other one didn't. So one scheme said yes, the other two said no. So even though I'm managing just three of them out of the total, that can also mean that people don't agree. So, but this wasn't a legal issue it's more like a spending money issue so yes.

Amanda Farmer: So it sounds like perhaps the more entities you represent, you are engaged as their strata manager, the higher your level of responsibility, I would say to be attuned to situations that may put you in a position of conflict that may be perceived to raise a conflict. And from a legal perspective, you'd have to be ready to act really quickly in those situations because if you get into deep in those situations of conflict, especially if there's litigation around, you maybe in breach of your own contract, you may be accused of some misconduct. If you haven't picked up, hang on a second. I shouldn't be talking to this entity about that entity's problems. I've just made a real blunder there and it could mean you've got to walk away from all of the contracts that you have, which commercially be quite painful. So for some managers, perhaps you feel like I really don't want to be in that position, appreciating that it may only happen occasionally. You might have a rule that you only act for that one entity, just in case because that level of responsibility is just too high.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, I mean, this is a public case that I can talk about, which is when I managed the Italian Forum and we didn't manage to straddle lots of this. We managed residential and commercial. And in a sense, at times they were aligned, at times they weren't. But overall, I was able, I think, to recognise and understand where each person was coming from and not to basically betray any of their reasons or confidence, but just to basically make sure that everything was minuted correctly so that when the wedding was done at the BMC that it was pretty much in the minutes of our meetings in terms of what decisions had been agreed. Now, some sort of management statements, Amanda, I'm not sure if you've come across any of these, but they actually compel you to provide your minutes of every meeting that you have to the BMC.

Amanda Farmer: Minutes of every meeting that every entity or BMC member has must be provided to the BMC. I'm not sure they have seen that. Okay.

Reena Van Aalst: Yep. I need the strata schemes, not the stratum lots because they're companies and they got, yeah, I need the strata schemes. And I thought this is really strange because, you know, and which meant that I think in this particular case, we had to sort of document things very specifically in a way that like perhaps if you weren't having to do that, you would be more open in your reasons and things like that. So yeah, it was very interesting where this SMS compelled you. Maybe it was set up because I didn't trust the people that were at the time on the, I don't know, but it sounds like it has to have been some previous experience of BMC is not functioning where the subsidiary schemes weren't perhaps voting the way that they had been instructed to vote. And therefore the minutes had to be provided, but then the minutes contain many other things that you don't want them to know about. So yeah.

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Amanda Farmer: Yeah, that's right. Exactly. Yeah, records is that another hotbed for conflict there isn't it if you are acting for the different schemes, keeping those records separate so that if there were records inspections, one entity doesn't find out about the legal advice that the other entity is getting. Look, I just think if you're not set up for it, you're gonna be in a world of pain if you can't manage those situations.

Great chat there about our complex schemes, and building management committees, good one for those who are involved in or managing those schemes to refer back to or share with your staff if they need to understand a little bit more about the potential pitfalls there.

Shifting gears, my challenge for this week comes from a listener who posted this question to our website and we've been waiting for this chat for a little while to get to it. I think it's a great question. Jade has asked, if there are lot owners who are un-financial because of what Jade calls arrears fees, let's say this is interest on unpaid levies, and during an AGM, their motion to have that interest waived gets passed. Jade's asking, does that owner then instantly become financial and have voting rights during that same AGM? Or do they have to wait until the end of the meeting?

Jade is acknowledging that the owner obviously couldn't vote on the motion to waive their own interest charge. But once that motion goes through, that resolution is made. Are they then financial and can vote for the rest of the meeting? Great question, I thought.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, that is a great question actually. I've never actually come across that before, but I suppose if any other resolution once it's been passed would be effective, like let's say when you elect a new strata committee, well, the old committee is then gone straight away. They don't have to wait till like the end of the meeting to become a strata committee member. So it sounds like they can vote, but I mean, I'm not sure about in the act that says otherwise.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. When I was first considering this question, I actually had in mind the quorum requirements, which tell us that we're looking at whether we have a quorum for each motion. We're not looking at whether we have a quorum for the meeting. So it is possible that you may have a quorum for some motions.

You may not. So the legislation kind of contemplates that people may come and go, the eligibility requirements may shift during the meeting. So my initial thought was, yes, once this motion has been passed, you are now financial and you can vote on the rest of the motions at that same meeting. However, I then went on to have a look at clause 23 in schedule one of the Strata Schemes Management Act.

And that's the clause that tells us that voting rights cannot be exercised if contributions are not paid, contributions being levies. And in summary, it says this, a vote at a general meeting by an owner does not count if the owner of the lot was an un-financial owner at the date the notice of meeting was given and did not pay the amounts owing before the meeting.

Now, Reena, we know an un-financial owner is defined as someone who is in arrears of levies to summarize, including interest or recoverable expenses related to those arrears. I believe that term is defined in the act. So the key part of this clause that has got my attention is you're un-financial if there was an amount owing at the date the notice of the meeting was given and you haven't paid that amount before the meeting.

It doesn't say before the motion, it says before the meeting. So I think if you're going to apply that clause, then you need to be paid up before the meeting starts. And I've given guidance previously to owners to say, you can turn up with your cash in hand. Some people find that they're in arrears by \$2. Sometimes it's a 20 cent interest charge that they weren't aware of. And if you can hand that over, then you've paid it before the meeting.

Reena Van Aalst: Well, actually, no, I'd better correct you on that now because Macquarie Bank and Bank of Queensland don't take cash anymore. So we can't deposit that cash anymore. So what we tell people to do now is actually pay it online. Show us a receipt, even if it's 20 cents or \$10 or whatever it is. Because now I'm not sure if you're aware of this, but we can't take cash

anymore because the banks want, before we used to take the cash, take it down to the bank and deposit it the next day. Now we can't.

Amanda Farmer: What do you mean by you can't? I mean, cash is still legal tender. Is that just for certain banks or for strata schemes?

Reena Van Aalst: But Macquarie Bank and Bank of Queensland, which is I think the two main banks that most strata managers would deal with, no longer now take cash.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah, I'm not sure that would be the lot owners problem to, you know, play devil's advocate here as I like to do. I'm not sure that would be the lot owners problem. If that's your bank's problem, the owners got not your strata manager, but the owners corporations banks problem, then I am handing you legal tender to pay my bill. Maybe I don't have a bank account. There's no legal requirement that I have to have a bank account.

Reena Van Aalst: I think also like now some shops don't accept cash either. So they say that's fine. But if you don't pay by card, then we can't help you. So I'm not really sure. I mean, I don't know how the law works about legal tender. But now some entities don't take cash. When you go to pay over the counter, just take credit cards and F plus and a lot of entities don't take cash. Like, you know, they don't take cash, Amanda. And like, if you're buying online, you can't pay with cash. You can only pay with credit card or PayPal or Apple Pay or some, you know, like, I'm not sure how that works, but yeah.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah. And then you don't buy that product and you don't do business with that company. I don't think a lot of owners have that choice. They have to pay their levies to be able to be financial. They have to pay their levies as a matter of law. It's a statutory debt for the owners corporation to put barriers in the way of making that payment. I don't know that those barriers would stand up.

Maybe there's a way around this that if these are the transaction terms of the owners corporations bank, then the owners corporation needs to inform lot owners of that. And, you know, call me a strata lawyer, but maybe there's a by-law that needs to be passed saying this is how you need to pay your levies. This is a reasonable rule that we've had to put in place to avoid this kind of mess because our bank won't take cash. You need to, I said earlier, you know, what if you don't have a bank account? Well, I imagine you go to the post office or you don't, and you can, if that's still a way to pay bills, pay over the counter and those funds can be deposited into the account. It doesn't solve the problem of you turning up to a meeting, wanting to pay your 10 bucks on the spot.

Reena Van Aalst: No, Amanda. We've always used the post office. We don't mean Macquarie Bank doesn't have an open bank like it doesn't have a consumer-facing place you can go. That's always been through the post office. You just put up a deposit form and Mac and Queens and even though they have branches that I have. They won't know they won't notice.

Amanda Farmer: But you still can't, but you're telling me you still can't give cash at the post office.

Reena Van Aalst:

No, not into those accounts. I don't know why. I mean, the money is going into their account. I don't know how it makes sense.

Amanda Farmer: That seems crazy to me. What if somebody wants to use cash?

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, I know. So I think, yeah, I think, well, I think maybe in our next podcast, we may just try and get an update from these banks about like on what authority they have to say that they won't take cash because I don't know how it works.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah. And hopefully we'll be hearing from some other strata managers who are experiencing the same thing or owners perhaps, but you know, I'm trying to imagine a scenario where I am a person who only wants to deal in cash for whatever

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personal reasons I have. And I legally need to be able to pay my levies. I just can't wrap my head around the fact that I can't go somewhere. Let's set aside for the moment that I don't want to turn up to the meeting with this cash and give it to the poor strata manager, but I can't even go to the post office and pay my cash. I suppose I go to the bank and I can get a check.

Reena Van Aalst: But we've been told that you can't actually, the money has to be in the account before the meeting. We got advice years ago. I remember we had this, people can't just turn up to the meeting and just give you cash.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah, I've had this fight before and I just rely on clause 23 and say it has to be paid before the meeting. Here, you're the treasurer. Here's my money. I've paid it. And you know, \$10,000 is a different situation to 10 cents, but I have certainly done that as a proxy where the outstanding amounts been \$2 and I've said to my client, yeah, here's a \$2 coin, go and give it to the treasurer sitting up there at the desk and insisted in reliance on clause 23 that I have paid my money before the meeting. The fact that you may have some internal procedures for how you account for that and deal with that ain't my problem. I am paying the owners corporation.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, no, the legal advice was that it had before the meeting that had to be receded and you can't receive something. Yeah, I know. Anyway, yes, I've got all these tangents today.

Amanda Farmer: Doesn't say that in the legislation. I love it. I love it. It's a good question, but I do think in answer to that question, if you suddenly become financial during the meeting because of a motion to waive any expenses or interest that may be sitting on your account, I think clause 23 is pretty clear. We look at who's financial before the meeting, whether that's five seconds before, or whether that's a week before.

A chairperson who is refusing to recognize your vote because they've already determined at the beginning of the meeting who's financial and who's not is probably on safe ground there. And do reach out to us, those who are in the banking finance space for strata, those who have the answer to our question about not being able to pay in cash, those managers who have found ways around this, owners who have found ways around this, do let us know.

Moving on to our wins for this week. Reena, you and I had a chat about this before we hit that record button and we have some similar wins this week. I was going to share a win about a nice surprise that I received from a colleague of mine that I don't get very often and I think yours is maybe a bit similar. Do you want to go first?

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, so I've had a few queries recently in terms of big tenders to submit proposals for Amanda. Obviously a lot of referrals from existing clients and other clients. And you give your referees list to the entities that have asked for a proposal and you don't know who they've rung, who they haven't rung. And this particular one, I've had a couple of them say to me, Oh Reena did you get the building? They rang me and said, yeah, thanks. We actually have been, you know, we have got that building or we have been advised that they're putting us forward as a proposed manager. So yeah, it's just nice to sort of have to be able to thank your referees because sometimes, you know, they do so much work.

One particular building, I think had a lot of people ring various referees and they had a lot of questions. So I think a lot of time could be expended by referees that sometimes goes unnoticed. So I just want to say thank you to all our referees out there. And also, to understand that, making a decision to tantalise managers is a very important one and a big step. And so therefore, I think it's good that people are contacting your referees to ask questions. And I think that we're lucky to have people that we've been working with for so many years that are able to attest to our services and our management. So I want to say thank you to those people.

Amanda Farmer: So these are people who you list on your proposal as current clients or past clients who you know are happy to say nice things about you. And sometimes they get called, sometimes they don't, but it's good to know when they do.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, and also to what we try and do Amanda, is depending on, you know the demographic of the particular strategy that's considering coming to us, you know might say to them well, why don't you ring these people because that's you know, they're in the same location as what you are or a similar type of building So I try and make it more sort of relevant to them.

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But yes, in this case that that did happen but and sometimes they just ring anyone but on the list. But it's just nice to know that you know that people have come back to you and said, Reena, did you get that building or did they come back to you or, you know, I had a really nice chat.

And actually one of them now actually is going to, I mean, we haven't yet been appointed, we're promoted to be appointed, but the two chairpeople will now catch up and get together and talk about different things. So in a sense, it's established a relationship between two like-minded chairpeople that want to talk about the different challenges in their schemes and how they would, how they could manage them in a more appropriate and fulfilling way.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah, I love that. I am often asked what steps should we take if we're looking at engaging a new strata manager? What do you recommend Amanda? And on my list, I always say the strata managers you're chatting to ask if you can be connected to some of their existing clients. I love the idea of having that panel of people ready to go. If you're a strata manager and choosing a few different buildings so that your two-lot scheme, you've got a great advocate there who can share that experience of being in that building, your brand new building, having been through a building defects claim with you, the BMC, the commercial building, so that you've always got someone who can share their particular experience with a client who may be going through the same thing. I think that's great if there's companies out there who aren't doing that. Good idea.

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah.

Amanda Farmer: So my experience was this, I am regularly approached by people who I don't have the capacity to serve. I am a small practice. I am a lawyer who is performing the legal services in my practice. And as many of you know, I don't do any work for owners corporations as a rule. I now only serve owners in my legal practice. So when I'm approached by an owner or a building or a strata manager who has needs that I can't meet, I do have a list of what Michelle in my office and I call the usual suspects we give to the manager or the owner say, here are some strata lawyers who know what they're doing, reach out to them and see if they can help you. And I know many of those lawyers are just as busy, just as overloaded, have wait lists in the same way that I do.

And from time to time, I hear back not very often, but from time to time, I might hear back from a lawyer who says, Amanda, so-and-so came to me. Thanks so much for the referral. But this particular lawyer who I heard from last week, I had previously received an email from him saying, Amanda, thanks so much for the referrals that are coming out of your office. I really appreciate it. And then a few weeks later, I received a phone call, a real live phone call, which turned into a voicemail because anyone who knows me knows I don't answer my phone saying, Amanda, thank you so much once again for the further referrals that are coming out of your office. And I just thought that is such a lovely thing to think to do when we are all so very busy and particularly to pick up the phone. I read something on LinkedIn the other day that said, phone call. That's not how we use phones these days.

That's just, nobody uses phones to make phone calls. We text and we leave messages and we look things up on the internet. So really lovely to receive that old-fashioned form of communication to say thank you. And I raised this because like Reena's business, if you are at strata management business, if you're a service provider in strata, I think remembering to do things like that, to thank those who are referring work to you we have a procedure in my office where we always make sure we know where our new clients are coming from. Was it a neighbour? Was it a strata manager? Often it's my opponent in litigation who's referring me work, which is always a nice compliment, to be able to reach out and say thank you to that person. I think is a really nice personal and business practice to adopt.

Reena Van Aalst: That's lovely, Amanda. Yeah, we actually, I just had a referral recently from another strata manager who is in a different demographic there in the North Shore and they don't do anything on in the Eastern suburbs. So that was nice to get a referral from them. And I always refer them work as well if anyone comes to me that wants someone in that demographic that we don't serve as well. So yeah, it's nice to have that sort of camaraderie between strata management companies and lawyers, etc. But, recently, I was at one of my friends actually, he does marketing and he's actually going to be speaking at a professional marketing conference that's coming up at the end of the month.

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And he invited me to go to it. And it's about professionals, like chiropractors, medical, legal, whatever, trying to market themselves using AI and different types of mediums. And I'm thinking, like, if you think about trying to get work as an organization and a professional professional services, which is a bit harder than a product per se. Well, I'm not sure that who knows these days what's harder and what's easier. But to be able to have that pipeline of referrals and referees is also a very important thing. So you think about marketing and advertising costs, how much we spend on that and having to go to this conference, which if I'm able to, I will be going to just to understand more about what they recommend.

It's really important to say, well, thank you to the people that are giving. So that's all that money you can save in a sense. Because a lot of people actually in strata, it's not about being able to get the clients, it's the capacity to serve clients, I think sometimes is the challenge.

Amanda Farmer: So true. And that's why I do put a very intentional limit on how many clients I take on in my legal practice. I have the online side of my business with the education that we provide through these platforms and inside the membership. So I'm able to say no to a lot so that I can serve those that do come to me at a really high level. And then that's that really nice ecosystem of them then having a really great experience referring their friends and colleagues. But it does mean that I end up with a waitlist, I end up having to say no to a lot and people are suffering, people need help, they need legal representation, they often need it very quickly. So being able to send that person somewhere where you know they're going to be well served is really important to me. And that person who comes back to me and says, thank you, that client came to me, we're now helping them.

And the next person we're now helping, I'm going to keep sending them. They've shot to the top of my referral list. I'm going to keep sending them those people that I can't help because I know that they can. And a hundred percent what you say about the money that you can save, not having to do any cold outreach advertising is money that you can use in your business elsewhere. If you do end up going to that conference, I'd love to hear what it is that you learn any tips that you can bring back for us here on the podcast.

Reena Van Aalst: Definitely Amanda, but just to talk about your comments about being happy to have your referrer list that you can refer to. Unfortunately, apart from the one I was referring to that has a different demographic. When people come to me and we say, like, we can take you on in three or six months time because of our pipeline of work coming in and capacity to manage. They go, who else can you recommend? And there's probably one or two people I could recommend. And then, you know, but I always check with them first if they want to take that building on or if they've got capacity and they say, no, I'm sorry, I can't. I don't have capacity either. So sometimes I feel I can't do what you're doing, which is to give them someone else that they could go to that could serve them well. So anyway.

Amanda Farmer: Yeah, it is hard. And I've certainly had the experience where I've been referring people to somebody and then because I don't have the capacity and then they're referring people to me because they don't have the capacity and we sort of say in the office, okay, we're not sending any more referrals that way because I think we're annoying that person. But there are, you know, the up and comers out there who I think it's on us to keep our eyes open for these people to be finding out who they are, to keep our ear to the ground at conferences or staying connected to even if it's just you're on LinkedIn and you can say, so and so has just gone out on their own. They've started their own business.

And I'm always very careful. I don't recommend anybody because I don't know what happens inside their business. Maybe they send the matter off to a different lawyer or junior lawyer in the business who perhaps is not the person who I think would be best for the job. So I'm very careful not to recommend I say, Look, I know these people do this work. They may have capacity, you might be good fit. Go and have a chat to them. I think you can do the same with strata.

And certainly in those newer businesses, if I am referring work to a new business that I know has just opened up and I want to support that business, I'm saying to the client, look, this person used to work for this big company. I saw on LinkedIn that they've gone out on their own. They would be the type that probably have capacity to really provide a great level of service. Have a chat to them. I don't know what it's going to be like, but have a chat to them.

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YSP Podcast Transcript: 415. Cash is still legal tender in strata...isn't it?

Reena Van Aalst: Yeah, no, I have done that, Amanda, with someone that I do know and, but normally that size building or yeah. So, it's good in a sense sometimes I do refer them, you know, I think all that is a good fit. I consider it a good fit, but they just don't even end up contacting them for some reason. So I'll say, I'll do that person contact you. I said, okay, good. If that's all, no, they haven't been in touch. So you never know. It's horses for courses.

Amanda Farmer: Indeed. Great chat. Thank you so much for making the time to bring all of that value to our show today, Reena.

Reena Van Aalst: Thanks, Amanda, it was a pleasure as always.

Amanda Farmer: And I'll look forward to catching up with you next time. Bye for now.

Reena Van Aalst: Bye, Amanda.

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