

**Publication Date: 30 January 2025**  
**YSP Podcast Transcript: 438. Blame it on “the strata”**

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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 our podcast episode this week. I'm your host strata lawyer Amanda Farmer and I am recording this intro shortly after our Friday Live chat over on the Facebook page. That chat was all about communication standards in strata. It was a chat inspired by last week's podcast episode, which if you had a listen to that, you'll recall Reena Van Aalst read out a particularly nasty email that a strata manager had received from an owner.

The various comments in response to that particular discussion that Reena and I had about the email, together with the timing of a separate discussion that happened over on LinkedIn last week about strata manager emails, led to me hosting a more in-depth chat on precisely this topic over on our Facebook page as part of our regular Friday LIVE session today. In this podcast episode, I'm sharing an edited-down version of that Friday LIVE chat with you.

As always, you can catch the full discussion along with the video and all the comments that have been shared over on the Your Strata Property Facebook page. We did talk about some other news from the week that was in strata last Friday, including some news from the NetStrata investigation and some new laws for Victorian owners corporations. So do visit that longer version of the chat over on the Facebook page to hear more on those topics.

There's a link to the video in the show notes for you. If you're not yet following us on Facebook, I do encourage you to pop over and follow the Your Strata Property Page. I'm regularly there, usually on a Friday with a live appearance for you, sometimes opening up the floor to questions, other times sharing an interesting case that has crossed my desk or getting into something a little more controversial, which I think it's safe to say when our experience last Friday.

I'm going to take you over to the edited version of that chat. It opens with my reference to the podcast with Reena, which was Episode Number 437, the one just before this one. Don't worry if you haven't yet listened to that episode. You will soon be brought up to speed on the need-to-know for today. Here we go.

This week's podcast. Reena and I had a chat. Some of you may have listened to it, some of you may have seen some comments about it on the Facebook page or on LinkedIn. Reena and I asked what is being done by who and who is responsible for addressing the abysmal was the word used the abysmal way that some strata managers are treated by their clients.

And what I'm going to do here is give you a little peek at that part of the video discussion that Reena and I had. You don't often see this. You might see some of it in our promos, but we record our entire chat by video. I'm going to play for you that part of the discussion where Reena read out to me the content of an email that one of her colleagues not in her business, in another strata management business one of her colleagues had received.

And you'll hear if you go and listen to the full podcast that that colleague has said to Reena, “Reena, can you read this on the podcast to Amanda and see what she thinks and see what others think about this email received by a strata manager from an owner.” I'm going to play this for you now:

**Reena Van Aalst:** “I'll actually read out what she said. Do you think I care about the likes of you? You are a Persona non grata, an old memory growing up. You silly prima donna. Ashamed of myself. Never. You. Do you realise the non-importance of your role in society?”

**Amanda Farmer:** Oh my God.

**Reena Van Aalst:** It's classified along with used car salesmen and real estate agents. Don't get above your station in life.” And exactly.



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**Amanda Farmer:** What did you think hearing that? Some of you may have heard that. That may be in the second time that you were hearing that. If you've listened to this podcast episode already, some of you might hear that and go, “Oh, par for the course. Amanda, welcome to my world. We get these kind of emails all the time.”

I think that email was disgusting. I know you get tough emails. I get tough emails. But that one was next level. Lots of comments coming through. Not just telling me you couldn't hear me. Thank you. But we're getting your feedback now. Darrel saying, “Some owners have taken the position that all strata managers are evil and they deserve to be treated poorly. Usually that owner also believes that the strata manager is their building manager who will snap to attention and initiate repairs without consulting the strata committee. Some of the abuse we receive on an almost daily basis is crazy and I spent over 20 years as a security guard before starting here.”

That skill may have you well placed, Darrel to be a strata manager. Kristen saying, “Her reaction was every bit as astounded today as it was yesterday. Melissa saying, “Just horrible and so uncalled for. Just horrible. And it happens so often.” Yes. Interesting to hear from you, strata managers that you. You think this is horrible as well. “Disgusting,” says Sean. “Appalling,” says Romaine, Luke saying, “I think there's more to this story.” Okay. All right. Interesting. Darell saying, “That's an abominable email.” James, “This person is a low life, completely out of bounds, atrocious. The content of the email did cross the line.” that someone on LinkedIn.

I can't see your name, unfortunately. Horrible. Okay. All right, we're on board. Good. Glad none of you said, that's fine. Amanda, strata manager should just suck it up, you know, deal with it. That kind of communication from my point of view and what I'm hearing from you here today. Thank you. Is not on. I'm hearing from you that you agree that is not on. If you are a strata manager who is receiving emails like this, have ever received an email like this, please know you have permission. You have my permission. You have the permission of everybody here is commenting to reply to that person.

And I think regardless. I know Lucas saying, “I think there's more to this story here.” I think regardless of what may have come before, I don't think there's any excuse for that kind of email. We're not talking about in the heat of a moment on the phone here. Not to say people don't send emails in the heat of a moment, but put something in writing. It's a different level, not acceptable in any circumstance.

And you have my permission, permission of others experienced managers here, letting you know their view, to reply to, to say to a person like that, “Do not ever, do not ever communicate with me like that again. That is not acceptable. And if you continue to communicate with me in that way, your emails will be ignored.”

And please, if you're a junior manager, if you're an employed manager, you have a team leader, you have an owner of the business, please be bringing this kind of communication to the attention of your seniors, your mentors, your boss, letting them know that this is happening because it's not okay.

And I encourage any strata management company, business owner who is working with owners, they don't have to be committee members, owners who are communicating with them in this way, let the committee know. If it's not a committee member, let the committee know that this communication has occurred, send it to the committee and be telling the committee, “This is not acceptable. We have dealt with it in this way according to our office policy.”

And you may want to think about implementing an office policy about how to deal with these kinds of communications so that you can fall back on that. “We've dealt with this. According to our policy. We've sent this reply, we're bringing this to your attention. You may wish to Communicate with this owner yourself and to let them know that in your eyes as the committee, this communication is not acceptable.

Because if we continue,” I'm suggesting you can say as a strata manager, “if we continue to receive communications from this owner or from anyone in your building in this tone or with this content, we will no longer be able to work with you.” And you can build these in. If you're not confident that you have that built into your contract, you can build in clauses like that into your contract.

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“If we receive this kind of communication, then we will be giving notice to terminate the contract.” Why work with somebody? Why work with the building that has owners that are going to communicate in this way? And what you're doing there is shifting that responsibility over to the committee to take this on. For them to be aware that they have owners communicating in this way and for them to be aware that they're going to lose you, they're going to lose a good, devoted, committed, hardworking manager if their owners continue to operate in that way.

They are then taking some responsibility for this problem. It's not all on your shoulders as a strata manager, because it's not, it is not acceptable. There are degrees. We're going to talk a little bit more about that today. About degrees of what? Maybe we just as professionals, suck up, take the high road, deal with, happens every day. We get on with it, we're paid professionals, that's what we do. And then that's that line. What is not acceptable?

And I have done it in my career. I've done it as a committee member with owners, I've certainly done it as a lawyer with clients and with others. To say that is not acceptable, that is not how you communicate with me. And guess what? It won't happen again. That's called setting boundaries. Really, really important.

And I want to acknowledge that that is easier for some people than others. It may be easy for me as a lawyer operating in a culture where lawyers are in the main, respected, perhaps more respected than some others, certainly more respected in our world than strata managers. It's easy for me as somebody with two university degrees, with 20 years of experience, with the confidence of that experience, being a naturally confident person as well.

For some of us, it is easier than others. For people like Reena Van Aalst, it may be easier than others. It is not that easy for other people. So please, if you're a junior person or a person who may need that support and that confidence, be sharing this with your team members, with your team leaders, with your boss, that this is happening. Please don't suffer in silence and get the support that you need. Use my words. I've given you some words there that you may be able to use when you're responding to this kind of correspondence.

Okay. Those comments I've been watching in the corner of my eye have been flying through. Kim saying, “Completely out of bounds.” Mark says “More about the author” Sean thought it was measured against some that perhaps you might be receiving. It was mild. Kyria saying, “there's more to this unacceptable. But frustration leads to extremes of behaviour.”

That is the heart of what we are talking about today. What I want to talk about today, Kyria and I am hearing a lot of strata manager voices. I know there's some owner voices here in the comments as well, but what I saw on some of our Facebook comments today and in a separate but connected discussion that is happening on LinkedIn, which I'm going to take you over to have a look at, there is some finger pointing, I'm going to call it some finger pointing going on.

Strata managers are frustrated with and upset about the way owners are communicating with them. And owners are frustrated with and upset about the way strata managers communicate with them and saying, “Well, hang on a second, strata manager is not performing. Strata Manager doesn't take my call. Strata Manager doesn't. Strata manager doesn't. What do they expect? We're going to lash out, we're going to be upset, and we're going to perhaps fire off emails that we wish we didn't fire off.”

I hear you. I hope I've said quite clearly that an email in the terms that you just heard Reena read out, in my view, is never acceptable. That is not to say that there aren't owners out there who are frustrated with, upset about poor service that they're receiving from their strata manager and may feel the need from time to time to point out that poor service. I do think that's a different thing.

Sean, “I was saying, trouble is, many companies, licensees-in-charge, do nothing about it.” That sounds awful, Sean. Heartbreaking to me. I think if you're working in a company like that, it's time to move on. Let's just be clear here. There are more buildings than strata managers, right? There are more buildings that need strata managers than there are strata managers out there. You are the service that is in demand. You're in demand.

If your company is not going to support you in dealing with communications like that, then it may be that you're working for the

wrong company. I was just looking on Seek earlier today and you'll find out why I was looking on Seek so many strata manager positions. Advertise. You guys will tell me you're hiring all the time. Why stay in a role where you're not supported by those who are supposed to be looking out for you?

Other jobs out there, guys. Melissa McPherson is saying, “Communications by-law is my favourite.” Yes. You're referring to the communications bylaw that's available inside my templates library, Melissa. I know that you've used that one to great effect. You're not the first one today to mention the communications bylaw or a by-law to help regulate communications. In a little bit later, I'm going to take you over to another comment from an experienced strata manager that mentioned the benefit of buildings having by-laws and rules in place to help manage communications.

So great to hear that. Sounds like some of your buildings are using that, Melissa, to great effect. Darell saying, “No frustration does not give anyone a pass to treat someone like that Ready Strata management saying, “This is not unusual language for a strata manager to hear. I just assume that someone that talks to another person that way is the sort of person that talks down to servers in a restaurant. We are all people and nobody deserves to be respected.”

Yes, that was the bit that if you saw in the video, I was kind of. What the email ended with something like, “You know, you're the bottom of the barrel, you know, you're the dregs of the earth,” kind of thing. I mean, there is. Yes, no excuse for that one. Leonie saying, “I've had the opposite horrible email sent to me from a previous strata manager.”

Absolutely. I want to acknowledge that that is happening in some places and that is not on. That is not on. I was talking to a strata manager online just this afternoon, talking about doing some CPD training for the team and he was saying, “You know, Amanda, I listened to the podcast and I. And I hope I can tune in this afternoon. I understand what you're going to talk about. Totally get it.” But he said, “Sometimes, you know, I see emails sent by strata managers that I think as a strata manager, Oh, mate, no, no, shouldn't have sent that.” He said, “Sometimes I think strata managers can tie themselves up into this knot.” They can put themselves in this place where they do lower themselves to this kind of communication and open the door to it. Yes. I've seen that happen as well.

That is something that I discourage, obviously. Just as owners need to be thinking carefully before they're firing off those emails. Strata managers absolutely do too. And that is the part I come back to that is what being a professional is all about not being emotional, not being biased, or having an interest in the outcome that your client may be wanting to achieve. You are disinterested. And that word does not mean uninterested, it means impartial.

You need to be standing apart from the emotion of that scenario so that you can properly guide and advise. So getting into an email war, or keyboard war with an owner is never a good idea, not a good look. And it does. Maybe that's what was going on here. To Luke's point, no more to this than meets the eye. Maybe that's what was going on here and that's where it degenerated too.

So Leonie acknowledged that that can happen from the other angle, from the other side as well. Jeff saying, “Agree. Sometimes committees instruct managers not to provide information. The managers, the meat and the sandwich. However, the committee is the real problem. Sometimes it may be the owner who is the issue. We need the full story.” Yes, Jeff, that exact point was discussed on the podcast this week as well, where Reena was saying, as a compulsory manager, I send documents out to everybody. There's full transparency.

I make sure everybody knows what's going on. I can't do that. When I am a voluntarily appointed manager, I have to take instructions from the committee. And sometimes the committee's instruction is don't send that document, don't answer that owner's email, don't communicate with that owner, send this, not that.

And it can make the strata manager look bad and it can make the owner feel like they're being targeted and make it seem like the strata manager is not doing their job. They are doing their job. They're following the instructions of the owners corporation, their client and the owners corporation instructs through the strata committee.

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So yes, that does happen. Jeff. Sean saying, termination for persistent abuse. Yay. You like that idea, Sean? Yes. Holly saying, “Amanda, I'd like to know what led to this situation. While the type of email sent crossed a line, what led to this situation? If the conversation gets this heated, both sides have failed.”

Yes. And it may be that that strata manager is feeling that, Holly, and thinking, “Oh, that's where it got to. Perhaps I could do things differently in the future so it doesn't get to that level.” I think we all have something to learn from a communication and experience that ends up in that category. Suzanne saying, “Something like that happened at our strata management lot. Owner told her, not the chairperson anymore. I as a committee member apologise for the behaviour. On one just owner. The owner is now banned from emails.”

You know, finding ways for the building to take responsibility I think is really, really important here. So it's not on the strata manager to deal with that. Okay, that is not alone. The reason why I mentioned this is such a hot topic issue. This week, at the same time that Reena and I were recording this chat, there was a post that another strata manager was putting together to share with her network on LinkedIn.

And it is a long similar, not the same, but similar lines. What I'm going to do is share this here with you. This is a post by Natalie Fitzgerald. Natalie is a strata manager, works at Genesis Strata Management and is also a board member of the SCA New South Wales Board.

And Natalie's a brilliant writer. Natalie writes, “My name isn't Strata. After receiving my third email today, addressed Dear Strata, a thought passed through my mind. My name isn't strata. I have no special authority or powers. I cannot kick someone out of their home for being too loud. I can't arrange to have their car parked in a private space towed. These are the things that I can't do. Can't provide legal advice, financial advice. I'm not responsible for the defective fire equipment. My name isn't strata. My name is Natalie. I will support you in every way I can.

I will call the lift company and ask why, how and when of the repair. I'll tell you your rights in relation to defects. I'll advocate for you. I'll refer you to the best lawyers. I will empower you with information. I will find that out-of-the-box solution. I will fight for you. I know your lot isn't just a number on a strata plan. I understand that it's your home and it's likely one of your greatest financial investments. I know you worked for it. You're still working for it. My name isn't Strata, it's Natalie. And I've got you if you'll let me.”

Goosebumps. I love it. I love it too. I definitely gave that one a love heart. I think I gave it some claps. Darell saying, “Natalie's a Strata wizard. Sean saying, love this post.” It's over on Natalie Fitzgerald's LinkedIn profile. If you do want to head over there, connect with Natalie, follow Natalie and you can be the first to know about her posts. The other thing that you may want to do is read some of the comments under that post.

And it's the reason why I wanted to focus on this today, together with the podcast chat with Reena. Quite surprisingly to me, more than one person challenged Natalie about her approach in this situation and questioned whether there was something that she was doing or wasn't doing with her clients to encourage them to refer to her as “The Strata or Dear Strata.”

There was a suggestion that perhaps she didn't know her clients very well, wasn't connected to them, didn't have the heart-centred approach to the work that she does. I can't think of anyone who was more heart-centred and personable than Natalie Fitzgerald. Often too much. And I think that those criticisms of Natalie's share here, which I know because she picked up the phone and had a chat to me after listening to the podcast, I think those criticisms of her share, which she thought was just something nice to be sharing, perhaps something helpful for others to relate to and maybe get a few laughs along the way. I think those comments and those criticisms miss the point.

Natalie wasn't making a criticism here on my reading of her post about owners asking too much or demanding too much or being rude or this is not the email that you heard Reena read out on the podcast, right? Very different from that email. The point Natalie was making, and she does say this in her reply comments on the post, “Is that there's a real disconnect here between who owners think their strata managers are and what they expect them to do and who they actually are and what they actually do.”

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And if you go and reread that post, you can watch this replay or go and check out the LinkedIn post directly. That's what Natalie's saying. I'm not the Strata. I'm not this magical, mystical and there's a great AI image from Tim Sara. Thank you Tim for that. Under Natalie's post, I'm not this God, this all-powerful being that you think The Strata is that can do all of these things that you think I can do.

I'm not the one who can fix the lift, but I'm Natalie, your strata manager and I can arrange that for you. I can't change the law, but I'm Natalie, your strata manager and my job is to connect you with lawyers who can help you with that. I'm not The Strata, Natalie wasn't complaining about. My clients are awful, they don't know my name. The point Natalie was making is we're getting something wrong here when after 20 years plus I've been in the space for 20 years, Natalie too of trying to explain what Strata Living is, what an owners corporation is, what a body corporate is, that every owner is a member of the body corporate.

There is still this pervasive concept of the strata and what The Strata should do for me and what The Strata is not doing for me. And in calling this out, Natalie is an excellent company. The person who best explains this frustrating concept is Professor Cathy Sherry. Too many of you know and love. She was, I think maybe the first that I ever heard years ago saying, “What's this thing with this strata? There is no the strata. We have an owners corporation and owners you are all members of the owners corporation. The strata is you. You have control here.”

That is what I believe. And I know, having spoken to Natalie and reading her comments under the post, that was the point of Natalie's post. So returning to the finger-pointing perhaps that I mentioned earlier and I'm acknowledging those comments here from owners in our live chat here, saying, “You know, it's not all about owners needing to communicate better. Strata managers need to do their bit as well. There's a reason why. Perhaps there's a reason why we write Dear Strata, perhaps there's a reason why we send frustrated, heat-of-the-moment emails that we wish we didn't send.”

Yes, I want to recognise that and ask the question, “what's going on here and how do we solve it?” I want to ask that question, not promising any answers and say a little bit more than what I said in the podcast chat with Reena, which if you've listened to it, having heard the content of the email that Reena relayed and the shock that you saw on my face watching that video earlier, I immediately said, “Where's the strata managers advocate in this? Who is helping strata managers to deal with this communication? Who is saying anything on behalf of strata managers about this not being acceptable? Is the SCA doing something about this?”

And when I saw Natalie's post, knowing that she was a board member of the SCA, you'll see I had commented on that post. Natalie listened to the podcast and after listening to that podcast, she picked up the phone and gave me a call.

I want to go a little bit further than what I said on the podcast and if that seemed a little bit simplistic and reductionist, I apologise for that. This is not just SCA's problem to fix, that's for sure. This has to be a group effort. And when I say problem to fix, I'm talking broadly about the problem of poor communications from the owner's side.

From the strata manager side, absolutely. As well, poor communications, harmful, hurtful communications that come from a place of strata managers not expressing, not properly able to relay their role and what their role is and not being able to set expectations and on the other hand, owners not understanding what it is their strata manager does or indeed not being happy with the service that their strata manager is providing because they ain't getting good service. I want to acknowledge that.

So a group effort here from strata managers. Yes. Yes. To educate their clients. Yes. To do as much as they can to help their clients to understand what it is that we do. I know Natalie is a leader in that space for doing that. You just have to look at the Genesis website to see the hard work that her and her team do in that space. Yes. A group effort from our strata management industry bodies, from SCA.

And the chat that I had with Natalie when she picked up the phone to me was, you know, as a board member, are you able to say anything in response about what maybe SCA is doing here in this space to improve the reputation of strata managers? Big job, big job following 2024. But to assist owners in recognising what it is that their strata manager is there to do to solve this problem, this concept of the strata, to stamp out this concept of the strata.

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And on such short notice, Natalie wasn't able to speak with me with her board member hat on. I want to be really clear about that. We did have a conversation in her personal capacity, not as a board member. But what she did point out is some public information. This is the reason I was on Seek earlier today. There's an AD.

There's an ad out on Seek at the moment from SCA National. They are recruiting for a communications and marketing person. You'll find that job on Seek. If that's your skill set and you love strata, go and check it out. SCA is looking for a communications and marketing person. Natalie said to me her personal view is. That sounds like then SCA is looking at how it can do better in this space, coming off the back of a really hard year to position strata managers more clearly what it is that their role is. And to try not to end up in this position where owners are misunderstanding or indeed owners are frustrated and are not getting what they think they are entitled to or need to be getting from their strata manager.

So the intent, through my conversation with Natalie, from her personal view, not her board member's view, is to do some more work on owner education and public education in general about what it is that strata managers do, expectation management for owners. The fact is that we are many, many years into strata being a big business, a big industry, and something is not landing when it comes to knowing how strata works and what it is that these professionals do.

It's nuts that we are still talking about this so, so many years in to strata being such a big part of so many people's lives. So I've said managers, yes, part of the solution to this. Advocacy groups and industry associations, part of the solution to this. Owners, yes, part of the solution to this. And I've mentioned there were committee members who might be aware of individual owners who were given the strata manager an unfair. Sometimes these things, these are warranted, never those emails we talked about, but sometimes, yes, we got to remind our strata managers what they're there to do. But owners who are giving a strata manager a really unfair time to be pulling those owners into line and saying, hey, we might lose our manager if you keep this up, so can you just pull your head in?

Owners, I think, have a role to play there and the committees and owner representative groups. I mentioned the OCN on the podcast. I hope you see that I try to do my bit here as well, talking about these issues. What I did say on the podcast is that this is often not the audience who needs to hear these conversations. Those who are members of the OCN, those who are members of my online community, those of you who tune in.

I would like to think. I know it's probably not necessarily the case for 100%, but I would like to think that you're not the ones who are sending these unacceptable communications and that it's others who need to hear this message. Government, our state and territory governments absolutely need to be part of this solution. We're seeing a little bit more, I think, in New South Wales, where we've seen Fair Trading advertising, where there are licences being revoked, fines and penalties in the real estate industry more generally.

Not too many examples of that in strata yet, but that kind of work is really important so that there is a clear differentiation between these are the good strata managers and these are the not so good. We need to be advertising that and owners to be seeing that there is a strong, effective regulator there that will deal with poor practices.

I would love to see, as I said on the podcast, media campaign explaining strata to owners, not just something on a website, but some advertising. When we have our road toll increases, when we have too many people driving on their phones, when we have people behaving badly on the road, we have our state government step in and do a media campaign. Can you imagine something like that happening in the strata space? Your strata manager is not the strata the strata is not a thing. This is what your body corporate is.

And you are all members of. Of the body corporate. And if you want a good community, it's up to you to contribute to that. What do you think of that idea? And a level of personal responsibility? Absolutely. For both managers and for owners. And these are the thoughts that I shared at the top of this chat.

Empowering managers, particularly those who are new to the space, to be confident, to say, this is not on. No, you don't communicate with me like that. This is where the line is and you crossed it. That is okay. And I think in some situations, more of

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that needs to be happening. When I hear from managers, the kinds of things that they're putting up with. And this is a market where the managers are going to be the ones who are ruling the market because there's not enough of them.

And that's why all of this matters, to try and bring it together. That is why all of this matters because strata managers are leaving strata management because of these kinds of communications, because of the unreasonable demands, because of the unreasonable expectations, which is not necessarily a fault of the owners that their expectations are unreasonable. They don't know what their strata manager is supposed to be doing. But strata managers are leaving the profession, the industry, whatever you want to call it, and that is already a big problem. It's going to be a really serious problem as we have more and more buildings coming online that needs strata management.

Strata management is going to get more expensive, it's going to be harder to find a manager, and you're going to have to tread very carefully if you want to keep your good manager on board. That's why this matters in this conversation is important. I'm going to head into those comments and then I'm going to wrap up by sharing with you another post from LinkedIn that was posted under my sharing on my profile of the podcast this week. And I think it's a really nice summary of a lot of the things we've been talking about today.

But I do want to give you some time here to share your views. Romain saying, can you comment later on owner to owner disrespect in direct speech and in mail? Yes, Romain, you know what I say you got an owner in your community who is sending emails, maybe similar to the one that Reena read out earlier.

You say exactly the same thing, not acceptable. I've done that in my building with an owner who communicated with me in a way. I said, not acceptable. Do not ever send me an email in those types of terms again, if you do, I will ignore it, I will not read it and I will block you from my email account and I won't receive your emails anymore. You're entitled to do that. That is your boundary. That is your personal space. Draw that boundary.

James saying, “Often owners expect more than their Strata agreement provides. Few agreements provide a 24. 7 concierge service. Yep. So hitting that note there James, about setting the right expectations.” Definitely. Sharna saying, “Amanda's by-law for communications for YSP members is excellent.” Thank you very much Sharna for saying so. That's a template that we have available to our members.

Darell saying, “The level of vitriol certainly says a lot about the type of person that sent it through.” Yes. Grant saying, “Hi Amanda, I've uncovered the Strata manager sending disparaging emails and appalling language about owners sent to the strata committee. No foundation nor evidence but the committee pays the strata manager. The committee loves the strata manager even though the owners do not. So no consequence.” Yes, you might take some comfort, Grant from the post that I am shortly about to share from a strata manager that calls on other strata managers not to be siding with committees or with committee members and to recognise that they are there to serve the owners corporation as a whole. So stay tuned.

Jeff saying, “Sometimes the manager can be protecting an owner. The owner cannot be told the reason. That's a real situation.” Yes. Angela Loving I think Natalie's post there. Kyria saying, “When a strata manager is instructed not to do something that's normally responded to, wouldn't it be better to respond in a timely manner to the owner that the committee has instructed that no further action will be taken? Strata manager committee needs to be responded to about a complaint otherwise no answer is just as abusive.” Yes, I like that Kyria. I like that I said earlier that, you know, a non-responsive strata manager can be non-responsive because that's their instruction.

If I was, let's think of it this way, as a lawyer, if I was told by a client, “Amanda, I don't want you to respond to the other side, their offer is crap. I don't want to say anything. I don't want to give them the courtesy of a reply.” I suppose in that situation I would say that's not what I recommend. What I recommend is that we do reply saying, “It's rejected or I reply saying I have no instructions, I have no instructions to respond to you at this point in time. If that changes, you'll know about it.” I think that's okay.

And I think I would be telling my client. You know I'm a professional. There are rules of conduct that apply to my profession. This is my usual practice and I will be sending an email in these terms. I have no instructions to reply to you. Have a think about that one.

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Thanks for that reminder Kyria. I think that's a good one.

Okay, those comments just keep on coming and I do want to make sure that I share with you as a close for today this post. Who's the post from? This is a post from a name that will be familiar to you. Nina Howell has posted this on LinkedIn under my post on my profile where we were sharing the podcast episode and I want you to have a close look at this one.

And I will read it out. There we go. Nina says, “Dealing with difficult owners or committee members is inevitable. Some behave poorly towards strata managers or other owners, creating unnecessary conflict and disharmony within the building. As a strata manager, it is essential to be strong, courageous and willing to stand up to misbehaviour. Too often weak leadership and people-pleasing approaches lead to greater issues down the track.

Strata managers must take charge, set the tone and ensure the scheme is managed effectively. By-laws There it is. By-laws. Addressing conduct and communication is helpful also to establish clear boundaries.” My approach says Nina, “I always start with empathy to de escalate tension, but I make it crystal clear what behaviour is unacceptable. And as I said, clear boundaries are key. Without them, disruptive owners can take control and undermine the harmony of the community and make managing the scheme a nightmare in the future.

Strata managers don't take the easy route by siding with the loudest owner or committee member just to make your job easier. Our role is to act in the owners corporation's best interests, which includes managing personalities and setting firm boundaries. Stand strong, lead with confidence and uphold the standards that keep buildings running smoothly.” Those are the thoughts of strata manager Nina Howell from Wellman Strata.

Thank you very much for sharing your insights with us, Nina. I feel privileged that we have managers like Nina and like Natalie out there serving buildings. Head over to Nina Howell and or Natalie Fitzgerald's LinkedIn profiles to express your support.

It's not an easy issue. If it was easy we would have solved this one long ago. But thank you for the space and the time to air some thoughts with you to share your thoughts and your comments on this subject. This is a conversation that as always we will be continuing.

Thanks for joining me on a Friday. Have a fantastic weekend in strata. Next Friday I will be on U.S. time. Not yet sure if we'll be able to squeeze in a LIVE appearance around this time, but keep your eyes on the Facebook page and we will let you know what's going on next week. Bye for now.

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