

Publication Date: 8 May 2025

YSP Podcast Transcript: 449 - Want Smarter, Fairer Strata Committees? Start Here.

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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 episode of the Your Strata Property podcast. I'm your host Amanda Farmer and in today's special episode I am bringing you the audio from last Friday's live session which I hosted over on our Facebook page. Why was last Friday so important?

Well, it was the day that I launched a first of its kind special report titled the Strata Committee Crisis: Why New South Wales Apartment Communities Need Smarter Support. The report shares the results of the major survey we conducted earlier this year. Over 740 responses strata owners, committee members, managers, residents uncovering the real challenges our strata communities are facing and offering a clear, practical path forward. In this chat I walk you through the key insights and findings from the report, including what strata committee members are struggling with the most, what kind of training they really need, and who should pay for it.

If you're part of a strata community, whether you're an owner, manager, committee member, all of these insights are going to be incredibly valuable for you. I'm already hearing from many who are asking if it's okay if they share the report with their committees, with their neighbours, with their friends. Absolutely. We'd love to share this far and wide. You can catch the full video of this chat, complete with audience comments and live interaction over on the Your Strata Property Facebook page.

Just search Your Strata Property over there in the Facebook search bar. The video has already been viewed over 1400 times as I record this intro. Feel free to add your thoughts in the comments and join the conversation. And if you choose to like or follow our Facebook page, you will be notified each time I'm going live over on that page. That's usually about once a week or so.

And don't forget, as you'll hear in this chat, you can download your free copy of the special report at yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport. That link is also in the show notes for you. Let's get on into it.

In March 2025 I conducted a survey of strata owners, committee members, and industry professionals. Some of you will remember this. It wasn't that long ago many of you participated in this. Many of you answered the call to please fill in our survey. Thank you. 745 people in fact ended up completing that survey. I was quite blown away by that number, particularly because the survey was only open for about a week, maybe 10 days. We extended it to. It's not a survey that we pushed very hard for very long. So absolutely fantastic effort from those of you who jumped straight in and answered all of those questions in that survey.

The prompt for that survey was the introduction of a new legal requirement in New South Wales, a legal requirement for strata committee members to undertake mandatory training. Now that legal requirement has been introduced as part of the Strata Legislation Amendment Act 2025. That legislation has not yet commenced. We're being told that it will commence sometime in the second half of this year, 2025. As of today, at the time we go to print, go to air, no details have been released about the content, the method or the delivery of this mandatory training for strata committee members.

What is certain is that the training will be mandatory. It's there in the legislation that has been made. What is uncertain is what that training will look like. So it was in that context that I wanted to conduct the survey to hear directly from you whether you are strata committee members, your owners who used to be strata committee members, your owners who say, "Are you kidding? I would never bother serving on my strata committee. I stay away from those guys as much as I can."

Or maybe your strata managers or other strata service professionals. I was asking you, "What are your biggest challenges? What kind of support do you need? Who do you trust to deliver that support?" You answered the call and completed the survey in droves and so quickly and I really appreciate that. The result now of that survey is the special report that I'm releasing today.

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It is called the Strata Committee Crisis: Why New South Wales Apartment Communities Need Smarter Support. I'm going to tell you right now where you can go to access your very own free copy of the report. The web address that you need to go to and this is going to come up here on the screen. It's also going to be in the comments here on Facebook. We will get that over to LinkedIn and YouTube in due course as well.

You're seeing this one on your screen. It is yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport. Pretty simple, that one. Click on through and that one pops into our comments here. When you hit that page you'll see that all I'm asking for is a name and an email address to send the report to yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport. I encourage you if you want to head over and do that now because we are going to get into.

For the balance of today's session, we are going to get into the findings in this report. You may want your own copy in front of you to have a read of, to refer to. Once you pop your details into the form on that page, you will automatically be taken to a page that tells you your report is on its way. It's on its way to your inbox. It should be there pretty quickly.

Less than a minute or so. There is also a two minute video on that page from me. No need to watch that right now because I'm here live with you. But if you want to keep that window open and return to watch that video later, then you are most welcome to. Alrighty. Any troubles with that link, please do let me know. I'm heading over to those comments again to say, "Hi to Leonie. How you doing?"

Sean M is saying, "It's interesting to observe the absence of some prior SCA board members at various levels." Yes, interesting indeed, Sean. And that's why I say, you know that board that put their hands up, those strata managers, those professionals who put their hands up to take on those board positions in New South Wales in October last year. Brave souls. Brave souls. And should take up the presidency, I think. Braver still.

Hey, Maureen. How you doing? Sean is saying, "Your website is swamped with requests, I think." Oh, okay. All right. Ronnie's saying he's not able to access the link. Let me know if anyone else is having any trouble there. It could be those who are all trying to access it at once. It's not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere, guys. So if you can't access it right now, then I will remind you at the end of the session to head back over.

The link will remain the same. And if you can't because you're on the move or you're on your phone or it doesn't suit you at this point in time to access it, not to worry. I am absolutely going to walk you through the key points here and you can go ahead and access yours a little bit later. All right, I'm getting a few people. Sean saying now he's got it.

A few people having an issue with link bottleneck. Bottleneck, we think it is. I don't know. Who are the two of the techie people here? Allan's got it. Yes. Okay, maybe try refresh, guys, by web developer, we're saying, "What did you think? Would you send all these people over here at the same time?" Awesome. Okay, thank you, guys. It's not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere at all.

So if you're having trouble accessing, and those of you who are members inside our community, check your inboxes from this morning as well because you'll have a link there for you. Thank you. Lorraine saying received hers. Debbie's got it. All right, awesome. Look, after putting you to all that trouble, I am now going to share my screen with you. And here it is, the special report, the Strata Committee Crisis: Why New South Wales Apartment Communities Need Smarter Support.

I'm not going to go through all of it. I'm going to walk you through some of the key points here and leave you in your own time. Friday is a great day to be launching something like this. Friday is a great day to sit down when you finish up tonight with glass of wine, cup of tea, whatever it is that suits you on a Friday and read through this report I heard from a member earlier today.

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You're seeing this one on your screen. It is yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport. Pretty simple, that one. Click on through and that one pops into our comments here. When you hit that page you'll see that all I'm asking for is a name and an email address to send the report to yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport. I encourage you if you want to head over and do that now because we are going to get into.

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James was telling me, "I'm 30,000ft above Malaysia or somewhere." James, were you? I know you'll be tuning in, letting me know you were reading it on the plane. Deb's saying, "Is it in the members section, Amanda?" That's a really great point, Deb. Richelle, let's make a note to just pop a direct link into the member forum and make sure that our members can easily access that directly.

Excellent. Kristen's got it, Sean's got the email. I love you guys for keeping me up to date there on the tech working. So this is what the report looks like. A 2025 survey exposes the barriers to effective strata governance and the solutions within reach. You'll see an executive summary there from me. I'm not going to read that out to you. You can go and have a read of that.

The results are clear. Strata committee members and the homeowners they serve are struggling. They are frustrated, anxious and often overwhelmed. But there is also strong demand for change. Our strata committee members are untrained, unprepared and under pressure. And there's a hidden cost of that. And I know that those who are not on strata committees, owners who are not on strata committees, strata managers who are working with strata manage strata committees, that they are often the ones who suffer, who bear this hidden cost of volunteer strata committees.

So I want you to understand that when looking at this report, we're looking at it through those various lenses, whether you are a strata committee member who's reading this and saying, "Yes, absolutely, I am struggling as a volunteer strata committee member for all of these reasons that Amanda's been able to highlight in the report." Others might be saying, "Well, I'm an owner and I don't want to access the strata committee, I don't want to do any trading, I don't want to be part of the strata committee, but I am suffering because my strata committee doesn't know what they're doing."

And a strata manager who is attempting to work with strata committees and perhaps strata committees that don't understand their legal responsibilities, don't want to acknowledge their legal responsibilities. That is a challenge as well. So this affects everyone. It affects everyone who is interacting with strata communities, not just our strata committee members. There are mistakes and misunderstandings that can lead to conflict, wasted money, breaches of the law and long term damage to communities.

Until now, these decision makers as committee members have largely been left to figure it out on their own. Any training has been optional, unstructured and often non existent. That is now set to change. Why is it set to change? Because we've got new law, as I mentioned, we have new law, but we don't yet have a plan. New South Wales mandates committee training, but without the roadmap. So this is our reference to the Strata Legislation Amendment Act 2025.

The act introduces a new legal requirement for strata committee members to undertake training and that's all it says, by the way, guys. That is all that the legislation which has been made. It has been made. It just hasn't commenced yet. It's a pretty simple clause that's being inserted that strata committee members must undertake training. The our lawmakers have the opportunity to develop regulations around that which give us a bit more detail.

We have yet to see those regulations or to hear what that detail might be. So at the time of publishing this report, the legislation has not yet commenced. No details have been released about the nature, scope or delivery of the required training. So we've got a combination of certainty that the training is going to be mandatory and uncertainty about what it will look like.

And that is why we conducted this survey. We wanted to hear directly from those who are affected, what are their biggest challenges? What kind of support do you need? Who do you trust to deliver that support? That's what we wanted to tease out in this survey. I can see Trudy posting in the comments here on Facebook. "Will non committee members have access to the training?" That's a great question.

That's a really great question, Trudy. Non-committee members, under the law as it has been made, don't need to do the training. It's not going to be mandatory for non-committee members unless we suddenly see another amendment. But good question about whether they might have optional access. They might be able to access the training and do it anyway if they want to. I know, Trudy, from your comment on our website, that that's something that you would like to see and I think that's a really quite a clever idea.

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So our survey methodology, many of you will be familiar with this because you participated in the survey which we ran in March 2025. What was the format? This was an online anonymous questionnaire, pretty simple to fill out. We had a mix of multiple choice and also short answer questions. And it is from those short answers or open answer, I think is the better way to describe it, open answer questions where we've been able to pull a lot of the emotions, a lot of the feelings, a lot of the real lived experience that you guys are having, you were sharing with me in those open answer questions.

And we are so lucky to have technology these days that allows us to collate all of those and to draw conclusions from all of those short answers. So we had 745 respondents, people participating across New South Wales, including strata owners, committee members, residents, strata managers and other strata stakeholders. Not everybody answered every question. So if you are maths whiz and you're heading through the results and adding up some numbers and thinking that doesn't add up to 745, that's because not everybody answers every question.

Here is what the data has revealed and I encourage you to take the time to think a little bit more about this after today's session and after you've been able to access your own copy of the report. We're keeping that URL up here on the screen so that you can easily head over and access your own copy of this report. We've summarised the data into seven key findings.

So we're not going through every single question that was in the survey, but we've been able to pull together for you and that would be a bit boring if we were doing that. We've been able to pull together for you so some key findings. What the data reveals about life inside the strata committee struggle. Well, let's have a look at who participated in the survey. And the vast majority of respondents were actually current members of their strata committee.

64% of those who were participating in the survey were current members of their strata committee. 22% had been members of a committee in the past and 14% had never been committees. Sorry, committee members, but our owners, they were strata managers or there were other strata stakeholders. So what does that tell us? That tells us that the people participating in this survey really did have an informed perspective. They were sharing and answering their questions based on their real world experience.

This was not just the opinions of those from outside strata. It wasn't just the opinions mostly from those who are not really engaged. These were mainly actual serving committee members who were answering these questions. And indeed it was a well rounded view of strata engagement across our New South Wales strata communities. Just heading over to see a comment question there from Sydney resident on Facebook. "Hi, Amanda, can we distribute the report to our owners or do we direct them to your link?"

Sydney Resident, I would love for you to direct them to our link. Great question. We do want to be able to track how popular the report has been. We're always watching our data and making sure that we can share with those who like government. For example. Yes, a copy of this has been shared with government to be able to share with them how much you're interested in this information.

How many people have access this information. That is really hard for us to do if we're just sharing the PDF rather than sharing the link for people to opt in for their free copy of the report. So if you can share the link, and I encouraged our members to do that this morning, then we really appreciate that. Managers, send them with you, share them with your committees, with your owners, owners share them with your neighbours, with your friends.

Go ahead and share that link. Thank you very much. Great question. Sean is saying, "I think sharing the link is the best way for Amanda to gauge true distribution." Yes, thanks, Sean. And you know, I always find it interesting, maybe, maybe they don't have the tech, I don't know, or maybe it's a university requirement. But the UNSW City futures fantastic data that they produce and it's front of mind because their updated reporting just came through last month.

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They just pop it on a website and away it goes. Everyone can access it. I mean, it would be fascinating, wouldn't it, to be able to have data on how many people are accessing that, not just hitting the page, but are actually wanting to access that resource, are downloading it, even who they are. To be able to then reach out to them and be able to have them share their experience more widely about why they're interested, I think is really important data.

So that's indeed what we're attempting to do here. Elizabeth, how you doing? Saying, "One of my many concerns is strata manager knowingly breaching Regulations Act and advising the committee to the effect the committee takes what the strata manager says at face value." Yes, well, you know, I wonder if this is part of the policy, Elizabeth, around mandatory committee training. We've tried it for many years with our strata managers.

They have mandatory CPD, that's continuing professional development to make sure that they can renew their licence each year, keep their licence each year. They have to do a certain number of hours of quite heavily prescribed training on certain topics. That's not helping. That's not helping. I wouldn't have a 15 page report on the Strata Committee Crisis if that was helping. So do we go to the next level now and see if we can't train our strata committee members?

That might be where some of the thinking is coming from, from our policymakers in mandating strata committee training. So that's the first finding that you will see in the report. This is an informed perspective. We have people who have real world experience participating in this survey. Second finding, a question about your knowledge of strata laws. 70%, big chunks. 70% of survey respondents indicated limited or no confidence in their legal knowledge.

Now, I want to remind you that over 60% of those who participated in this survey were actual committee members. They are actual committee members making decisions most days of the week about how their strata community should run. And 70% of the survey respondents said, "I have limited or no confidence in my legal knowledge when it comes to strata law." 30% describe themselves as very knowledgeable about strata laws.

Big chunk there as well. That's great, great to hear. But we still have that significant majority who have limited or no confidence in their legal knowledge. So there is a widespread lack of legal knowledge among strata committee members. This is a major gap that I say the training must address. We can have training about all sorts of things in strata. And in some of these survey responses, some of you were telling me that we want to learn about psychology and we want to learn about communications and we want to learn about how we deal with a difficult neighbour, not necessarily learning about the legal stuff.

But this result reveals that there is a significant lack of legal knowledge among our strata committee members. I say that that is where our training must start. And let me tell you, when we get into the next finding here on the next page, you will see that many of you agreed with me. If I haven't quite read your comment there, Sydney resident, but if anyone is picking up typos, please do let me know if there are any typos in here that do need to be corrected.

We look at things 15,000 times and then don't see them. Sydney residents telling me more engaged owners. I'll go and check that one Sydney resident. Is it more engaged committee members instead? That's there. Colleen Burns is already asking here. You're on the ball, Colleen. "If strata committee members are expected to undertake mandatory training, who will pay for the training? Who will pay for the training?" We're going to get there, Colleen.

We asked questions about this in the survey. The short answer is we don't know yet who will pay for the training. But I certainly asked that question to all of our survey respondents and I have the results here for you. Moving on to finding number three essential topics for a strata committee training programme. The top three topics that survey respondents say must be included in any strata committee training programme are these three understanding maintenance and repair obligations.

Ding, ding, ding. That is a legal obligation. That is one of, if not the most important legal obligations. I say that our owners corporations have. Not just owners corporations, community associations have this obligation as well. Understanding your maintenance and repair obligations. That was picked up by the survey responders as really, really important to understand

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generally understanding strata law and regulations, including how to comply with legislation, and to enforce by-laws and thirdly legal responsibilities specific to committee members, including conflict of interest management.

And this is where I pulled out some of the actual responses that many of you took the time to pop in to the survey where you were asked to share your further thoughts. You did. We had some fantastic responses. Some of you may recognise some of this. These words repairs and maintenance are not a debate, they are legal obligations. So true. I love that. So that tells me that in some of your communities this is how it's treated, perhaps by committee members or by other owners, that it's something we can just talk and talk about, don't actually have to make a decision about.

It's not about you, it's about acting in the interests of the whole community. This is touching on the conflict of interest point. It's not about the individual committee members or what's good for them or what they might have an interest in. It is about acting in the interests of the whole community. This is in our legislation. The committee members have a legal duty to act in good faith, with due diligence and in the best interests of the owners corporation as a whole.

It's there in the legislation, but it is not being understood. Understanding the importance of long term capital works plans is listed as essential topics for a strata committee training programme. And how to work with and not be overrun by a strata manager. Oh, I found that one really interesting. How do I work with and not be overrun by a strata manager? In my experience that comes back to getting your confidence through understanding your legal rights and legal obligations.

If you have that confidence that you know what's what. And going back perhaps to Elizabeth's comment about strata manager tells committee the wrong thing, committee just goes along with it. If you've got the legal knowledge or the access to training to give you the legal knowledge, then you won't be. You're less likely to be, I want to say, overrun by your strata manager. So finding number three, strata community training must start with the fundamentals legal duties, compliance with the law and the obligation to act in the best interest of the whole community.

Now, I know many of you are coming in and trying to access the special report. Petra's just saying that she's got an error there on the website now. I'll just get Richelle to check that one out for me as well. It is the case that we had a lot of people all at once accessing that page. So if it has crashed, I know a number of you were still managing to get through after a little while.

If it has crashed, we will get onto that and make sure we let you know when it's back up and running. Sydney resident. Thank you. I see your comment there. Education for owners needed as well. Isn't that interesting? You know, you're not the only one saying that. Trudy has said that today as well. Everybody needs education, not just committee members. Richelle, if we do have an issue with we've broken the site because Amanda sent everybody there all at the same time.

You know who to reach out to to get that one sorted for us. Probably decided that you were all Russian bots attacking the website. Not the case, Just eager strata people. What about the desired training format? That's here in finding number four. Bit of a spread. Bit of a spread here which I found interesting. Written guides and downloadable resources. 30% of respondents wanted those. 20% wanted on demand video lessons.

Sorry, 26% wanted on demand video lessons, 22% wanted live online workshops and 17% in person training sessions. We had a small slice wanting other, other things and this was interesting. When asked what would be the best length for this training, 40% of all respondents supported ongoing access to an online resource hub for continued self paced learning. So what do we make of this range of data? Well, committee members want flexible self paced training formats that they can access online and on demand, revisiting those as needed.

That's the conclusion I've drawn there in finding number four. Sean M is saying, "Not surprising." I think you've also said, pointed out there Sean, that there's a lot of people want in person training sessions anymore. That's for sure. Being able to go back, go over, access new information, access updated information. I think we've got the people answering this survey, we've seen that the majority of them were actual serving committee members.

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Majority of them, vast majority of them. 70% also don't feel like they've got good legal knowledge, that they're not very confident about the law when it comes to strata. They want to be able to dip in and dip out as they need to. And they're recognising that we have different challenges from time to time in strata. It might be a by-law breach notice one day it might be levy debt collection the other day it might be a strata manager contract in two years time.

We have so many challenges facing us, questions especially when it comes to legal rights and duties in strata, that a one and done, a one and done is really not going to be a very effective approach. Having ongoing access to resources is something that you've said is really important here. Sean M is saying, When SCA New South Wales offered free online committee training quite a few years ago. I found it a great introduction to strata and committee roles and responsibilities right at the start of my strata journey." Yes, I love that. And you. So horses for courses, right, Sean? So there are some people who are brand new and this is where I have an ebook that's quite popular online. Many of you might have seen it floating around on Facebook that says these are the six things you absolutely need to know about living in strata.

These are the six things, very basic, and they cover things like by-laws, lot property and common property, repairs and maintenance, levies, meetings, your strata manager, how do you communicate with them, what is the committee? Very, very popular resource. I developed that one close to 10 years ago now, I think, and it's still going strong. And that's for people who are right at the beginning of their strata journey.

Many of you who are here are well in the thick of your strata journey and dealing with really quite specific challenges. You got some great curly questions that you like to throw at me from time to time. Everybody's at a different stage. Something like a simple ebook or a simple webinar or a simple one and done is not necessarily going to suit you. Thanks, Richelle. I see your note there.

Okay, finding number five. We've got some strong support here in the survey results for independent expert led training. So 44% of respondents explicitly said, "Yes, I should have the freedom to choose the best training provider." You want flexibility, you want to be able to have choice. Maybe this is tapping into the horses for courses situation that I was just explaining. Everyone's at different levels of their strata or committee journey.

Some need an introduction to the basics. For some that's just not going to be enough. But if you're able to choose, have the freedom to choose where you get your training and who you get your training from, then that's going to suit you. 33% preferred government only training and a pretty large chunk here, 23% weren't sure or were open to both. So most respondents expressed a strong preference for practical real world training delivered by experienced strata professionals, not just government mandated content.

And this is where some of the actual responses survey responses were very interesting to me. They included this. An independent expert with practical strata experience is what I want, even if there's a small cost, happy to pay for it. They need someone who has actually worked in strata and understands how buildings and people work. Another response they the government do not have the required knowledge in all areas.

That's why that person was voting for freedom to choose the best training provider. So strata stakeholders want this freedom to choose providers with genuine expertise and. And not a one-size fits all government solution may not be surprising to most of you. Heading over to these comments, Grant is saying, "The strata committee members need to pass a basic multi choice test to prove they really are up to the task, build confidence with their owners."

Yes, let's start with the basics, Grant, for sure. Lucas saying, "What's needed to obtain a driver's licence?" Yes, I like that. I don't know the answer to that anymore, Luke, but we might see that as quite basic and something that's quick and easy to be able to tick boxes for those who are on committees. Thank you, Sydney resident, for that link to a sample online training model.

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Deb is saying, "We are heavily reliant on the advice of strata managers. Our expectations are they know what they're talking about and we should feel confident the advice they provide is 100% correct. We are paying for their advice." Yes, it's so true, Deb, that you are. And on one view you should be able to, right? They are the professional advisor you are paying. You should be able to rely on their advice.

There's needed to be a rapid upskilling of strata managers in the last, I'm going to say 20 years. I've been around for 20 years plus and that the change has just been dramatic. There has needed to be this rapid upskilling, but it hasn't happened. They haven't been able to keep up. And it's the reason why people like me, like lawyers, have had to. Been able to, had space to, let's say, have been invited to come into this space as educators, as educators and trainers because there is so much about strata everyday strata management and strata living that is based in law, that is based in rules and regulations and, and there is just this huge gap and owners are discovering that they can't trust what their strata manager is saying.

And yet now we're seeing this obligation, this burden, if you like, to be properly trained, to make sure you're educated to understand being shifted or shared with, not necessarily shifted, it's still there with the strata managers. They still need to do their training, but being shared with now strata committee members and a few of you saying quite astutely, I think, is this then going to extend to owners as well, individual owners, because we're just not getting what we need to get out of the strata managers.

Okay, Savia, thank you very much, Great point. "But strata managers are not strata lawyers." So true. And strata lawyers are not strata managers is what I want to speak to, because I think that's where some of these survey responses are coming from. We need someone with practical strata experience. We need someone who's worked in strata, say some of these responses, who understands how. Understand how buildings work.

I think it is so important, and I do my best to do this in my education and training to bring in the subject matter experts. Subject matter experts. So, you know, I have Reena Van Aalst on the podcast often, other strata managers on the podcast often. I certainly have my own view of strata and dispute resolution and conflict resolution and how laws apply. But I'm not there on the ground with you as strata managers.

I am also a committee member, so I do have that committee member experience. But I think real quality training does bring in those other voices and those other experiences. And we all learn. I learn so much from strata managers and from other professionals serving our space. Remedial engineers and architects and contractors and accountants. So much that that's the fascination of strata for me. And what I'm. Why I'm so interested in it.

There is just so much to learn from all, all angles. So that's another reason why I think we're seeing these survey results to say we should have a choice if I want to do a module that's led by a strata manager, because I'm really interested in how meetings work and I want to hear from an experienced strata manager who's running meetings all the time about how to run an effective meeting that I want to be able to tap into that particular resource.

I want to make sure that I'm acknowledging those who are posting here in the comments. I think they're coming through thick and fast, so I'm not going to get to all of them. Lois is saying, "I'm a cynic. How do you ensure someone does the course a couple of times on someone else's behalf or ensure someone does. Doesn't do the course a couple of times on someone else's behalf?"

It's a great point, Lois, and I have a feeling that that's why we're not hearing anything yet. Haven't heard anything yet from Fair Trading and those with the responsibility for developing how this training is going to work. There's a lot of moving parts. It's a few things to think about. Where it's mandatory. Well, you got to prove that somebody did it and that the right person did it.

How are you going to do that? Definitely a few things to think about there Luke saying, "Good strata managers live and breathe the practical application of strata management on a daily basis." Yes, I agree. Okay, let's keep moving along here. Who should pay for the training? I think this came up earlier in a comment here on Facebook. Who should pay for the training? Well here we go. This was one that surprised me.

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We had 745 respondents. The most common response was that the owners corporation should cover the expense. So when we look at these survey results compared against each other, 38% of those who were answering this question, surprise to me said that the owners corporation should cover the expense. Now I've said in the report here when you go in and have a read of it. While initially surprising, this result highlights a collective understanding that the benefits of well trained committee members extend to the entire community, not just the individuals who are undertaking the training.

So those who are completing the survey were recognising that this isn't a responsibility that we just shift over to government or that we should just shift over to government or shift to the individual committee members. You can see just 6% of respondents said that individual committee members should be paying for their own training. This is not a responsibility that we just shift over strata communities function best when knowledge and capability are recognised as a shared asset.

If these are a shared asset the community is going to be benefiting from this education and training which it absolutely will be. That is just a no brainer then the owners corporation should be paying. Couple of the survey responses here. The owners corporation should cover this. Educated committee members are protecting everyone's investment. Oh my little heart is singing. Yes, as a committee member and also as a lawyer who sees what happens when committees behave badly when they don't comply.

Educated committee members are protecting everyone's investment. "Hear hear." Say the dedicated devoted committee members who are tuning in the owners corporation should chip in said someone else for some of it as it benefits them. I don't think individual committee members should pay. So some really switched on people here saying seeing training as a shared responsibility, a necessary cost of good governance. Governance is my conclusion. This is the kind of thing, this is the kind of cost that is worthy of inclusion in annual budgets and long term planning.

Okay so let's think, let's take this to the next step, right? And you'll see this in some of my recommendations, my five step action plan that is coming up. Let's take this to the next step. If we say owners corporations are going to be paying for this or at least contributing to some of the cost of this, then we've got a budget for it. We got to be ready for it.

Jen is saying, "Yes, 100%. That was my response." Jen, your response was the one that made my heart sing here. Educated committee members are protecting everyone's investment. I'd say the whole building benefits from the training. Okay, so a surprise. Those responding to this survey and 745 people responded, 38% said the owners corporation should cover the cost. I've shared that with government. Let me say and as I said earlier, they do have a copy of this report.

If they could fix one thing. This was the magic wand question. It's always a good idea to ask a magic wand question. Fascinating what you get in response. That magic wand question I asked was this. "If you could wave a magic wand and instantly fix one problem with strata committees, what would it be?" Respondents shared deep frustration, but there was also some hope, also some hope there as well.

Top three issues that respondents would instantly fix with their magic wand. Number one, improve knowledge and competence. Probably goes without saying when we think about the results that we've seen, the survey results we've seen that have come before this. Number two, eliminate personal agendas and bullying. This is something that many of us have been around for a long time, seeing more of or at least more complaints about or owners becoming more anxious about or and more owners reporting experiencing bullying from their fellow strata owners, whether that's a strata committee members or fellow owners or fellow committee members even.

We want to eliminate personal agendas and bullying. Increase participation and transparency. We want to do that as well. One of the problems that we want to fix, increase participation and transparency. And this is where we got lots of gold out of those individual survey responses. Somebody said here they are incompetent, they do whatever they like without regard to the law, they know nothing about property maintenance. That's somebody criticising their strata committee.

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Other members do nothing to educate themselves and bully you into doing things that benefit themselves. John is saying the link is back up. That's good to hear, John. Maybe just everyone take a breath and don't hit the link at the same time. We might crash it again. But many thanks team for sorting that one out. Remove members who are only in committees for control, power and personal favour.

Yes. There is no transparency, said one survey respondent. Minutes are not accurate and important information is not disclosed. How about this one more engagement by members get involved. And I'm not sure if the use of the word members there is intended to mean owners or members of the owners corporation. Everybody should be getting involved and I hear that from committee members all the time. We're doing the best that we can.

We could do with more help, we could do with more hands. We want to develop subcommittees, we want others to be involved. We want to hear their voices and their opinions as well. We're frustrated because we don't have that participation, that participation that we want. There's a strong desire, this is where the hope is. There is a strong desire for smarter, fairer, more engaged committees. A vision of competence without conflict.

Now I've caught up to you, Sydney resident, who you were much faster going through that report than others. You're suggesting there the strongest desire is for smarter, fairer, more engaged owners. A vision of competence without conflict, perhaps? Yes, all round. Let's get everybody acting in a fair way and being more engaged. Okay. Some recommendations, and these are my recommendations that I have thought about. You know, this survey was conducted in March, I've told you that.

Had a little bit of downtime the last few weeks or so. I've certainly been deep in this data and putting together some recommendations. What is a special report without a path forward, some five practical actions or a five step action plan here for us? So I say we need to develop accredited training programmes led by strata experts, programmes that are delivered by experienced strata professionals and legal experts.

We've really seen in these survey responses a strong understanding that legal knowledge is essential, that it is a fundamental and that it is indeed missing. Delivered by experienced strata professionals and legal experts, not just government bodies. We want to cover the legal duties of committee members under the legislation. Maintenance and repair obligations, financial literacy and budgeting for capital works, effective committee governance and decision making, conflict resolution and communication skills.

These programmes, and it might be a variety of them, delivered by a variety of different people. We're hearing from the survey respondents that they want to have the choice. These programmes, not just one programme, not just one provider, can be recognised as meeting the mandatory training requirements under the new legislation once it commences. There are some great people out there already as registered training organisations, as approved providers of CPD education, already with the system, with the infrastructure, with the experience and the qualifications delivering training, it may be that those are the best people to be delivering that training and giving people, strata committee members, owners, if they want to opt in, absolutely, the opportunity to complete that training and for that to comprise their compliance with this new legal obligation.

Recommendation number two, secure sustainable funding through owners corporations recognise that committee training is a core operational cost of managing a strata scheme, just like insurance or building maintenance. So we've got to encourage our owners to budget annually for training. It would be an admin fund expense. Some sample motions perhaps to support adoption of these budget items and adoption of the chosen training. There might be an option to co-fund with government grants, particularly in small schemes or in financially constrained buildings.

This is going to ensure that no individual committee member or building is financially disadvantaged for doing the right thing, for complying with the law, certainly. Recommendation number three, introduce a mandatory induction for all new committee members. So Sean, this is your point here. Something basic when we're just starting out. It wasn't just Sean, I think he made this comment as well. Others saying grant. I think it was.

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You said we need a basic quiz or something for these strata committee members to be able to do to make sure that they're actually thinking that they're actually awake. Require all newly elected committee members to complete a short induction module covering the basics of their role, their responsibilities, their legal obligations, ideally within the first 60 days of their appointment. This is a bit of an onboarding, an onboarding course, if you like core legal principles, the role of the strata manager versus the role of the committee meeting procedures and ethical conduct, where to go for help and support.

This is going to empower our new members with the aim of lifting overall committee confidence. Recommendation number four. This is pretty clear. We want flexible, ongoing learning formats. Learning available in a variety of formats, whether it's on demand videos, we want some written resources, we want downloads, we want workshops and webinars, we want an access to an online resource hub for continuous self paced learning. This reflects this strong demand in the survey results for this self directed practical education.

Recommendation number five, why don't we recognise and reward participation? A system for formal recognition of the training to encourage engagement, promote accountability, perhaps track actual compliance with the law. As somebody was saying earlier, how do we know that the right person has done the training? Do we need some digital badges or certificates for completing modules? What's the role of the Strata Hub here? Is there some public acknowledgment on the Strata Hub and or at AGMs that our committee members have completed this level of training?

Maybe there's preferential eligibility for office bearer roles. If you want an office bearer role, they can be some quite powerful roles. If you want to be the secretary, you want to be the all powerful secretary on your committee, you should need to make sure that you've done this particular training and maybe it's a higher level of training. Some of you in the survey results were saying certain training for committee members and then a different, more directed, more detailed focus, training for our office bearers, the role of the secretary, treasurer and chair.

Those who are taking on those office bearer roles need to have specific understanding of what those roles mean. This is reinforcing the value of the role and encouraging ongoing professionalism of strata committee leadership. Jen is saying, "Excellent!" Savia saying, "Committee members need ongoing training to stay abreast." Yes, I so agree with you there, Savia. Sydney residents saying, "Could you have a code of best practise on the Strata Hub to promote transparency?"

Sean M is saying, don't get me started on the Strata Hub. Yes, got it, Sean. All right, so that's not the end of the report. There are a few more concluding remarks there towards the end of the report. I have been one eye on the report here, as you might be able to tell them, one eye on the comments here on Facebook. No main feed, I got to tell you, but I have seen comments coming through saying, "The link is now working."

We've been able to get that one back up and running. So I will pop an email in your inboxes, likely again over the weekend. If you haven't yet accessed the report. I'll give you a reminder of that link and gradually we can be hitting that page and hopefully not shutting it down. What the survey results show and what this special report confirms is that strata committee members and strata owners alike are calling out for help.

You want clearer guidance, you want stronger skills, you want independent education delivered by people who understand strata from the inside out. And you're not asking for a handout. You're asking for accountability, credibility and the tools to do the job properly for the benefit of your entire community. The law has changed. Training for strata committee members is going to be mandatory. At some point in the near future, that law has been made.

But now we face a critical moment. Are we going to have to settle for tickerbox compliance? I hope not. I hope instead that we're going to seize this opportunity to build a stronger, smarter foundation for strata governance in New South Wales. That's why I created this special report as a roadmap for change. Yes, it has been given to government and it's now time for all of us, policymakers, lawmakers, strata managers, strata owners, committee members, training providers to work together to.

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To ensure that every strata committee member, and if we want to extend that out in a vision of hope for the future, that every strata owner has the knowledge and support that they need to lead with confidence in their community, I'm saying let's not wait for more conflict, for more crises or more costly mistakes. Let's empower the people who are already doing the work and give them the training that they deserve.

And I know that so many of you get this because you're already doing it. You're already living it. You are not waiting to be forced by law. You have already chosen to invest in your knowledge and your own training as owners, as committee members, as strata managers. And of course I'm talking here to our members, those of you who are part of the Your Strata Property online membership community.

Because what these survey results show, that we need what you want, what you're asking for, what this report recommends, drawn from the data, it is almost exactly what we've been doing inside the membership for nearly 10 years now. You want downloadable templates and legal resources. You want on demand video lessons. You want live online workshops. You want in person training. You want training led by subject matter experts that's practical and based in real experience.

You want access to an online hub for continuous, self paced learning. Well, welcome to the Your Strata Property membership and we know that this works. I've heard from so many of you over the years about how your buildings function better with less conflict, fewer mistakes, more confidence because you've had access to this education and support. So if you're not yet with us inside the membership, you will find an invitation at the end of the special report to join us.

The place to go, as always, is stratamembership.com training will be mandatory. That law has already been made, so why not get a head start? We still don't know exactly what the government mandated training will look like. We do know what it should look like and we know what it needs to include if we're going to properly grapple with the real problems facing our strata communities today. So I do encourage you get a head start on your training.

You've got nothing to lose. Join us inside the membership and you will be able to do that. You've got a whole lot to gain for you and your communities. So many of you tuning in here today. I still see all of those eyes there. Thank you so much for joining me for this special session, the launch of our strata committees in crisis special report. I'm just going to swing back around for the last time to those comments again.

Lois saying, "Extra training for office bearers." Yes, you like that idea, Lois. Sharna, you are most welcome. Joanne saying, "Thank you. Greatly appreciate this resource." Stephen saying, "Our committee currently have training with our strata management company is paid by the owners corporation. They determine the topics and has been running for more than 12 months." Love it, love it. Warms my heart, Stephen, to hear that. It's possible. It's possible.

I've certainly been approached for that style of training for strata committees as well. Definitely there are forward thinking committees encouraged by forward thinking strata managers who are already getting that head start. I think it's great and I want to hear more and more of that. Wendy saying, "Thank you." Thank you, Greg. Deb's saying, "Would there be different training levels based on lot numbers or if the property is residential and commercial?"

Yes, lot numbers is an interesting one, isn't it, Deb? Because yes, small schemes, two lots, four lots. Yes. Definitely have their own set of problems and yes, commercial would. It's a completely different ball game, isn't it? Yes. I'm just thinking what commercial owners. There'd be some things that perhaps they don't necessarily need to be across and other things they absolutely do need to be across that may not impact residential owners.

Thank you, Sydney resident and thank you for your participation. And Col, Kristen, you are most welcome. Okay, Deb saying, "It's definitely a great resource at YSP." Thank you very much, Deb, for that. "It's a good read," says Luke. Jen saying, "Thank you doesn't seem enough. An ongoing lifesaver." Stan, thank you very much. "Very informative," from Stan and thank you, John. All right, I'm going to let you go into your Friday afternoon.

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The link is here if you need to head back and try that one again, yourstrataproperty.com.au/specialreport to get your copy of that special report, you're going to see more of this. This is the launch, guys. There's a lot more that you're going to see online being discussed about this special report. We'll be pulling out some particular aspects of the report to be focusing on over the next little while.

So it ain't going anywhere. And keep your comments coming. Thank you, everybody. Bye for now.

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Demystifying the legal complexities of apartment living.