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Flat chat hopes to end strata bullying

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BULLYING and harassment are rife in Gold Coast bodies corporate, according to one of the state's leading lawyers.

Hynes Legal practice director and strata title expert Frank Higginson said the Coast's bodies corporate brought out behaviour you wouldn't condone in a classroom.

A mixture of a lack of understanding over the obligations of a body corporate and the explosion of access, thanks to social media, has led to situations he said where people fire from the hip and worry about the consequences later.

As an example he gave the case of the pet galah.

"We had a case where a body corporate wanted to ban a person from keeping their pet galah in their property," Mr Higginson said.

"The body corporate just wanted to kick it out and it was a classic example of the body corporate going over the top, shoot first and ask questions later kind of thing."

Sadly, for the body corporate, Mr Higginson said there was no such thing as a pet-free building in Queensland anymore.

"Once you go inside your front door the body corporate can't regulate

what's going on as long as it doesn't interfere with other people's enjoyment of their lots," he said.

"This galah had been a family pet for 13 years and you can't ban a pet because you think it may bark or screech at some time in the future."

Mr Higginson said people, particularly those on a body corporate, need to keep issues in context.

"After all, everyone's home is their castle and when you are emotionally involved, it does create a mess," he said.

"In this space people fire at will and there are no consequences as far as they're concerned."

Mr Higginson will be one of the panellists at the Smart Strata Gold Coast Seminar dealing with Bullying, Abuse, Harassment, Nuisance and Discrimination (BAHND) in Strata being held on Saturday at the Mantra Leg-

ends Hotel.

He will join commissioner for body corporate and community management Chris Irons, acting commissioner Esther Blest and their representatives as they define what is BAHND in strata. They will provide helpful tips on what to do if you are on the receiving end of BAHND and where the line should be drawn.

For more information visit smartstrata.com/category/events



**Hynes Legal practice director
Frank Higginson.**