



## PBSA Stage

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### **Beyond Bricks and Mortar. Creating a Holistic Student Experience**

Moderator: Aceil Haddad, founder, MATT PR

Panellists:

- Hannah Chappatte, founder and CEO, Hybr
- Sarah Canning, co-founder, The Property Marketing Strategists
- Martina Pardo, founder, A Designer at Heart

The discussion focused on enhancing the student experience in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). Key points included the importance of peer-led mental health support, integrated into rent, and the use of data to monitor student behaviour. Interior design should feel homely and flexible, avoiding gimmicks. Cost-effective solutions like twin rooms and shared bathrooms were proposed. Technology can aid in flat mate matching and social space creation. Safety concerns were highlighted, with international students prioritizing city safety and domestic students valuing building security. Innovation and collaboration between disciplines were emphasized to improve PBSA design and meet diverse student needs.

Other points included the need to develop differentiated product offerings to cater to the diverse needs of international and domestic students.

Opportunities to incorporate more flexible and homely community spaces within PBSA developments were also discussed, as well as the potential for mixed-use developments that can generate additional revenue to subsidize student accommodation costs.

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## **The future of student living: trends and disruptions**

Presentation by Sarah Canning and Deenie Lee of The Property Marketing Strategists

The presentation focused on the future of student accommodation, highlighting insights from the Youth Forum. Key findings include the need for better-maintained, social spaces, and personalized rooms. Students emphasized the importance of storage, en-suite bathrooms, and flexible communal areas. They also value technology features like noise-cancelling study areas and secure lockers. The survey revealed that all-inclusive bills and laundry services are preferred. Contract flexibility and extended stay options were also highlighted as important. The discussion underscored the need for innovative solutions to improve student living experiences, addressing both functional and social needs.

Other points included reviewing pricing strategies to align with what students value most, such as en-suite bathrooms and private kitchens; offering more flexible contract lengths, including the option to stay after graduation; and ways to better promote the features and amenities already available in PBSA buildings.

Implementing quiet zones or rooms for neurodiverse students or those needing a space to reset and Investigating technology solutions that can help match students with compatible flat mates both came up as possible actions arising from the research.

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