

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2016

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT ALLIANCE CALLS ON BUILDING MINISTERS TO FAST-TRACK BUILDING PRODUCTS REFORMS

The Construction Product Alliance (CPA) today called on the meeting of Australian Building Ministers, to be held in Perth on Wednesday 14 December, to fast-track reforms to legislative and administrative processes to address the ongoing issue of non-conforming building products.

Speaking about the issue was CPA Steering Committee Chair, Lindsay Le Compte, who said that the building and construction industry was growing impatient at the slow pace of reform action being taken by governments across the country to address the ongoing issues.

“Non-conforming building products continue to be a major worry for Australia’s building and construction industry and the community as a whole. We know the risk to health and safety from products that do not comply with Australian Standards. We also know that these products have the potential to cause construction businesses massive costs in retrofitting and repairing buildings and other structures,” Mr Le Compte said.

“Three years ago The Australian Industry Group released a report that raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of Australia’s approach to ensuring the quality and safety of building and construction products. As stated at the time by Ai Group CEO, Innes Willox, the report put a spotlight on the design and effectiveness of the conformance framework – the standards and regulations - that we rely on to ensure that products are fit for purpose.”

Mr Le Compte went on to say that the report identified that Australia’s conformance frameworks needed to be effective to ensure there is a fair and level playing field for the businesses that do adhere to relevant standards and regulations.

The industry responded by establishing the CPA to assist governments to address the complex issues that the country faced in developing a holistic response to the problem. The CPA provided governments with a suite of suggested reforms that it considered would be acceptable to industry and consumers, Mr Le Compte said.

“The CPA was pleased that governments referred the issue to the Australian Building Ministers Forum which established in July 2015 a Senior Officers’ Group (SOG) to report within 6 months on ways to minimise the risks to consumers, businesses and the community associated with the failure of building products,” Mr Le Compte said.

The SOG developed strategies to address non-conforming building products and these strategies were considered and given in-principle agreement by the Building Ministers’ Forum on 19 February 2016. Subsequently, the SOG released a discussion paper to seek feedback on the best way to implement

the strategies. Submissions on the paper closed in April 2016, and the SOG has been analysing the feedback since that time to develop an implementation roadmap.

"Three years on from the Ai Group report and we have no clear roadmap from governments as to how to deal with the issues, yet industry and the community continue to encounter product safety and compliance problems. So, the CPA and the industry looks forward with anticipation to this week's meeting of the Building Ministers' Forum to set the resolution roadmap we have been waiting for," Mr Le Compte said.

Further information

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