

5 Years After Grenfell, Progress Made but More Action Needed on Combustible Cladding

Tuesday 14 June 2022: Property peak body Strata Community Association (SCA) is pleased with action across Australia on combustible cladding five years on from the notorious Grenfell Tower fire, however, believes more needs to be done and calls on all states and territories to work to ensure building safety nationally.

Whilst most state and territory governments had begun taking action, only a few have begun the finalisation of their programs, which is obviously rectification and the removal of dangerous products.

SCA National President Chris Duggan was pleased to see each jurisdiction was broadly aware of the problem and taking action but said that only removal of these dangerous products would see the end of these issues.

“Each jurisdiction has made some progress, I am pleased to see it is on everyone’s radar, despite this I would love nothing more than to see all of this stuff off of affected buildings across the country,” said Mr Duggan.

“Most jurisdictions have banned the relevant dangerous products, it is important to note that these products were generally used for purely aesthetic reasons and did not enhance the structural integrity of buildings, there is no reason for them to be placed on a building ever again.”

Mr Duggan said he was pleased with the progress made by the two largest states, New South Wales and Victoria.

“In my home state of New South Wales, Project Remediate, a joint venture between the New South Wales Cladding Taskforce and Fire and Rescue New South Wales has audited over 185,000 building records and inspected over 4,000 buildings to date,” said Mr Duggan.

“Rectification works are underway for the most at risk buildings and I am pleased to see that the Minister believes rectification of all high risk buildings will occur by the end of 2023, this is a great step forward for New South Wales. I hope that New South Wales will get any remaining cladding off buildings after this date as quickly as possible.”

“The Victorian Government has put \$600 million on the table through Cladding Safety Victoria and will potentially provide funding for many of the higher risk, class 2 residential buildings authorities have identified after a state-wide audit. “

“Victoria has a clear 10 step process for rectification, and we hope the roll out of this program continues to go well. The scale of investment by the Victorian Government is extremely pleasing to see, and we encourage whoever wins the election later this year down South to build on the progress already made and get every Victorian building resident 100% safe as quickly as possible. “

Mr Duggan said Queensland was lagging behind the other East Coast states but was pleased to see the issue was at least on their radar.

“Queensland Parliament recently passed a bill to make enforcement of current compliance provisions easier, despite this, there is no government program on the horizon as yet to help affected buildings rectify. I hope to see something significant from the Queensland Government in this regard very soon,” said Mr Duggan.

“Our Queensland members have navigated the highly bureaucratic Combustible Cladding Checklist over a four-year period now- we just hope rectification is on the agenda and look forward to working with the Queensland Government to deliver in this regard.”

Mr Duggan noted the scale of the problem was nowhere near as large in any of the other jurisdictions across Australia, but this doesn't mean safety first shouldn't be applied there and the scale of investment by governments needed to reflect that.

"With more than 90 affected buildings, I really hope the ACT Government accelerates their program which is already underway. This program, known as the 'Private Buildings Cladding Scheme,' is a great start but needs more investment from the ACT government to assess buildings. A rebate increase from the current cap of \$20,000 would be welcome and we would love more details announced about the upcoming loan scheme, strata in the Capital needs certainty urgently," said Mr Duggan.

"South Australia is very much at the starting line with their program, and we urge the new Government there to get moving as quickly as possible and put this at the top of their priority list. Safety first is something we can all understand. We believe significant funding is needed and given only 28 buildings were identified in their audit, it is a problem the new Government should be able to clean up quickly we hope."

"West Australia started with a smaller problem than the Eastern States and has made rapid strides. There are only a handful of buildings remaining and the Government has made tremendous progress. We encourage them to work hard to get the last of the cladding off and be the first state to declare mission accomplished on this issue. "

Mr Duggan said that whilst all Australian jurisdictions were aware of the problem and had begun the process to fixing it, he simply wanted to see apartment dwellers safe across the Nation.

"The ultimate solution to this problem in all states is to get these products off affected buildings. It is important and fair that the cost is also minimised to innocent owners and that strata managers are helped navigate the technicalities of this issue. We believe strata will become the dominant form of housing in this country within our lifetimes and we want all jurisdictions to enhance confidence in these buildings by ensuring everyone in them is safe," said Mr Duggan.

[Click here to read SCA's Dangerous Cladding in Australia: State of Play report](#)

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About Strata Community Association

[Strata Community Association \(SCA\)](#) is the peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management (also referred to as Strata Management, Strata Title or Owners Corporations Management) in Australia and New Zealand.

Our 5,000 individual and corporate members include strata/body corporate managers, support staff, owners' representatives and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

We believe in taking action with urgency in order to raise public awareness about some of the most pressing issues facing today's society. Please join us by supporting our efforts to make a measurable difference for the community.