

Communique for the Building Ministers' Forum

31 July 2015

The Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) met in Melbourne today to agree on a range of significant outcomes that will benefit the Australian building and construction industry and the wider community.

The BMF shares industry's concerns about the health and safety risks posed by potentially non-conforming building products and materials making their way into the Australian building and construction supply chain and the non-compliant use of building products.

To address these issues, Ministers established a Working Group of senior officers to report to Ministers within six months on strategies to minimise the risks to consumers, businesses and the community associated with failure of building products to conform to relevant laws and regulations and at the point of import.

Ministers also agreed that, to ensure that community health and safety is effectively maintained, the ABCB will investigate options for a possible mandatory scheme for high risk building products with life safety implications and report to Ministers within six months. In addition, the ABCB will consider and report on possible amendments to the National Construction Code to require fire sprinkler protection to covered balconies of multi-storey buildings.

The Forum also agreed to limit variations to the National Construction Code. In particular, Ministers noted industry's concerns about the costs and delays arising from unnecessary and inconsistent local government regulation of building activity. Ministers resolved to reduce local government red tape by removing the opportunity for local planning schemes to exceed the requirements of the National Construction Code. Through these activities, Ministers renewed their commitment to working collaboratively towards a more efficient and effective regulatory environment for the building and construction industry.