

Building Ministers' Forum

19 February 2016

Communiqué

The Building Ministers' Forum met at the Gold Coast today and progressed a number of significant reforms which will benefit the Australian building industry and the wider Australian community.

Ministers agreed to work cooperatively to implement a range of measures to address safety issues associated with high risk building products. This work, to be undertaken by the Australian Building Codes Board, arose in response to the Lacrosse fire and is informed by the findings of the Victorian Building Authority's External Wall Cladding Audit in Melbourne. In particular, Ministers agreed in principle that the Australian Building Codes Board will support measures to address the risks specifically associated with cladding used in high rise buildings.

In addition, Ministers requested that the Australian Building Codes Board further develop proposed additional actions to address the wider issue of non-compliant use of building products. Senior officials were tasked to undertake further work with the Australian Building Codes Board to review the National Construction Code related to high risk building products. A report on these matters will be provided to Ministers at the next Building Ministers' Forum.

Ministers also agreed to the strategies set out in a report from senior officials from all jurisdictions, aimed at addressing the risks associated with non-conforming building products. This includes improving intergovernmental cooperation and enhancing industry and consumer awareness of non-conforming building products. Building Ministers accepted the offer from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection with assistance from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, to establish relevant information sharing between the Commonwealth, states and territories with a resolution to fast track and report within two months.

In principle support was also given for improvements to the regulatory framework to enhance the powers of building regulators to respond to instances of non-conforming building products, developing education strategies to better inform consumers and building industry participants and encourage greater responsibility in the safe use of building products.

The Building Ministers' Forum will continue to take action and work collaboratively to ensure building practitioners have the right tools to comply with the National Construction Code and ensure Australians can continue to have confidence in the safety of buildings.