



MEDIA RELEASE

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Welcome action ahead on non-conforming building products

“Ai Group welcomes the commitment made by Building Ministers to address non-conforming building products. The increasing incidence of non-conforming product in the market place - including recent reports of up to 64 building sites with asbestos-tainted concrete fibre sheeting - show that the problem is only worsening,” Australian Industry Group Chief Executive, Innes Willox said today.

“After last Friday’s Building Ministers’ Forum Ministers clearly acknowledged the problem and committed to take important steps with key players to deal with the issue.

“Governments have a central role in terms of leadership and regulatory powers and the Building Ministers’ Communique puts welcome emphasis on the importance of cooperation with industry and consumers.

“Ai Group’s recent report *‘The quest for a level playing field: The non-conforming building products dilemma’* first highlighted the need for stakeholders to work together to solve this problem.

“Ai Group applauds the move to improve information sharing between government agencies including the ACCC and Border Force - particularly the initiative to fast track and report within 2 months. Ai Group encourages Building Ministers to consider arrangements for accepting non-conforming incident reports from industry and supports the Construction Product Alliance’s call for a confidential reporting system to be established. Such an approach has proved valuable in other countries.

“The Lacrosse building fire in Melbourne’s Docklands highlighted that the quality and safety of buildings can be adversely impacted by conforming product installed in situations that it was not designed for. The ensuing audit of 170 buildings by the Victorian Building Authority showed that 51% of buildings did not comply with the external cladding requirements of the National Construction Code.

“This has reinforced Ai Group’s view that surveillance and audit by regulators are the most critical elements to ensuring product conformance and compliance. With declining resourcing of our regulators and an increasing incidence of unscrupulous suppliers, the current building regulatory system is struggling to adapt to the new environment characterised by complex global supply chains.

“Ai Group encourages Building Ministers to take definitive action,” Mr Willox said.

Media Contact: Tony Melville – 0419 190 347