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MEDIA RELEASE

Senate Inquiry into Non-conforming Building Products Gets Green Light from Housing Industry

The Housing Industry Association (HIA) has welcomed the announcement of a Senate inquiry into non-conforming building products, following recent high profile product failures.

“Building products and materials that don’t meet the required standard in Australia have been a growing problem in the community for some time,” said HIA Senior Executive Director, Building Development & Environment, Kristin Brookfield.

“It is overdue that a public inquiry is held to ascertain the extent of the problem, the impact on the Australian economy, the risks to the safety of builders and consumers, and most importantly, what can be done about it.”

HIA has previously called for a Senate Inquiry into non-conforming building products, following the launch of a consumer awareness campaign by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) into faulty electrical cables.

“The apparent ease with which products are making it on to the Australian market, whether via importers or directly through consumers, is concerning.”

“We are simply asking that all products meet the standards required by law and that the many manufacturers and suppliers that do the right thing are not being disadvantaged.”

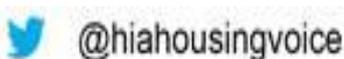
“This inquiry is one of the first steps towards these goals,” concluded Ms Brookfield.

The motion for an inquiry was moved by Senators Nick Xenophon, John Madigan and Jackie Lambie and will be conducted by the Senate Economics References Committee. The Committee will report to the Senate by 12 October 2015.

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Terms of Reference for the Senate inquiry into non-conforming building products, to be conducted by the Economics Reference Committee and to report by 12 October 2015.

The Committee will investigate:

- (a) the economic impact of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry;
- (b) the impact of non-conforming building products on:
 - (i) industry supply chains, including importers, manufacturers and fabricators,
 - (ii) workplace safety and any associated risks,
 - (iii) costs passed on to customers, including any insurance and compliance costs, and
 - (iv) the overall quality of Australian buildings;
- (c) possible improvements to the current regulatory frameworks for ensuring that building products conform to Australian standards, with particular reference to the effectiveness of:
 - (i) policing and enforcement of existing regulations,
 - (ii) independent verification and assessment systems,
 - (iii) surveillance and screening of imported building products,
 - (iv) restrictions and penalties imposed on non-conforming building products; and
- (d) any other related matters.