

Safer Buildings for Queensland

What government is doing to enhance the safety of Queenslanders

The Non-Conforming Building Products Audit Taskforce

The Minister for Housing and Public Works established the Taskforce in June 2017 after receiving information about buildings with potential non-conforming combustible cladding, and heightened international concern following the fatal fire at the Grenfell Tower in London.

The Taskforce combines the expertise of staff from the Department of Housing and Public Works (HPW), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC).

Through a series of targeted audits, the Taskforce is working to identify government and privately-owned buildings of possible concern constructed or renovated since 1994 when Aluminium Composite Panel (ACP) cladding products were first introduced into the Queensland building market.



Government-owned building checks

The Taskforce began by assessing almost 28,000 Queensland Government building approval records held by HPW.

The Taskforce also approached 21 government agencies, six statutory-owned corporations and 12 government-owned corporations seeking to identify all government-owned buildings that may be within scope based on their construction date and external material type.

The government buildings brought to the attention of the Taskforce and determined to be in scope were then audited by an internal building certifier against a range of factors to determine if the building had potentially combustible cladding. To date, the Taskforce has undertaken assessments of 982 Queensland Government buildings. Any building where potentially combustible cladding was identified, was referred back to the owning agency for further investigation.

Privately-owned building checks

The Taskforce has faced complex issues in determining the scope of potentially combustible cladding on privately-owned Queensland buildings. Limited enforcement powers required a different approach in dealing with the private sector. QFES, QBCC and Local Government

Authorities (LGAs) each offer a range of powers but much of the responsibility for building safety and compliance rests with the building's owner.

As an initial step, QFES undertook a review of over 42,000 records of potentially in scope buildings. From this, the Taskforce identified a list of approximately 12,000 buildings that are currently being cross-checked with their relevant LGA.

Based on experience from the government-owned building checks, it is likely that approximately 10 per cent of these 12,000 privately-owned buildings across Queensland may contain potentially combustible ACP cladding and as such require some form of remedial treatment.

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What else is being done?

Fire engineers are registered with the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (BPEQ) and are required under statute to maintain competence through continuing professional development (CPD) and to act professionally in the public interest. Building certifiers are licenced by QBCC and are required under statute to maintain competence through CPD and to act professionally in the public interest. The Taskforce has assisted in the development of CPD courses in conjunction with local and international academic institutions. The first CPD course was run in early 2018.

The Taskforce is working with fire performance experts from the University of Queensland on the development of a materials library. This library will help to support industry professionals engaged by building owners to identify the cladding product used and develop cost-effective rectification approaches. In essence, fire engineers, designers, architects and building certifiers will be able to quickly and cost-effectively generate comprehensive risk assessments for cladding products used or planned to be incorporated in buildings. Access to the materials library will provide for early intervention by these industry practitioners during the design, consultation and planning of new buildings or building upgrades.

HPW, QFES and QBCC websites are being kept up to date with relevant information to better help industry and the community have the most clear and concise understanding of the issues surrounding combustible cladding.