

BUILDING MINISTERS' FORUM

COMMUNIQUE – 18 JULY 2019

The Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) met today in Sydney to discuss a range of issues facing the building and construction sector. Ministers also met with industry representatives and discussed matters including professional indemnity insurance and implementation of the *Building Confidence* report.

Building Ministers agreed to a national approach to the implementation of the *Building Confidence* report. It was noted that many issues are historical and will continue to be addressed as the need arises. However, Ministers acknowledged the issues of the past won't cripple the future of the sector and, to that end, Ministers committed to work together to build a stronger building and construction sector in Australia.

Building Ministers will strengthen the Australian Building Codes Board

The strategic plan of the Australian Building Codes Board will be recast to better reflect the current challenges in the building sector.

The Australian Building Codes Board will be expanded to include greater representation and engagement from industry.

States and territories retain responsibility for building and construction matters

The Commonwealth will continue to help facilitate on the clear understanding that the states and territories have powers and responsibilities to regulate building matters. States and territories will take responsibility for their individual paths to remediation and rectification.

All jurisdictions support a national framework to address the issues identified in the Shergold Weir *Building Confidence* Report

To achieve this an implementation team will be established, for a period of time, as part of the Australian Building Codes Board. The implementation team will be tasked with developing and publicly reporting on a national framework for the consistent implementation of recommendations of the Shergold Weir *Building Confidence* report, as well as the design, construction and certification of complex buildings.

Industry are invited to contribute to the development of the framework through in-kind secondments to the implementation team.

The national framework will be responsive to the most efficient mechanism to achieve the desired outcome and will result in amendments to the National Construction Code (NCC) and/or the development of other guidance as required.

Adoption of the framework and ultimate implementation of the *Building Confidence* report recommendations will remain the responsibility of the state and territory governments.

States and territories will work towards a coordinated approach to professional indemnity insurance

To achieve this a professional indemnity options paper, developed in collaboration between New South Wales and Queensland, will be released for targeted consultation with insurers and the building industry. The options paper will set out a pathway for professional standards schemes and alternative insurance options. Outcomes of consultation will be reported back to the Building Ministers' Forum by September 2019.

The building ministers called on insurers to meet their existing obligations and lift their exclusions on professional indemnity insurance following this strong action by states and territories.

Silicosis

Building Ministers noted their continuing concern about the re-emergence of the illness of silicosis and the devastating impact that this disease has on sufferers and their families. Ministers agreed to support the work being pursued by the COAG Health Council and Work, Health and Safety Ministers to reduce and respond to instances of silicosis.

ACT Builder Licensing Exams

Ministers noted the work of the ACT in introducing examinations for Builders' Licenses, and agreed that the Commonwealth would seek information from Australian Skills Quality Authority on planned audits of building and construction qualifications, the potential to include these in the ASQA's work plan, expediting this where necessary and will invite ASQA to the next meeting of the BMF to report on this.

Technical specification for permanent labelling of Aluminium Composite Panels

Ministers also welcomed the release of a consultation paper by Standards Australia on a technical specification for permanent labelling of aluminium composite panels (ACPs).

Energy efficiency

Ministers also agreed to the development of enhanced energy efficiency provisions for residential buildings in the National Construction Code, informed by the COAG Energy Council's trajectory for low energy buildings. The ABCB will shortly release a paper for public consultation on options for implementing these provisions in the NCC.

NCC out-of-cycle amendment

The BMF signalled their intent to undertake an out-of-cycle amendment to the NCC to introduce enhanced fire safety measures for early childhood centres in high-rise buildings. These changes will be progressed in coming months through a public Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Next BMF meeting

The BMF will meet again in December 2019.

BMF Industry Roundtable



Pictured:

The Hon Karen Andrews MP, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology;

The Hon Kevin Anderson MP, the NSW Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation;

The Hon Richard Wynne MP, VIC Minister for Planning;

The Hon Mick de Brenni MP, QLD Minister for Housing and Public Works;

The Hon Stephan Knoll MP, SA Minister for Planning;

The Hon Elise Archer MP, TAS Minister for Building and Construction;

Gordon Ramsay MLA, ACT Minister for Building Quality Improvement;

The Hon Eva Lawler MLA, NT Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics;

Brett Mace, Australian Institute of Building Surveyors;

Jonathan Russell, Engineers Australia;

David Burnell, Australian Institute of Building;

Robert Whelan, Insurance Council of Australia;

Darren Pavic, Bovill Risk & Insurance Consultants;

Kristin Brookfield, Housing Industry Association;

Julia Cambage, Australian Institute of Architects;

Ken Morrison, Property Council of Australia;

Andrew Lumsden and Roxane Marcelle-Shaw, Professional Standards Councils;

Bronwyn Weir, co-author of the Building Confidence Report;

Fiona Doherty, Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors;

Scott Williams, Fire Protection Association Australia;

Denita Wawn, Master Builders Australia;

Nicola Grayson, Consult Australia;

Benjamin McDonald, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;