

BUILDING MINISTERS' FORUM

27 APRIL 2018 – COMMUNIQUÉ

The Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) held its first meeting for 2018 today in Melbourne, to decide on a range of significant measures that will benefit the Australian building, plumbing and construction industry and the wider Australian community.

Ministers welcomed Professor Peter Shergold AC and Ms Bronwyn Weir's final report '*Building Confidence – Improving the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia*' (the Report).

Professor Shergold and Ms Weir were commissioned by the BMF to independently assess the broader compliance and enforcement problems within the building and construction systems across Australia.

The BMF acknowledged the significant work undertaken by Professor Shergold and Ms Weir and the valuable input provided by governments and industry throughout their consultation processes.

The Report's conclusions and recommendations provide the BMF with a significant package of reforms intended to strengthen the effective implementation of the National Construction Code (NCC).

The Report is available on the BMF webpage on the Department of Industry, Innovation and Sciences' website at www.industry.gov.au/BMF.

The BMF provided in-principle support for the Report. Ministers will examine the Report's findings and recommendations in detail and have agreed to discuss future directions and next steps at the next BMF meeting.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to prevent the inappropriate use of potentially hazardous aluminium cladding on Australian buildings. The SOG will be consulting with industry on possible options for a new system of permanent labelling for cladding products.

Ministers agreed that given the urgency of this issue, the consultation will be undertaken during May and June 2018, with a report of the consultations and the preferred approach to be provided to Ministers at their next meeting.

Ministers noted the significant work being undertaken by jurisdictions to identify and address non-compliant cladding.

Ministers have asked the SOG to report on existing responsibilities of parties to meet the cost of rectification of non-compliant use of combustible cladding and remedies, including the rights of parties to recover costs from those responsible. The SOG will report to a future BMF meeting.

The BMF was briefed by Mr John Murray AM on the national *Review of Security of Payment Laws: Building Trust and Harmony* (the Review). The independent Review will be released by the Commonwealth shortly. The States, Territories and the Commonwealth will consider the Review recommendations, in consultation with the relevant portfolio areas in each jurisdiction and informed by the existing work of jurisdictions, and come back to the next meeting of the BMF with advice on how to respond to the Report.

The BMF agreed the scope of the Australian Building Codes Board's (ABCB) national Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) to examine the proposed inclusion of minimum accessibility standards for housing in the NCC.

The ABCB will now develop an options paper, incorporating input from the Disability Reform Council, for the BMF to consider at its next meeting.

Several important issues relating to the NCC were also discussed, including work on the development of the 2019 edition (NCC 2019). NCC 2019 will be the first new edition since NCC 2016, following the BMF's decision to introduce a three-year amendment cycle to improve efficiency and enhance stability for industry.

The BMF also discussed the challenges in relation to addressing fire safety in child care, including considering a possible early out-of-cycle amendment.

Ministers noted that energy efficiency measures for residential buildings will feature in the proposed 2018-19 ABCB work plan.

Ministers have confirmed their commitment to cooperation on national building reform through the adoption of a new [BMF Charter](#). The BMF Charter sets out the role of the BMF in overseeing governance of the built environment, including on:

- harmonisation of building regulations and standards as outlined in the IGA for the ABCB;
- collaboration on compliance and enforcement, and
- national policy issues affecting Australia's building and construction industries.