

# **BUILDING MINISTERS' FORUM**

**14 December 2016**

## *Communiqué*

The Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) met in Perth on 14 December 2016 and agreed on a range of significant measures that will benefit the Australian building, plumbing and construction industry and the wider Australian community.

The BMF endorsed the implementation of a package of measures to address the health and safety risks associated with the non-compliant use of cladding in high rise buildings. These reforms will be progressed through the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) and will provide continued confidence in Australia's building industry.

Ministers also agreed to accelerate the work of the Senior Officers' Group (SOG) in relation to addressing the health and safety risks posed by non-conforming building products (NCBPs). A report on the outcomes of the SOG work will be published in the first half of 2017. The BMF also agreed that the SOG would explore the practicality and benefits of a third-party certification for building product conformity. In addition, the SOG will provide ongoing advice to the BMF on policy matters affecting the building and construction sector including harmonisation and non-compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC).

Consistent with the Commonwealth's National Business Simplification Initiative, Ministers agreed to update the BMF on any work they have undertaken to map local government or other interventions in building and construction along with the proposed solutions to minimise any unintended adverse impacts that might arise from the interventions.

Ministers understand the key role that standards play in building regulation and will continue working towards ways to improve access to Australian Standards. The BMF supported the work that Standards Australia is undertaking to facilitate lower cost and greater access to standards.

In addition, Ministers discussed important issues relating to accessibility, including universal and accessible housing, and agreed to have further discussions on the costs and benefits of applying a minimum accessibility standard for private dwellings in Australia at the next BMF meeting.

Ministers noted the initiatives being implemented by jurisdictions in providing accessible adult sanitary facilities in public buildings and noted that the Review of the *Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010* received a large number of submissions in respect of this initiative, which will be addressed in the Australian Government response to the Review.

Ministers share the concerns of the Australian industry and community about the use of products containing asbestos in Australia. The findings of the Western Australian Building Commission's interim audit report for the Perth Children's Hospital were noted and Ministers agreed that all tiers of Government should consider the findings from this report.

Given the key role of the ABCB in progressing the national building reform agenda, Ministers agreed to an examination of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the ABCB to ensure it is fully aligned and reflective of the Building Ministers' priorities and policy commitments. It was further agreed that a revised IGA will be in place by 30 June 2017.

Ministers also agreed that the ABCB future workplan would include research into possible measures to reduce jumping suicide from buildings.

Today's meeting demonstrates the value of the BMF as an important platform for all governments to work together to ensure that Australia continues to have a safe and healthy built environment that the Australian community can continue to have confidence in. The BMF will reconvene in Sydney in March 2017 to continue this important national dialogue.