

Media Release – INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE

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Attention Editors/Property Editors/Chiefs of Staff

FLAMMABLE CLADDING CRISIS EMERGES IN QUEENSLAND, AS BRISBANE CBD DEVELOPMENT DEEMED “UNSAFE FOR OCCUPANCY”

CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE BAN ON CLADDING PRODUCT, CONSIDER PENALTIES FOR CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS WHO CONTINUE TO USE IT

Queensland's \$100 billion strata property sector – backed by the National peak body -- is concerned that the flammable cladding crisis plaguing Melbourne's CBD is getting a foothold in Queensland.

The product at the centre of these concerns has been blamed for major high rise fires both in Australia and overseas and industry leaders say the Queensland State Government must act urgently to ensure this doesn't happen locally.

The Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works' decision to block the Iglu development in Brisbane's CBD from getting an occupancy permit has sparked concern from the strata sector. (Editors – see attached article)

Built for the student accommodation market, the Iglu development has recently been denied occupancy permits by local government stemming from concerns over the use of potentially flammable and illegal aluminum cladding on its exterior.

Strata Community Australia (Qld) is the peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Queensland and President Simon Barnard says products like this threaten every single one of the 420,000 lots in the State.

“We estimate that there are over \$1.2 million Queenslanders living in strata properties, and with that number growing before our eyes, we can't afford for new developments to pose such a grave risk to public safety.”

“In response, we want to see an immediate ban placed on the use of unsafe building products known to the State authorities, to ensure we don't have a “sleeping giant” on our hands.”

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Mr Barnard says the Federal Government ordered a Senate Inquiry into the spread of unsafe building products last September, and a month out from its completion, this Queensland emergence has triggered calls for action.

“When we’re talking about fire risks in our biggest, newest buildings, we can’t have a complacent situation where the decision makers in one spot wait for a group further up the chain to take care of business.”

“Yes, the Senate inquiry will be an important step in how we protect local industry from illegal, unsafe construction imports but we are adamant that the State Government has a role to play too.”

“An immediate ban on the product and penalties for those who subsequently continue to use it would be a suitable response.”

CEO of Strata Community Australia’s national body, Kim Henshaw, points to how the instances in Melbourne were handled.

“Last year, the Victorian Building Authority issued audits into all major developments, working back over a 10 year period, so together with our Queensland body, we urge the Queensland State Government to match that action, and then go one better.”

“There is enough awareness within the industry for this product now that we don’t accept builders are simply “unaware” to its use.”

“If shortcuts are being taken in local construction, we encourage the relevant State authorities to throw the book at anyone doing so.”

Mr Barnard says beyond the obvious safety risks, it’s important that the State Government acts quickly for performance of the local property sector.

“It’s very simple, the properties that house Queenslanders need to be ready to live in straight up rather than having to undertake works that should be in from the start.”

“When we start having issues of confidence around the quality of our developments, that’s when the market and greater sectors will struggle.”

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