

## Media Release

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Attention Chief of Staff / Property Editor

### **PEAK STRATA BODY SUPPORTS LEGAL CALLS FOR URGENT BUILDING INSPECTIONS IN QUEENSLAND, AMID FIRE FEARS**

### **BUILDING BLAZE SENDS A WARNING TO QUEENSLAND ABOUT CHEAP CHINA IMPORTS**

### **POSSIBILITY OF CLASS ACTIONS & WIDESPREAD LITIGATIONS**

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Dozens if not hundreds of apartment buildings in Queensland and Australia's \$500 Billion strata industry could be at risk due to the possible use of unsafe products in Australian construction.

Some legal firms are looking at the possibility of class actions against manufacturers and others if unsafe products are found to be in buildings.

The peak industry body for Strata and Community Title Management in Queensland, Strata Community Australia (Qld) says it is closely monitoring threats of litigation and is calling on owners' corporations and bodies corporate to immediately carry out building inspections as fears rise concerning the widespread use of unsafe, imported building materials.

Following an investigation into a fire at the Lacrosse apartment block in Docklands, Melbourne, there are concerns that a commonly used external aluminium cladding product poses a very serious fire risk to the construction and strata sectors in Queensland. (Editor Note: see attached story)

The product at the centre of these warnings is Alucobest, a significantly cheaper, Chinese imported substitute for the more fire-retardant and non-combustible Australian made, Alucobond.

After reports that this product has been a popular choice for Queensland high-rise apartment builders over the past 10 years, Strata Community Australia (Qld) President, Simon Barnard, says it is imperative that owners' corporations take immediate steps to assess building safety and strata managers communicate the importance of this practice to their clients.

"This is a concerning discovery for construction in Australia and it bears direct impact on the strata sector."

"The only way to find out whether a building is at risk is via a building inspection, so strata managers should also be recommending this action to their clients."

“Experts are saying that invasive tests are the only option for detecting the difference between safe and unsafe products in this class so this is truly the best practice,” Mr Barnard said.

In addition to these concerns on Alucobest, there have been other instances of faulty materials in Australian construction recently that Strata Community Australia (Qld) wants owners corporations and industry stakeholders to be wary of.

“The focus here is very much on the fire risk associated with unsafe cladding products however, we have seen worrying cases among other materials like glass that also deserve attention through these recommended inspections.”

“A number of cases have been reported on recently concerning glass panels imported from China spontaneously exploding, causing injury to a range of stakeholders so we hope owner’s corporations fully comprehend the significant benefit proactive initiatives such as building inspections can bring,” Mr Barnard said.

More than 100 residents and owners of the Lacrosse building in Docklands are now reportedly considering a class action against the builders.

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