

Open Remarks – Senate Inquiry 19 July 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Senator Inquiry today

Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) is Australia's major technical and educational fire safety origination and the national peak body for fire safety that provides information, services and education to the fire protection industry and the community.

FPA Australia is a not for profit Association and is supported by approximately 1500 members consisting of leading companies and organisations around Australia employing an estimated 30,000 individuals and operating across every aspect of the fire protection, building and construction industry.

Our Vision is: Leading and supporting a professional industry to minimize the impact of fire on life, property and the environment, for a safer community.

The association is involved in and advocates for the continuous improvement of Legislation, Codes, and Standards and provides its guidance and education independently to pursue our vision free of bias, coercion, favoritism and external commercial interests.

As comprehensively discussed in the FPA Australia submission to the terms of reference of this inquiry, Product conformity is extremely important. However, FPA Australia contends to achieve compliant, quality building outcomes where buildings meet the National Construction Code requirements, it is paramount to have the following three pillars or elements that all come together.

1. **Conforming Products** – they are what they claim to be, are validated and are importantly (**Fit for Purpose**)
2. **Conforming People** – Professional, Educated, Accredited Practitioners that are (**Fit-for-Action**)
3. **Enforcement** – Empowered Regulators, Proactive and willing to act to ensure that people and products come together succinctly to achieve the necessary “compliant” building outcomes (and I emphasize the word compliant) that meet the goal of the National Construction Code and that is: to achieve “minimum” standards of Public Safety, Health, Amenity and Sustainability efficiently.

FPA Australia contends that no amount of Codes and Standards will ever replace or compensate for the need for People to be properly educated, professional in their conduct, accountable and able to deliver on these minimum building outcomes.

Improvements in the National Construction Code and Standards will always be healthy to respond to the latest trends, techniques and technology advancements. However, unless **Products** are Fit for Purpose and **People** are Fit of Action, and importantly there are Regulators willing to act and put in place the necessary administrative and building controls to ensure this occurs, we will continue to see an unacceptable level of risk for our community.

To understand the risk of not taking action, you only need to look at the recent tragic Grenfell Tower fire in London which represents the full and shocking magnitude of a breakdown in regulatory control.

Thank you.