



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Commerce**

Building
Commission

Doc ID: A16156993

7 November 2016

Committee Secretary
Senate Economics Legislation Committee
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

INQUIRY INTO NON-COFORMING BUILDING PRODUCTS

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to the Senate Economics References Committee for its inquiry into non-conforming building products.

The Building Commissioner in Western Australia is a statutory office created under section 85 of the *Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011* (WA). Part 4 of the Act allows the Building Commissioner to authorise persons to carry out inspections and investigations of buildings and building services, including how building services have been carried out and how building standards are being applied.

On 12 July 2016 asbestos was found in panels installed at the new Perth Children's Hospital.

On 15 July 2016 I requested authorised officers of the Building Commission division of the Department of Commerce to commence an audit of the builder, John Holland Pty Ltd, and of the Perth Children's Hospital buildings. On 13 September 2016 I released an interim report on the asbestos that may be of interest to the Senate committee in its deliberations. A copy of the interim report is attached.

The interim report concludes that the industry processes used by John Holland for detecting and preventing the presence of non-conforming and hazardous products must be improved (p24).

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A lesson to be learnt from the experience at Perth Children's Hospital is that industry and government must improve processes for detecting and preventing the presence of non-conforming and hazardous products in buildings. While the Building Ministers' Forum, and government – industry bodies are addressing this problem, specifiers, builders and suppliers must ensure procurement processes are robust and include effective testing and verification. (p25).

I trust the Senate Economics References Committee will find the interim report useful in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gow
Building Commissioner

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