MEDIA RELEASE

1 December 2017

MASTER BUILDERS WELCOMES CLADDING PLAN BUT CALLS FOR BROAD INDUSTRY CONSULTATION, IMPLEMENTATION FAIRNESS AND MANDATORY TRADES REGISTRATION

The Victorian Government today responded to the interim report of the Chairs of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce, Prof The Hon John Thwaites and The Hon Ted Baillieu. The Victorian Cladding Taskforce Chairs’ Interim Report was handed to the government at the end of October, containing a number of findings and recommendations.

“We are pleased that the Taskforce Chairs and the Government have recognised that improvements are required across the whole industry, including with dissemination and availability of information as well as more effective regulatory advice and enforcement,” Radley de Silva, CEO, Master Builders Association of Victoria, said.

“An improvement by all players across the building and construction industry is required,” Mr de Silva said.

“To improve the skills of the industry, which is a need as evidenced by the Interim Taskforce Report, we would have liked to see a recommendation for mandatory trades registration in Victoria.”

“Master Builders looks forward to more detail around implementation timeframes, allocation of appropriate resources to the audit and regulatory process, and pragmatic and fair funding arrangements,” Mr de Silva said.

Quotes from Radley de Silva, CEO, Master Builders Association of Victoria:

On the role of the VBA

- “For too long, the VBA has taken a reactive stance—acting as an enforcer, instead of providing adequate guidance and interpretations of the law, to better enable building practitioners to comply with them. We would welcome the establishment of a State Building Inspector within the VBA to address those issues.”

- “The VBA needs to visit more sites to ensure better adherence to quality on our building sites, and the Government’s desire to see the VBA attend 10 per cent of worksites is a step in the right direction. We consider that the VBA should inspect a larger proportion of owner-builder sites and other high-risk locations that require more oversight.”
MEDIA RELEASE

On audit and rectification

- “Master Builders calls for a pragmatic, efficient and effective rectification solution. We believe that the rectification standard proposed by the Taskforce must provide a reasonable and fair allocation of responsibility for rectification, as well as reasonable and fair timeframes and costs. Significant consultation across industry will be required to establish those pragmatic solutions and we strongly urge such consultation in respect of the rectification standard.”

- “A review of the VBA’s initial audit of around 170 buildings should not result in unnecessary duplication and costs for those builders who have already contributed significant time and resources to the audits.”

On introducing new statutory duties

- “In considering introducing a statutory duty of care on building practitioners (including architects and designers) – we consider that any statutory duty of care must be reasonable, practicable and fair.”

- “Approaches such as a Code of Conduct for private building surveyors, should not impose undue burdens on them, especially given the responsibilities across the whole supply chain which should be considered in this context.”

On the concept of compulsory warranty insurance for multi-unit residential developments

- “Master Builders strongly advocates for the focus of reform to be on the full spectrum of industry participants adhering to clearly articulated and understood building regulations, rather than introducing insurance products which really just are a reaction to the problem.”

On mandatory trades registration

- “We are disappointed, in the face of evidence of the need to improve the skills of industry participants, that the Taskforce Chairs and Government failed to introduce a system of mandatory trades registration and compulsory CPD program. Skilled and qualified trades are a crucial factor in ensuring quality, cost and safety outcomes for all Victorians.”

Media enquiries: Leanne Edwards, Manager-Policy & Communications, 0413 450 254, ledwards@mbav.com.au
Peter Sackett, Media Adviser, (03) 9411 4534, 0466 777 059, psackett@mbav.com.au