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Parliament of New South Wales

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

July 19, 2002

TOUGHER, BETTER BUILDING STANDARDS AND MORE INFO FOR BUYERS NEEDED, PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION FINDS

The State Government should "aggressively fine and drive out" shoddy builders from the construction industry rather than simply cautioning them, a NSW Parliamentary inquiry recommended today.

The Joint Select Committee into the Quality of Buildings – which visited homes and building sites over the last four months - recommended new home purchasers must be better informed about their rights.

Committee chairman, Member for Keira, Mr David Campbell MP said the report aimed to improve building and inspection standards and dispute resolution.

Mr Campbell and his committee members today officially released the report at a home in Menai in Sydney's south. The bi-partisan committee has tabled its findings in the NSW Parliament.

"Buying a home or building one is the biggest financial outlay any family will ever make," Mr Campbell said.

"The report proposes greater regulation of the Home Building industry to protect home buyers and builders without the red tape, which could strangle this vital industry in our economy."

In total, the Joint Select Committee On The Quality Of Buildings report contains 55 unanimous recommendations including the setting up of a **Home Building Compliance Commission** and a **Home Building Advice and Advocacy Centre**.

The Joint Select Committee received more than 230 written submissions from homeowners, builders, inspectors, local councils and industry bodies.

Mr Campbell said the themes of ***Responsibility***, ***Accountability*** and ***Liability*** best describe the committee's recommendations.

"That is: setting out who is responsible for aspects of a residential building, holding those responsible accountable for their actions and making those who act inappropriately carry the liability for their actions.

"We have delivered a strong set of recommendations that require careful and measured legislation."

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Mr Campbell said the Joint Select Committee On The Quality Of Buildings key recommendations included:

The establishment of a **Home Building Compliance Commission**

The Commission would be responsible for:

- **Builder and Inspector licensing and auditing;**
- **Investigating and prosecuting shonky builders;**
- **On site inspections and arbitration of complaints;**
- **Clearly defining standards for Home Building Contracts; and**
- **Ensuring streamlined and seamless resolution of disputes.**

Support for consumers through establishing a **Home Building Advice and Advocacy Centre**

The Centre would be responsible for:

The provision of advice on all aspects of home construction and purchase - including contract negotiations, conciliation, complaints and dispute resolution procedures.

Mr Campbell said that both the compliance commission and advocacy centre would be heavily involved in establishing, monitoring and enforcing recommendations including;

- **Establishing a comprehensive license, accreditation and audit process for Builders, Inspectors and Certifiers;**
- **Aggressively fine and drive out of the industry non-performers with less reliance on cautions;**
- **Better educate new home purchasers about their rights and responsibilities;**
- **Publish clear information about building standards and contracts;**
- **Tighten rules for noise, fireproofing and waterproofing; and**
- **Give Strata Unit purchasers rather than the original builder priority in Building Management issues.**

Mr Campbell thanked the other members of the committee saying the bi-partisan approach taken helped produce such a clear set of unanimous recommendations.

"I am confident of a positive and timely response from the Government," Mr Campbell said.

For further information please contact: David Campbell MP 0418 421 337