

**Submission
No 81**

**INQUIRY INTO REGULATION OF BUILDING
STANDARDS, BUILDING QUALITY AND BUILDING
DISPUTES**

Organisation: Strathfield Council

Date Received: 2 August 2019



65 Homebush Road, Strathfield NSW 2135
PO Box 120, Strathfield NSW 2135 | P 02 9748 9999 | F 02 9764 1034
E council@strathfield.nsw.gov.au | www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au | ABN 52 719 940 263

25 July 2019

Mr David Shoebridge MLC
Chair
Public Accountability Committee

Dear Mr Shoebridge

Inquiry into the regulation of building standards, building quality & building disputes.

Strathfield Council thanks you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the above subject.

There have been numerous earlier reviews and studies, where a number of significant problems have been identified with current building standards, regulation and certification systems which in effect reduces the effectiveness of regulation and subsequently the quality of the end product.

The currently systems are complex and prescriptive, hard to understand, inflexible but confused with exempt and complying development codes. This opens it up to mixed interpretations and hence conflicted regulations.

Strathfield Council has consistently raised issues of the inherent conflict of interest where a developer is essentially paying their own certifier. This has raised building compliance and regulation to be questioned and ultimately leads to no confidence in the final product. This no confidence has been validated by the recent crisis in building construction standards and materials (cladding), in NSW.

Building materials such as external cladding, need to be regulated through Australian Standards, and exhaustive appropriate tests.

Council requests that the private system should be gradually made redundant and terminated.

During the redundancy period, consultation with Councils and relevant government departments should occur with the intention that building standards, building quality and building disputes should be returned to NSW Councils with appropriate funding to re-establish and resource.

Council encourages the establishment of adequate consumer protections for purchasers of new apartments/ dwellings, remove time limits on liability pending liaison with the insurance industry to ensure whoever built it is required to fix it.

There is also a certain level of fatigue and frustration at the number of reviews undertaken and the lack of progress in addressing the well documented problems.

The consequences of inaction have started to be very apparent and has been the catalyst for a significant level of risk which has manifested in the very public building failures in NSW, only to be exacerbated by a regulatory system that is ineffective running concurrently with the lack of appropriate Australian Standards .

Should you have any further questions or require further information please contact me on

Yours faithfully

STEPHEN CLEMENTS
DEPUTY CEO, GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING ENVIRONMENT & URBAN SERVICES