

## **MEDIA ADVISORY – INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE**

**Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Attention National Media**

### **PROPERTY LEADERS CALL FOR SENATE INQUIRY INTO CLADDING TO BE FAST TRACKED – “NO MORE DELAYS”**

### **THOUSANDS OF APARTMENT OWNERS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF A BILLION DOLLAR PROBLEM**

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A Four Corners report detailing the volume of non-compliant flammable cladding on Australian buildings as “unquantifiable” has prompted property leaders to call for a Federal Senate Inquiry to be urgently fast tracked.

They say the inquiry, now two and a half years old, is well overdue and action is needed urgently

The most recent delay has pushed the final report back until at least 30 April 2018; and property leaders say each delay to the inquiry puts Australians at increased risk.

Thousands of apartment owners nationwide are believed to be at risk from the same products responsible for the deadly Grenfell tower fire in London, which claimed at least 80 lives.

It represents a billion-dollar problem for strata property owners, who could end up as the sole party responsible to rectify non-compliant cladding, and the peak body for these owners nationwide says without Federal Government intervention, they are at risk of being stuck with crippling bills to make their buildings safe.

“Our fear is that thousands of apartment owners around the country, could be left to face this serious safety threat alone, and we want to see Federal Government intervention ASAP,” Strata Community Australia CEO Erik Adriaanse said today.

“What happened at Grenfell was the result of a dangerous waiting game, where no one wanted to take responsibility to fix a known issue, and we must avoid a repeat of this happening on home soil.”

**Strata Community Australia (National Office)**

Suite 101, Level 1, 845 Pacific Highway, Chatswood NSW 2067

**P** 02 9492 8250 | **E** [admin@stratacommunity.org.au](mailto:admin@stratacommunity.org.au) | **W** [www.stratacommunity.org.au](http://www.stratacommunity.org.au)

Mr Adriaanse says he was glad to see Monday night's Four Corners report address the lack of responsibility that exists on a contractor and supply chain level, and hopes this will be a major focus of the Senate Inquiry's final report.

"The finger pointing that happens between certifiers, architects, fire engineers and builders when non-compliant cladding is identified on a building is very disappointing, and only serves to trap owners in a legal minefield."

"Take the Lacrosse Apartments example; where the owners were served with a \$15 million bill to remediate their building, and have accumulated vast legal fees, trying to pursue the builder to pay the costs."

"The builder argued that its design plans had been approved by a building surveyor, fire engineer and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and thus the owners are still stuck with the enormous bill, close to 3 years on."

"Every expectation is that the audits that are underway in most states and territories to inspect buildings will identify thousands of buildings with non-compliant cladding so it's not hard to see how this inflates to become a billion-dollar problem."

Mr Adriaanse says just last week, the Federal Government announced it would not be introducing tougher screening measures at the border, and it prompts the question, "What action will be taken to protect owners?"

SCA will be attending the first ever Australian Cladding & Building Standards Summit, over the 7th-8th December in Melbourne, and hopes to see the Senate Inquiry deliver its report ahead of this date.

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### **About Strata Community Australia**

Strata Community Australia Limited (SCA) is the peak industry body for Body Corporate and Community Title Management in Australia & New Zealand. Membership includes body corporate managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate. SCA has in excess of 3,300 members who help oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$1.2 trillion. Website: <http://stratacommunity.org.au/>

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