
0:00 / 1:12

Woman posts live video trapped on 23rd floor of burning Grenfell Tower

QLD News

Body corporate bosses warn it's 'a matter of time' before a disaster like London fire happens here

Daryl Passmore, The Courier-Mail
June 15, 2017 5:23pm

- [Stories from inside the inferno](#)

BODY corporate bosses warn it is “a matter of time” before a disaster like the London tower inferno happens here unless authorities act urgently to get rid of dangerous

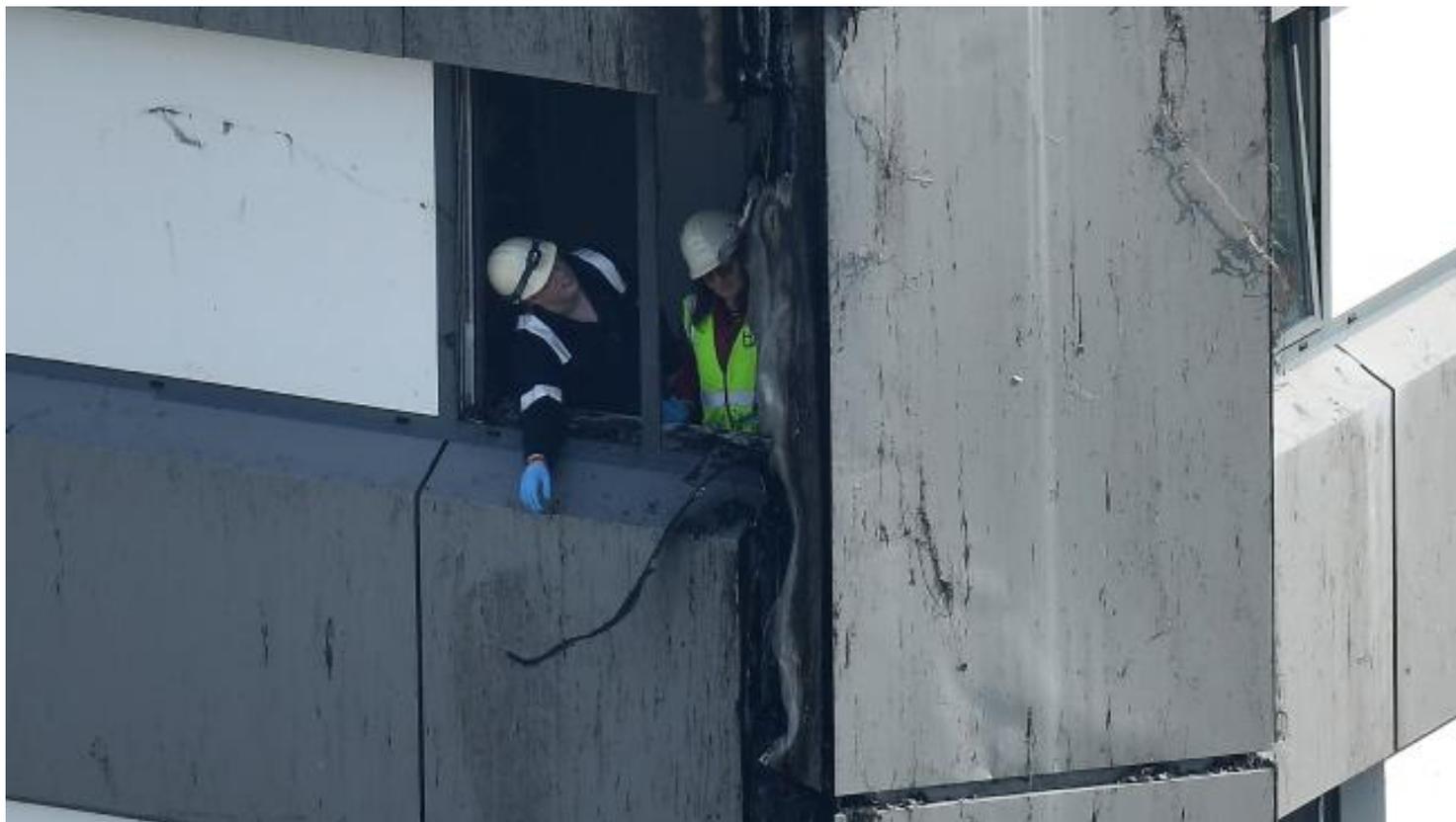
building materials.

“This is a ticking time bomb,” **Strata Community Australia** Queensland president Simon Barnard said.

The group has called for an immediate audit of high-rise buildings to check for external cladding products similar to that being blamed for the rapid spread of the blaze which engulfed Grenfell Tower in London, leaving at least 12 people dead and 74 in hospital.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mick de Brenni said he was confident no buildings in Queensland have the suspect material. But he admitted the state’s building industry watchdog does not currently have the power to conduct an audit of existing high-rises.

New laws going through Parliament will enable the Queensland Building and Construction Commission to search buildings and seize materials.



📷 Emergency crews look out the window of the 24-storey residential Grenfell Tower block in West London. Picture: Leon Neal/Getty

An Aluminium Composite Material cladding product similar to the one used in London was found to have contributed to the spread of a fire at the 23-storey Lacrosse building in Melbourne’s Docklands three years ago, when flames travelled up the side of the building in just 11 minutes, forcing more than 300 residents to flee.

Fortunately no-one was hurt.

The same sort of cladding was found and removed from an apartment block and a commercial building on the Gold Coast last year.

Strata Community Australia is demanding urgent action to reassure hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who live or work in high-rise buildings that they are safe.

“Between 40,000 and 50,000 units have been constructed in the last few years,” Mr Barnard said. “How many more buildings in Queensland have this product that we don’t know about?”

“If the Government doesn’t act now to eradicate the scourge of unsafe building materials, our fear is that it will only be a matter of time before a devastating loss of life, like what occurred in London, happens here.”



📷 Flowers and candles left for the victims of the Grenfell Tower inferno. Picture: Chris J Ratcliffe/Getty

Master Builders Queensland deputy chief executive Paul Bidwell said: “It would be very difficult to say there is zero risk.

“Our members try their hardest to avoid these kinds of products, but when you have retailers and importers selling them it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between a legitimate product and one that shouldn’t be touched.”

Mr De Brenni said: “There are no known instances of this cladding currently in Queensland. There has been two instances identified and rectified in recent times.”

A robust certification and standards system “should provide confidence to consumers and builders alike”, he said.

But new legislation introduced by the Palaszczuk Government to crack down on dodgy building products are currently before a Parliamentary Committee and due to go to a vote in August.

“These will be the toughest laws in Australia, and they are designed exactly to deal with the issue of flammable building cladding,” Mr de Brenni said.

The legislation will enable the QBCC to stop unsafe products being sold or installed or require them to be removed during construction or after a building is completed. Officials will have the power to enter any building to search for, and take samples of, materials.