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Attention New South Wales Media

THOUSANDS OF APARTMENTS IN NSW FACING POTENTIALLY BIGGER BILLS THAN MASCOT TOWERS

VICTORIA SET TO ESTABLISH NEW GOVERNMENT FUNDED SPECIALIST COMBUSTIBLE CLADDING AGENCY

NSW STILL DRAGGING ITS FEET AND MUST DO MORE TO ASSIST THOUSANDS OF NSW RESIDENTS FACING ENORMOUS CLADDING BILLS

As part of its newly announced property and building industry reforms package brought forward by the Mascot Towers issue, the New South Wales Government is being urged to follow the lead of Victoria and set up a dedicated combustible cladding agency to handle the billion-dollar cladding fiasco in NSW.

The peak body for the strata sector in NSW, representing the interests of hundreds of thousands of NSW residents living in apartments, units and townhouses, says the combustible cladding issue is at risk of ending up in the “too hard basket” in NSW, while other States are dealing with the problem.

An estimated 10,000 apartment buildings in NSW, Victoria and Queensland have suspected combustible cladding issues. Rectification costs per apartment run as high as \$60,000 (per apartment, not per building).

The Victoria Premier did not dispute media reports yesterday that Victoria was about to establish a new taxpayer funded agency, **Cladding Safety Victoria**, to directly assist Victorian residents address cladding issues in their State.

According to the media reports, the new agency will offer free services and advice to assist Victorians in removing combustible cladding. A formal announcement from Government is expected within the next month.

Strata Community Association NSW President, Chris Duggan, said today the cladding issue had to be included and solved by the NSW State Government as part of its building industry reform package.

“When the new NSW Building Commissioner is appointed next month, I will be knocking on their door to make sure that cladding is at the top of the list of issues that need to be addressed,” Mr Duggan said.

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“NSW has a larger strata footprint than Victoria and if the Victorians have seen fit to move to a new taxpayer funded agency to fix cladding, NSW should consider a similar idea.

“The Victorian Government has so far allocated \$160million to sort cladding issues in Government buildings in that State and I believe we'd have an even larger bill for public buildings in NSW. Taxpayer funds are being used to solve the Government's combustible cladding problem but NSW residents living in apartments and units have been left high and dry.”

Mr Duggan said the problems besetting the Mascot Towers apartment issue in Sydney had overshadowed the thousands of other apartments in NSW where combustible cladding had turned into an expensive nightmare.

“We do not want cladding ending up in the too hard basket,” Mr Duggan said.

“Mascot Towers is one building and we feel enormous sympathy for those residents. They deserve justice and our full support. But there are thousands of other apartment buildings in NSW where combustible cladding is an issue that could force people into severe financial hardship and detract from the value of their property asset.

“I hope the NSW Government and the soon to be appointed Building Commissioner take a long hard look at the new Victorian cladding model and see what can be done in our State.”

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About Strata Community Association (NSW)

Strata Community Association (NSW) is the peak industry body for Strata and Community Title Management in New South Wales. Membership includes strata managers, support staff, committee members and suppliers of products and services to the industry. SCA (NSW) has in excess of 2,400 members who help oversee, advise or manage a combined property portfolio with an estimated replacement value of over \$400 Billion. SCA (NSW) proudly fulfils the dual roles of a professional institute and consumer advocate.

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