



Hickory Group | Response to Combustible Cladding Crisis

Building cladding specialist worldwide are being held responsible for using a certified, lightweight aluminium composite product that has been the cause of multiple high-rise fires.

In recent light there has been a shift in responsibility within the building industry regarding a cladding crisis. Hickory would like to readdress its standings and the need for transparency and better regulations for new market products.

Hickory would like to address the cladding crisis within the building industry where we have become a spotlight victim to the Victorian Building Authority (VBA). We are hoping to work with industry professionals, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Victorian Building Authority to rectify the crisis and prevent future incidents from occurring. This is not possible with the continued blame sequence the Victorian Building Authority is conducting.

In recent weeks, Hickory has continued to defend ourselves against claims made by the Victorian Building Authorities Cladding Taskforce. We pride ourselves in providing quality cladding that is built and constructed as per current regulations and any further regulations. We stand firm by the understanding that our building was certified under 2017 VBA regulations and thus did not pose as unsafe or faulty in its environment.

We would like to address the current environment for regulation as it is at fault. Following a shift in responsibility within the industry, the VBA allowed for private surveyors to sign off on building regulations. At Hickory, we have always used a VBA authorised surveyor to survey our buildings and sign off on the sites.

Additionally, we have always complied with building standard and regulations, including aluminium cladding that were maintained by the VBA. Our cladding was used following approval by relevant authorities and were later deemed compliant.

A recent Victorian study has shown that at least 70% of all high-rise buildings in Australia have at least one potential defect. In recent years we have seen the use of aluminium composite panel façade material become a conventional practice for multi-storey buildings. Aluminium composite panel was the preferred material for external cladding purposes as it considered to be environmentally friendly and light weight. The use of aluminium composite panel was marketed and sold as a product internationally that was "suitable for use on the external cladding of buildings including high-rise and residential buildings".

Following a series of incidents worldwide regarding the panelling, builders are now being asked to rebuild the facades with new (safer) material at a significant cost without the support from the government.

Following this issue, we hope that the Victorian Government will provide builders, owners and contractor with a supplement fee to rectify this cladding issue and prevent further incidents. This is not something that builders should be blamed for and this approach will threaten Australia's building industry.

Thus, we propose that building regulation be a priority of the public sector once again, to prevent further crisis and shift the responsibility back to the regulating body; the Victorian Building Authority. This would allow for better regulation on cladding and other materials used by builders and prevent such issue from occurring again without the knowledge of the builders.

Hickory provides an After Care Solution for all of the buildings constructed by the Hickory Group, which explains that they will maintain building and rectify issues quickly.

To find out more about our response to the cladding crisis [click here](#).

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