



Tasmania Fire Service

Office of the Chief Officer

File No: A19/50597

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF RESCUE, FIREFIGHTING AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AT AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

Although the role fire services play in building approval processes differs across Australia it is critically important to ensure the compliance with local and state requirements from a fire safety perspective. This is important when designing and developing buildings and infrastructure at airports both air-side and non-air side.

Fundamentally the most important part of building design and development from a fire safety perspective is to ensure the safe egress of building occupants during a fire, that the appropriate building fire detection, suppression and warnings systems are installed and that systems are in place that aid firefighters in reducing the need for active occupant rescue and allowing efficient and effective detection to allow firefighters to quickly suppress any fire before it can take hold and significantly impact on the building structure.

As a minimum, fire authorities must provide comment on and/or approve performance solutions that involve fire performance requirements that relate to fire brigade intervention. The National Construction Code (NCC) identifies the minimum fire safety standards that buildings must comply however, there is some concern over the prevalence of non-compliant combustible cladding as seen in recent buildings fires in Victoria including the Lacrosse building fire in 2014 and the recent January 2019 Neo200 building fire. Measures need to be taken to improve compliance levels and to ensure there is ongoing engagement with fire authorities in the fire engineering processes.

Reference should be made with the International Fire Engineering Guidelines (IFEG) that have been endorsed by the fire safety industry and has been published by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB). This guideline contains best practice for fire engineering designs and includes an obligation to engage early with fire authorities regarding fire safety in the building design process. It is well known in the fire industry that if there was ongoing compliance with the IFEG the quality and effectiveness of fire engineering designs would improve.

Recently, the Building Ministers Forum (BMF) engaged Peter Shergold and Bronwyn Weir to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia, known as 'Building Confidence'. In compiling this report reference was made to these observations and it is recommended that the Senate Inquiry refer to the 'Shergold & Weir' report and where appropriate make further recommendations in relation to airport design and development that further enhances fire safety in the interest of occupant and firefighter safety.

Yours sincerely

/ Chris Arnol
CHIEF OFFICER

5 March 2019