

Friday July 15, 2016

## Asbestos contaminations highlight dangers of product substitution in building industry

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) says the reported identification of asbestos in imported construction materials at two worksites this week underscores the risks posed by non-conforming building products.

The dangerous and illegal substance was detected in metal skirting at the site of the Queensland Government's Executive Building, and within roof panels at Perth's new Children's Hospital.

The discoveries coincide with the release yesterday of a report by the Building Products Innovation Council (BPIC) aimed at combating the increasing use of non-conforming building products in Australia.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said building product substitution could lead to potentially life-threatening situations.

"The use of non-conforming or non-compliant building products, either inadvertently or deliberately to lower costs, is a serious problem that must be tackled," Mr Whelan said.

"Often the use of sub-standard building products only becomes apparent when something goes wrong, posing a risk to construction workers and the ultimate occupants of the building.

"Installing products that don't meet the required standards for their intended use may save costs for builders and developers, but detecting and removing them down the track can be extremely costly for owners, and potentially taxpayers.

"The increasing use of imported building materials, often ordered online from unfamiliar and untested suppliers and manufacturers, has increased the potential for non-conforming and counterfeit products to enter Australia.

"The ICA broadly supports the BPIC's goal to better protect consumers and compliant businesses from poor-quality building materials. Just as the building and construction industry has evolved, so must the regulatory regime that oversees it."

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Link: <http://www.bpic.asn.au/home>