

The current Fire Safety system in NSW is riddled with problems. Building fire safety is largely controlled through a system of self-certification and stricter legislation is required to ensure safety of building occupants. The proposed changes, if completely and properly implemented will go a long way to resolving these problems.

### **New Critical Stage Inspections - Supported**

Passive fire protection measures often go unchecked and it is common to have gaps in fire rated construction, or incorrectly installed fire seals and collars. There are some certifiers in the industry that already do bounding construction inspections, but this is not enough. The introduction of the new critical stage inspections for Class 2 to 9 buildings will assist in resolving the current high level of defects in this area.

There should also be mandatory CPD training for all A1 and A2 building certifiers regarding passive fire protection measures including lightweight construction, and fire seals.

### **“Competent Fire Safety Practitioner” – Accreditation System Required**

The change to a ‘competent fire safety practitioner’ represents no material change from the current term ‘properly qualified person’ without a proper accreditation scheme being implemented.

The change in terminology must be done in unison with the implementation of a complete accreditation system. Introducing the change in terminology prior to the implementation of a complete accreditation system will create unnecessary confusion amongst building owners and further unnecessary work for Certifiers and Councils throughout NSW.

When NSW introduced private certification, there was no accreditation scheme introduced and the industry was plagued with problems. It took several years for a complete accreditation scheme to be introduced.

The existing voluntary scheme operated by the FPAA is insufficient and a full government operated accreditation scheme is required.

### **Clause 174 and Clause 181 – More Work Required**

Currently, Fire Safety Certificates and Fire Safety Statements need only include the details of the owner of the building. The proposed changes to require the details of the person who is issuing the statement will not assist Councils or Certifiers in determining the validity of these documents: this could be the owner’s real estate agent or building manager.

With the proposed changes, there is still no requirement to include the details of the person who has inspected the building, or assessed the essential fire safety measures.

The Fire Safety Certificates and Fire Safety Statements need to also include the name and contact details of the ‘competent fire safety practitioner’. This is so that Councils and Certifiers can verify the information being provided by the owner or agent. Without this information, the proposed changes to “competent fire safety practitioner’ and any accreditation scheme are worthless.