

Summary of the South Australian Building Cladding Audit Interim Report



Government of South Australia
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

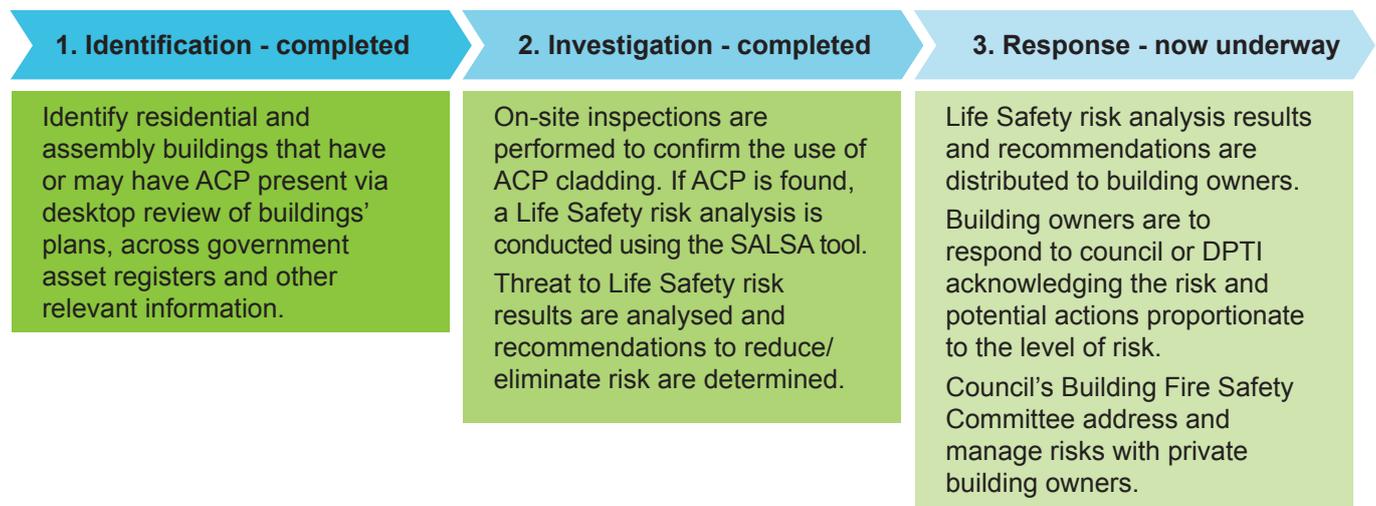
1. Background to the Audit

Following the Lacrosse building fire in Melbourne (2014) and the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in London (2017), both of which involved Aluminium Composite Panel (ACP) exterior cladding, the South Australian government called for a thorough and comprehensive cladding audit of high-rise residential and assembly buildings across the State.

The purpose of the Audit was to accurately identify those buildings that have ACP cladding (Phase 1), review and rate their immediate safety status (Phase 2) and establish an orderly process by which any recommended remediation or safety enhancement work will be undertaken (Phase 3).

Phases 1 and 2 are now complete for residential and assembly buildings and findings and recommendations are included in this Interim Report of the South Australian Building Cladding Audit (Audit) prepared by the SA Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI).

2. Audit Process



The Audit's review of public-owned buildings across the State was undertaken and delivered by DPTI in conjunction with the Metropolitan Fire Services (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) as appropriate. In an abundance of caution, DPTI did not limit the audit of public-owned buildings to residential and assembly buildings. All public-owned buildings were audited.

The Audit's review of private-owned buildings across the State was overseen by DPTI and facilitated by local Councils, in conjunction with the MFS and CFS as appropriate.

The Audit used the evidence-based South Australian Life Safety Assessment (SALSA) tool to assess risk associated with the impact of ACP on the safety of a building and applied recommendations relative to that risk. The SALSA tool is based on the same risk assessment tool developed and used by the Victorian government and fire authorities in their audit of ACP external cladding in their State.

SALSA Risk Assessment Rating

The risk rating provides an understanding of the fire safety issues created through exposure to ACP on a building façade by assessing fire risk, fire systems and exit strategies. Importantly, this identifies the level of urgency for remedial action on buildings where the issues may lead to harm in the event of a fire.

RISK CATEGORY	RISK DESCRIPTION	IMMEDIATE ACTION	ONGOING ACTION
Low	Minimal safety risk.	No immediate action required.	Regular building maintenance as required by state legislation and the annual return to council of maintenance certification if required.
Low - Moderate (treated as Moderate)	See below.	See below.	See below.
Moderate	Fire safety provisions are sufficient to allow safe exit from a building in a façade fire event.	No immediate action required.	As for Low. Also, monitor the installation of any recommended fire safety improvements.
Moderate - High (treated as High)	See below.	See below.	See below.
High	Occupant life safety is not adequate.	Recommended remedial work to be carried out within 12 months to reduce risk to Moderate or Low.	As for post action risk category
High - Extreme (treated as Extreme)	See below.	See below.	See below.
Extreme	Occupant life safety is unsatisfactory.	Immediate remedial action and remedial work required to reduce risk to Moderate or Low.	As for post action risk category.

3. Summary of Audit Findings

3.1 Public Buildings

- 17,000 public-owned assets were considered in the review phase;
- 126 buildings were identified as requiring further investigation;
- Of these, 52 were found to incorporate some ACP external cladding and underwent a full Life Safety Risk Analysis;
- Through this process, two (2) buildings were assessed as High risk;
- The remainder (50) were assessed as either Moderate (39) or Low (11) risk;
- No public-owned buildings were found to warrant a higher risk classification, e.g. High-Extreme or Extreme.

Two public buildings were assessed as High risk and requiring remedial action:

1. An ablution block which has an ACP façade. Works are programmed to totally remove the cladding from the ablution block with completion expected within weeks.
2. A building which is currently undergoing major construction. As a construction site there is no public access. On completion it will include all appropriate fire safety systems which will reduce its risk assessment rating to an acceptable level.

While the remainder (50) of the public-owned buildings were assessed by the Audit to be of Low or Moderate risk, DPTI focused additional attention on four (4) buildings in Adelaide that are of significant public interest due to their scale, usage and patronage numbers.

The new Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Women's and Children's Hospital received Low risk ratings. Adelaide Oval and the Adelaide Convention Centre received Moderate risk ratings. All four buildings rated within the risk level where there is confidence in public safety in the event of a façade fire.

However, as an additional precautionary measure the Audit process recommended that the manager of the Convention Centre, Adelaide Venue Management, undertake authorised laboratory-testing of the venue's cladding to establish precise properties, in order to best inform the building's ongoing, overall fire safety engineering analysis and performance. Adelaide Venue Management has accepted this recommendation. Recommendations have also been made to Adelaide Oval's Stadium Management Authority, on ways it may even further lower the venue's current Moderate risk rating.

These recommendations are provided by DPTI in conjunction with the MFS and work undertaken will be monitored by DPTI as part of Phase 3 of the Audit process. The cost of reparations or remedial work undertaken on a public building will be borne by the Government agency that owns/operates the building.

Individuals requiring information about the risk rating of a public building can seek that information via the SA Planning Portal www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/en/cladding_audit

3.2 Private Buildings

- Through a Council review process, 172 residential and assembly buildings were identified as of potential interest;
- Of these, 124 buildings (located across 19 Council districts) were confirmed as having some ACP external cladding and underwent a full Life Safety Risk Analysis;
- 96 buildings (77%) were assessed as either Low or Moderate risk;
- 21 (17%) were assessed as High risk;
- Seven (7) buildings (6%) were assessed as Extreme risk.

A total of 28 buildings were rated above the acceptable life safety risk level, seven of which were risk-rated Extreme. No building was considered by fire service authorities to warrant evacuation. These buildings are primarily multi-storey residential apartment buildings.

Building owners must adequately maintain the fire safety of their buildings, and for high rise buildings must annually submit evidence to Council that maintenance has been undertaken. When a Council believes a building's fire safety is not adequate it must take appropriate action (including enforcement) under provisions of the *Development Act 1993*.

In such instances building owners can be required to prepare a report on the adequacy of the building's fire safety and to develop and implement remedial plans acceptable to the Council's Building Fire Safety Committee.

In the case of the seven buildings assessed as having an Extreme risk, it is likely that formal Development Act Notices will be served requiring action from the building owners.

Councils have now commenced notification to building owners about the Audit findings and the immediate and longer-term remedial or other works that are required to reduce the fire safety risk to an acceptable level. On some buildings, work has already been undertaken or is underway.

Property owners and lessees requiring information about the risk rating of a specific private building should contact their Community Corporation, the building manager or the building owner who will be the recipient of any formal building audit advice from Council.

4. Next Steps

For all public buildings the MFS have been actively engaged with DPTI throughout both Phases 1 and 2 of the Audit and fully support all findings and recommendations contained in the Interim Report.

DPTI has worked with these fire safety authorities to identify specific actions that may be taken. These may include:

- removing ACP from around exits;
- removing ACP from around firefighting equipment;
- removing ACP from the first 3 metres above ground level;
- installation of an Active Fire System*;
- removing ACP within 1m of a balcony.

* An Active Fire System is fire warning or suppression equipment that may trigger automatically or with intervention, in the event of a fire. It includes sprinklers, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, automatic fire doors, fire control systems etc.

In the next Phase (3) of the Audit, DPTI will monitor building owners' responses to the Audit findings and recommendations made in the Interim Report. DPTI and the MFS will continue to work collaboratively with owners of both public and private-owned buildings to ensure that appropriate recommended remedial or other actions are taken, relevant to a building's SALSA risk rating that will reduce that risk to an acceptable level (i.e. Low to Moderate).

Responsibility to fulfill the requirements of Phase 3 of the Audit will now be handed to the government agency that owns a building that has been identified during the Audit process. All government agencies consulted through the course of the Audit have been informed of the findings and are being provided, by DPTI and fire safety authorities, with advice as to how they can respond to reduce a building's SALSA risk rating.

For privately owned buildings, Councils are responsible for ensuring that owners of private buildings in their jurisdictions, identified through the Audit as having higher than acceptable risk ratings, take the necessary actions and undertake the appropriate remedial or other work required to reduce any risk rating to an acceptable level. i.e. Moderate or Low.

All buildings identified in the Audit will be automatically added to the MFS Computer Aided Dispatch System, so that the presence of any ACP cladding is instantly flagged with fire and emergency services in the event of any future emergency related to the building.

The BFSC will work with owners of lower-risk buildings on ways they can even further reduce any potential risk to occupants or visitors to their buildings.

DPTI is in direct contact with all responsible government agencies and with Councils. It will actively gather and collate information regarding remediation actions undertaken at all buildings identified by the Audit. DPTI will produce a Final Cladding Audit Report, when all buildings have had their risk ratings returned to moderate or below, at which time the Department expects to be confident that all the buildings identified in the Audit will be rated at the level of safety expected.

Further information is available via the SA Planning Portal

www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/en/cladding_audit