

[Property](#)[Residential](#)[Combustible cladding crisis](#)

Combustible cladding ignited in Canberra apartments fire

Michael Bleby *Senior Reporter*



Aug 21, 2019 — 5.48pm



Residents of a Canberra high-rise apartment building avoided potential tragedy this month when a smouldering cigarette ignited combustible cladding on the wall and balcony of a second-level unit.

Five firefighting vehicles rushed to Glebe Park Apartments on the afternoon of August 7 after the cigarette butt set fire to a cloth-covered sofa on the apartment balcony and the fire spread to the 100 per cent polyethylene-core panels on the building at 15 Coranderrk Street.



The balcony fire at the Glebe Park Apartments in Canberra on August 7, 2019. **Nine**

"This fire was partially extinguished by civilians using a fire hose reel from outside at ground level," an ACT Fire & Rescue spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

"ACT Fire & Rescue crews fully extinguished what remained of the fire on the balcony within 18 minutes of the initial call at station."

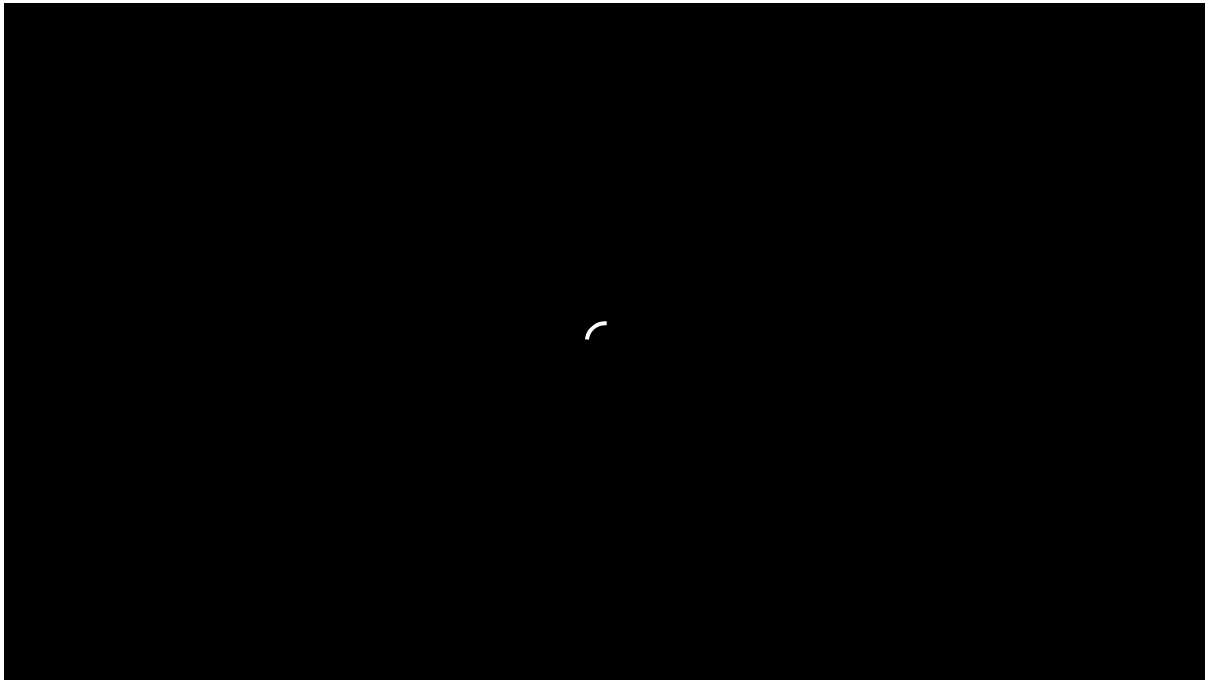
Local media [have reported the fire](#), but the presence of combustible cladding has not yet been disclosed. Fire authorities referred questions about the building's

cladding to the developer and builder. Developer Amalgamated Property Group did not respond to a request for comment.

The extensive use of cladding of the sort used on London's Grenfell Tower, and Melbourne's Lacrosse and Neo200 towers makes fire a serious risk at the 184-unit, eight-storey building developed by Amalgamated in 2009. But the incident also highlights the lack of knowledge in the nation's capital about the extent of combustible cladding on privately owned buildings.

Canberra Airport is also clad in 100 per cent PE-core panels.

The ACT government began an audit of cladding-affected buildings in 2017, but that review focused only on 240 government-owned buildings. Unlike state governments in Victoria, NSW and Queensland, it has not yet compiled a list of private buildings.



"The Review Group is currently considering the different approaches taken in other jurisdictions in relation to the audit of private buildings containing potentially combustible cladding," ACT Building Minister Gordon Ramsay said on Wednesday.

"The government will consider feedback from insurance agencies, other jurisdictions and other bodies and provide an update by the end of the 2019."

Mr Ramsay referred questions about the Glebe Park Apartments fire to the ACT's Emergency Services Agency.

Video footage of the fire obtained by *The Australian Financial Review* shows it burned on both sides of a balcony partition separating two apartments. It could have been disastrous if two barbecue gas bottles on the burning balcony had ignited. It is the first known cladding-related blaze on a residential building in the ACT.



Glebe Park Apartments in Canberra. Alex Ellinghausen

The *Financial Review* has previously reported that state and territory building ministers [agreed in 2010](#), after ACT regulators reported concerns of their own fire authorities about the panels, to draft an advisory note warning the building industry that 100 per cent PE-core panels would not meet building code standards, but the advisory never happened.

In 2012, the [Australian Building Codes Board rejected a proposal](#) to change the rules by suppliers Alucobond Architectural and SGI Architectural.

"The proposed changes would have the potential to dilute the prescriptive measures of the code," [ABCB chairman John Fahey](#) said.



License article

TOPICS [Combustible cladding crisis](#) [Construction](#) [ACT residential property](#)

[Property market](#)







Michael Bleby writes on real estate specialising in construction, infrastructure, architecture based in our Melbourne newsroom. *Connect with Michael on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Email Michael at mbleby@afrc.com.au*







MOST VIEWED IN PROPERTY

- 1 **The billionaires living on Perth's millionaire's row**
- 2 **Westfield landlord Scentre weathers the retail headwinds**
- 3 **Credit Suisse sells \$134m Adelaide office tower to Singaporeans**
- 4 **These are the most exclusive streets you can live on in Sydney**
- 5 **Be prepared for office markets to turn**

 **Commercial Real Estate**

	
	
<p>EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR SALE</p> <p>15/22 Beaumont Road MOUNT KURING-GAI NSW</p> <p> Industrial / Warehouse</p>	<p>\$1,300,000 FOR SALE</p> <p>80 Albert Street OSBORNE PARK WA</p> <p> Industrial / Warehouse</p>

 Industrial / warehouse	 Industrial / warehouse
 1,566m ²	 544m ²

THE AUSTRALIAN Financial Review Magazine

Don't panic, but natural wine is here to stay

Reinvented prawn cocktail is catch of the day

James B. Young reveals the best books on central Australia

Viking 'twins' sew up the made-to-measure market

Industry experts tell what's hot and what's not in watch collecting

BOSS

AFR BOSS Most Innovative Companies unveiled

The 10 most innovative professional services firms

The 10 most innovative technology companies

Top 10 innovations in retail, hospitality, tourism and entertainment

The 10 most innovative property, construction and transport companies

Life & Leisure

Morris Wines toasts the 160th anniversary that nearly didn't happen

This is the coolest way to finesse your driving skills

Gadget gifts for Dad that you'll love, too

Behind closed doors at French champagne house Pommery

Volvo delivers a class act

Special Reports

Technology driving the future of auto

Smart workplaces boost productivity

Cricket's Boxing Day test a big power draw

Critical infrastructure under threat from hackers

Big data centres on regional areas

FINANCIAL REVIEW



SUBSCRIBE

LOG IN

Subscription Terms



Contact & Feedback



Markets Data



Brands



Our Network



© Copyright 2019 The Australian Financial Review

[Reprints & Permissions](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms & Conditions Of Use](#)