

POLITICS VICTORIA

New national taskforce to tackle building industry crisis

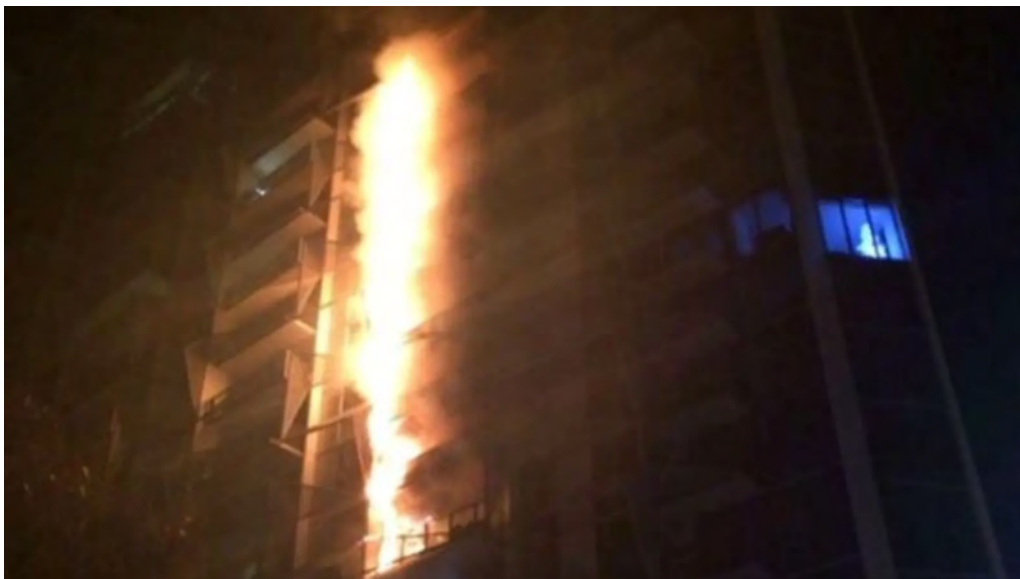
By [Clay Lucas](#)

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State and federal ministers have agreed to fund a new taskforce to pursue nationally consistent building standards amid the flammable cladding crisis plaguing Australia's construction industry.

Victorian Planning Minister Richard Wynne and all of the nation's ministers with responsibility for building laws met with federal Industry Minister Karen Andrews in Sydney on Thursday morning.



The 2014 cladding fire at Dockland's Lacrosse tower. MFB

Ms Andrews said the two tiers of government would fund a taskforce that would help all states tackle serious failures identified in the building industry by a recent federal government report.

Discussion of problems with construction hit fever pitch in Victoria this week after Premier Daniel Andrews announced the state would fund a \$600 million repair effort to remove flammable cladding from around 500 private buildings.

Ms Andrews said there needed to be a "nationally consistent approach" to tackle issues in the building industry.

The new taskforce will be responsible for restoring confidence in the sector.



Industry Minister Karen Andrews with Prime Minister Scott Morrison. ALEX ELLINGHAUSEN

Thousands of high-rise buildings around Australia are covered in combustible cladding that needs to be replaced, while the industry is also dealing with the fallout from a range of other defective and faulty buildings such as Sydney's [Opal Tower](#).

The meeting of ministers comes after Australia's five largest industry groups demanded urgent action on the nation's "patchy and inconsistent" building rules.

"Industry is concerned that the lack of consistent or coordinated action by governments," said Ai Group chief executive Innes Willox.

He said this inconsistency around the country "not only threatens many thousands of on-site jobs but also undermines public confidence in the industry as a whole".

Mr Willox said construction was Australia's fourth-largest industry, and it was crucial to restore public confidence in it.

The construction industry has called for better enforcement of rules so that cowboy operators are held to account.

- with AAP



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