

Society of Saint Hilarion appeals fire safety defect notice from Charles Sturt Council

The safety of more than 100 nursing home residents is allegedly at risk if dangerous combustible cladding is not removed, court documents reveal.



Ben Cameron [Follow](#)

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The Seaton nursing home allegedly contained combustible cladding. Picture: The Society of Saint Hilarion Aged Care / Facebook

A Seaton nursing home with more than 100 residents allegedly contains combustible cladding considered a “danger to occupants”, court documents reveal.

The Society of Saint Hilarion Inc has appealed a fire safety defect notice issued by the Charles Sturt Council’s building fire safety committee following an inspection of the St Hilarion Nursing Home at Kelly Ave.

It employs 93 staff at all times, has 107 residents and has on average 65 visitors a day.

The committee inspected the two-storey building in August 2019 then requested an independent evaluation two months later co-ordinated by the society, to “determine the combustibility properties”, documents lodged with the Environment, Resources and Development Court show.

Then, BCA Engineers submitted an independent risk assessment report in July last year, before the committee issued the safety defect notice in February.

“(The committee) considers the current building, installed with combustible ACP cladding, a danger to occupants and requires replacing all the existing ACP panels with compliant product,” documents stated.



The nursing home appealed a committee notice calling for \$250,000 worth of new cladding. Picture: The Society of Saint Hilarion Aged Care / Facebook

The committee required the cladding be replaced with Building Code of Australia-compliant cladding within four months to “ensure that the fire safety of the building is made adequate”.

BCA Engineers estimate it would cost \$250,000 to replace the cladding.

However, the society argued BCA suggested the ACP cladding could be retained with additional measures – including the modification of evacuation procedures – that would “reduce the risk to low” in relation to the cladding.

“The existing passive fire protection measures and fire sprinklers will provide a safe evacuation for building occupants and fire brigade intervention,” documents reveal.

“The smoke detection system provides an early warning to the building occupants as well as informing the fire brigade.

“The existing automatic fire sprinkler system will control any fire spread and maintain tenability for both building occupant evacuation and fire brigade intervention.

“There are staff members on site 24/7 and we have been advised that there are at least eight staff to provide emergency response at all times.”

The matter returns to court next week.