

FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS WORKING PARTY

**Identified Issues, Contributing
Factors & Recommendations**

Stakeholder Consultation

May 2008

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Fire Protection Systems Working Party Identified Issues, Contributing Factors and Recommendations

Background

1.1 Industry concerns

In late 2005 organisations representing contractors and employees engaged in the fire protection industry advised the former Minister for Commerce of their concerns regarding the 'self-certification' of the installation of fire protection systems in new buildings and the ongoing maintenance of such systems.

The initial concerns raised by industry relate to the practice, under the current regulatory framework, whereby a person who installs or maintains a fire protection system certifies that they have installed/assessed the system according to the Building Code of Australia (and/ or relevant Australian Standards, legislation etc). It is stated by the industry groups that there is no independent process to check that the work does in fact comply with these standards. As a result, the industry organisations are concerned about sub-standard work.

Other concerns were raised later by industry. Of significance are concerns regarding fire safety Alternative Solutions under the Building Code of Australia.

1.2 Industry proposal

The two major fire protection industry contracting organisations and the union support a comprehensive system of contractor and/or occupational licensing across all occupations involved in the design, installation, testing, commissioning and maintenance of fire protection systems. The licensing system would support a requirement for all industry participants to be appropriately trained.

The industry proposals also envisage that any licensing system would be accompanied by an effective compliance audit and inspection regime. It has been suggested that the cost of this system could be funded through licensing fees.

1.3 Preliminary examination of issues

The former Director-General of the Department of Commerce arranged for a preliminary examination of the issues raised by the industry organisations to be undertaken. Following discussion with officers of the Department of Planning and the NSW Fire Brigades a paper was prepared by the Office of Fair Trading which indicated that there may be some scope for improvement/strengthening of systems/processes in order to provide greater confidence that fire protection systems serving buildings are adequate.

1.4 Building Industry Co-ordination Committee

The paper was submitted to the Building Industry Co-ordination Committee for consideration (out of session). The Committee, established as part of the Government's response to the findings of the *Inquiry on the Quality of Buildings* (Campbell Report), is chaired by the Director-General and currently includes representation from Department of Planning, Department of Local Government, WorkCover Authority, Department of Education and Training and Treasury as well as the Office of Fair Trading and other areas of Commerce.

A primary role of the Committee is to review the impact of Government regulation on the building and construction industry to ensure that such regulation efficiently and effectively meets the expectations of industry and consumers.

1.5 Working party

The Building Industry Co-ordination Committee supported the establishment of a working party, comprising of representatives of the Department of Planning (including the Building Professionals Board and Building Systems Unit), NSW Fire Brigades and the Office of Fair Trading, to investigate the concerns raised by the industry.

1.6 Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the working party are to:

- investigate the allegations made by industry;
- produce a clear statement of the issues and, if possible, substantiation of same;
- identify the major contributing factors to the alleged issues;
- investigate the actions currently being taken, and those planned to be taken, by government and industry in relation to improving confidence in the adequacy and performance of fire protection systems;
- investigate the approaches used by other State/Territory Governments and industry; and
- report back to the Building Co-ordination Committee on the outcomes of its investigations and deliberations, and advise if any further action is necessary.

1.7 Consultation with Stakeholders

It is proposed to consult with a wide range of stakeholders with respect to the issues and recommendations contained in this report, including:

Association of Accredited Certifiers
Association of Consulting Engineers Australia
Association of Hydraulic Services Consultants Australia (NSW)
Australian Institute of Building
Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
Fire Protection Association of Australia
National Fire Industry Association
Institution of Fire Engineers, Australia
Plumbing Trades Employees Union
Master Plumbers and Mechanical Contractors Association of NSW
Insurance Council of Australia
Engineers Australia
Master Builders Association of NSW
Housing Industry Association of NSW
Property Council of Australia
Local Government and Shires Associations
Urban Development Institute of Australia
Urban Taskforce Australia
Royal Australian Institute of Architects
Planning Institute of Australia

Comments are sought regarding the extent to which the issues identified in the report are perceived to be a problem; whether the recommendations in

the report are an appropriate response; and whether other responses, including non-regulatory responses, may be more appropriate to achieve desired outcomes.

1.8 The Planning System

The planning system plays a significant role in building fire safety. This system includes the approval process for 'building work' (including installation and modification of fire safety systems), authority to require the fire safety upgrading of existing buildings, regulations for fire safety system maintenance and offences. The system also includes a scheme for the accreditation, auditing and investigation of accredited certifiers. A large part of the work of building certifiers relates to building fire safety.

The planning system in so far as it relates to building fire safety is generally robust. Notwithstanding, the Department of Planning has recognised that some improvement and strengthening is needed and is taking positive action in this area. Some of the actions currently underway and planned for the future are mentioned in this paper.

1.9 Future Directions

Consideration should be given to the following options to address the issues raised:

- a. The Government undertake and complete the planning reforms and other initiatives outlined in the paper and then maintain a close watching brief to ascertain the effectiveness of these measures; or
- b. Reconvene the working party to formulate additional proposals to address issues raised.

2. Identified issues

As a result of its investigations and consultation it is the view of the working party that there is evidence of potential issues with the current controls which govern the design, installation, approval and maintenance of fire protection systems in buildings which warrant further investigation.

The issues are:

1. Questionable quality/adequacy of some fire protection system designs;
2. Some non-complying fire protection system installations and the non-detection of same as part of the certification process;
3. Some fire protection systems not being properly maintained;
4. Questionable design, approval, implementation and maintenance of some Alternative Solutions involving fire safety matters;
5. Inadequate communication of fire protection system and important Alternative Solution information to end users (i.e. fire authorities, maintenance contractors, owners and occupiers [current and prospective]); and
6. Insufficient specialised training, courses and continuing professional development packages that meet the expectations of current legislative, technical and skill levels for all professionals involved in fire safety systems.

3. Major contributing factors

It is the view of the working party that the following are possible contributing factors to the identified issues.

3.1 Questionable quality/adequacy of some fire protection system designs

Possible contributing factors noted by the Working party include:

- Competency of designers - there is no requirement for fire protection system designers to be licensed or accredited.
- Lack of understanding by designers of the regulatory context in which they work (e.g. insufficient knowledge of the Building Code of Australia and the approval/certification system under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act).
- Plans and details prepared for submission with an application for construction certification do not always contain sufficient and appropriate detail (see comments below).
- Concerns have been raised that system design compliance is not always being checked or certified (approved) before system installation.
- During the construction phase conflicts may arise between the approved construction certificate plans and the later and more detailed plans and specifications prepared for fire safety systems to be installed in the building. For example, an egress system may not have been designed sufficiently wide enough to accommodate hose reels and hydrants. Insufficient area may not have been set aside in the architectural drawings for a fire control room, hydrant booster or sprinkler control rooms or for recommendations contained in an Alternative Solution.

3.2 Some non-complying fire protection system installations and the non-detection of same as part of the certification process

Possible contributing factors noted by the working party for non-complying installation of fire protection systems include:

- Competency of practitioners involved in design, implementation, certification and maintenance – not all practitioners are required to be licensed/accredited. There is also a lack of knowledge of the relevant codes and standards;
- Where an installation involves different trades, achievement of a fully compliant installation can be compromised. Damage caused by subsequent trades may not be rectified to the required level of fire rating (in particular, penetrations of fire rated walls, ceilings and floors by other trades involving inappropriate materials and non-use of fire collars);
- Testing and commissioning of active systems is either not carried out or is not carried out in an appropriate manner (including where individual components may be tested at different stages of a project but the complete system is not tested);
- Lack of independent checking of designs and installations;

- Compliance certification:
 - The standard of certificates received by Councils and certifying authorities from installers are not uniform with respect to information contained including references to standards, codes, approval documents and manufacturers specifications relied upon.
 - Certifying authorities and councils expend considerable resources to manage the deficiencies in certification documents.
 - Uncertainty with respect to when responsibility begins and ends for persons required to certify their part of the design and installation of fire safety systems, particularly when fire safety systems rely on different trades.

Difficulties in establishing accountability by an investigating body responsible for determining responsibility for deficiencies and substandard work practices.
- Role of Principal Certifying Authorities - concerns have been raised that some Principal Certifying Authorities are not inspecting systems at all e.g. to ensure hydrant outlets are correctly located. They are simply relying on certification – often in the form of self certification.

3.3 Fire protection systems not being properly maintained

There are a number of factors that potentially contribute to this issue:

- Although the legislation relating to maintenance of essential fire safety measures is considered conceptually sound, issues have been raised regarding the application and operation of the legislation, including:
 - Competency of maintenance practitioners. Those relied upon to conduct system performance capability checks and to provide certification are not required to be licensed or accredited. The onus is on the building owner to determine the competence of persons engaged to perform assessment, testing and maintenance functions.
 - Inadequate communication to end users of system characteristics, performance expectations, limitations and conditions.
 - Compliance auditing – councils lack adequate resources and expertise.
 - Collection and coordination of submission of evidence of maintenance (fire safety statements).

3.4 Inadequate design, approval, implementation and maintenance of alternative solutions involving fire safety matters

Possible contributing factors include:

- Competency of designers, approval authorities, and those involved with implementation and maintenance;
- Insufficient and inconsistent forms of reporting;
- Lack of independent checking;

- Changes to existing performance based designed buildings potentially reducing design effectiveness; and
- Designs not being adequately maintained.

3.5 *Inadequate communication of fire protection system and important Alternative Solution information to end users (i.e. fire authorities, maintenance contractors, owners and occupiers [current and prospective])*

A possible major contributing factor to this issue appears to be the lack of an appropriate level of information in the documentation required to be issued, kept, made accessible and consulted.

3.6 *Inadequate specialised training, courses and continuing professional development packages that meet the expectations of current legislative, technical and skill levels for all professionals involved in fire safety systems.*

Possible contributing factors include:

- Lack of understanding of the legislative frame work which regulates buildings in NSW including, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Regulations, Building Professionals Act and Regulations and the Home Building Act.
- Lack of up to date technical knowledge with respect to fire safety systems including the ability to interpret and apply relevant Australian Standards, the Building Code of Australia and specialised industry manuals or alternative fire engineered solutions.

There is no conclusive evidence at this time to suggest that issues raised relative to the design, installation, approval and ongoing performance of fire protection systems are confined to buildings or more prevalent in buildings, which have been the subject of approval by accredited certifiers.

4. Action underway or planned to be taken

It is the view of the working party that resolution of the identified issues will require a number of actions. Some action is already underway, and some is planned, for example:

4.1 *Department of Planning - Building Professionals Board*

The *Building Professionals Act 2005* received assent on 7 December 2005 and was proclaimed on 25 January 2007. It establishes the Building Professionals Board as an independent statutory body reporting to the Minister for Planning, which is responsible for:

- accrediting all accredited certifiers,
- investigating complaints against them,
- conducting audits of accredited certifiers and Councils, and
- improving professional practice through education and training.

The Building Professionals Regulation 2007 was gazetted on 25 January 2007 and the 'Accreditation Scheme for Accredited Certifiers' was gazetted on 2 February 2007. The Act, Regulation and the scheme commenced on 1 March 2007.

The accreditation scheme includes the categories of 'accredited certifier – **building hydraulics compliance**', and 'accredited certifier - **fire safety engineering compliance**'.

Accreditation for **building hydraulics compliance** will authorise the accredited certifier to issue compliance certificates in relation to designs of and constructed building hydraulics. These include fire hydrants, fire hose reel services and fire sprinkler services. The accreditation does not include the carrying out of any inspections required under section 109E(3)(d) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (inspection of building work for the purposes of issuing an occupation or sub-division certificate – being the role of a principal certifying authority).

The qualification requirements for this category of accreditation are a degree in building services from a university with the meaning of the *Higher Education Act 2001* or a diploma in hydraulic services from a course accredited under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*.

Accreditation for **fire safety engineering compliance** will authorise the accredited certifier to issue compliance certificates for Alternative Solutions involving fire safety for designs of and constructed building works certifying compliance with the relevant performance requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

Alternative Solutions involving fire safety includes alternative solutions relevant to:

- a) fire safety systems and components of fire safety systems;
- b) the safety of persons in the event of fire; and
- c) the prevention, detection and suppression of fire.

The qualification requirements for this category of accreditation are a degree in fire safety engineering from a university with the meaning of the *Higher Education Act 2001*.

Other categories of accreditation that might impact on the design and installation of fire protection systems in buildings include 'accredited certifier - **electrical services compliance**' and 'accredited certifier - **mechanical services compliance**'.

4.1.1 Compliance certificates – Fire Safety Alternative Solutions

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Compliance Certificates) Regulation 2007 commenced on 20 March 2008 and requires that a certifying authority must not issue a complying development certificate or construction certificate for an Alternative Solution that involves a fire safety requirement for certain "high risk" buildings unless the certifying authority has obtained, or been provided with, a compliance certificate from an accredited certifier – **fire safety engineering compliance** certifying that the Alternative Solution complies with the Performance Requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

Additionally, the principal certifying authority must not issue an occupation certificate unless another compliance certificate is obtained or provided from an accredited certifier – **fire safety engineering compliance** certifying that the building work relating to the alternative solution has been completed and complies with that alternative solution. The Building Professionals Board is currently assessing the need

to extend the application of compliance certificates beyond alternative fire safety solutions to cover other areas of building certification. This may reduce the level of self certification of designs presently occurring in the current system.

4.1.2 Proposed legislation – Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2008 and Building Professionals Amendment Bill 2008

On 3 April 2008, the Minister for Planning released Exposure Drafts of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2008 and the Building Professionals Amendment Bill 2008. Aspects of the reforms which address some concerns of the Working Party include:

- Introducing Fire Safety design certificates for complex fire safety systems. Designers (“building professionals”) of fire safety alternative solutions must be accredited and must certify their design meets requirements in the regulations.
- Additional critical stage inspections for all fire separating construction (walls, floors and ceilings) in medium and high-rise residential / commercial buildings (fire safety systems).
- Increasing oversight of certifiers working on complex development (buildings requiring a fire isolated stairwell) – Certifier must have approval of the Board before working for a developer/builder with record of non-compliance.
- Introducing requirement for certifying authorities to issue non-compliance direction where non-compliance with consent. If non-compliance is not remedied, certifier must inform council.
- Strengthening communication between councils and certifiers - new obligations for councils and certifiers to keep records of and inform each other of complaints and any enforcement action.
- Clarifying certification process by requiring construction and occupation certificates to be consistent with development consent, introducing mechanism for seeking advice re consistency from a consent authority and regulations to define consistency.
- Increasing oversight of development by introducing new inspection requirements before a construction certificate can be issued.
- Increasing oversight of councils by accreditation of council building certifiers and new reporting requirements for councils. The BPB will be able to investigate complaints against councils in their certifying authority role. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will also be mandated for council certification staff.
- Broadening accreditation to include companies.
- Strengthening conflict of interest offences by introducing new offences for a certifier to derive more than 20% of total income from certification work for 1 developer or for an employed certifier to issue more than 50% of total certificates for 1 developer.
- New offence for a council to carry out building certification work if non-accredited person carries out the work on their behalf – maximum penalty \$110,000 (exemptions may be given).
- New offences re accredited bodies corporate including: carrying out work where employee is not accredited (penalty \$110,000); and breaching responsibilities as a director (penalty \$33,000).

- Board will be able to issue new PINs and higher fines will apply to bodies corporate.
- Increasing the Board's disciplinary power including to cancel or suspend a certificate of accreditation, or impose a fine of up to \$110,000 (currently \$11,000) without having to go to the Tribunal. Increase councils' capacity to fund enforcement action from enforcement bonds as condition of development consent and compliance cost notices for monitoring compliance with s.121B orders.
- Increased targeted auditing of certifying authorities by the Building Professionals Board.

4.2 Department of Planning – Building Systems Unit

The concerns raised by industry and identified during the investigation include a number of issues related to Alternative Solutions under the Building Code of Australia as well as active and passive systems in general. Furthermore, the issues relate to the complete life cycle of these systems and solutions – that is, design, approval, implementation/installation (including commissioning), maintenance and modifications made during their life.

While the action being taken by the Building Professionals Board should address some of the concerns about Alternative Solutions the Department's Building Systems Unit has commenced a project relating to Alternative Solutions, and is scoping a project to review the regulation of the maintenance (ongoing performance) of essential fire safety measures.

4.2.1 Alternative Solutions

A working party has been established to assist with a review which seeks to, among other things, determine whether any improvements are required to the NSW Planning System to increase confidence in the adequacy and ongoing integrity of Alternative Solutions under the Building Code of Australia.

The project relates to the subject of Alternative Solutions generally – which can relate to any subject matter regulated by the Code (including structural sufficiency, fire safety, health and amenity, sustainability etc.). However, a major focus of this project is fire safety Alternative Solutions – their design and approval, implementation and maintenance.

Matters being considered include:

- clarification of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the design, approval, implementation and maintenance of Alternative Solutions.
- improving approval application information submission requirements to better assist compliance assessment.
- increasing transparency (and hence accountability) for design and approval decisions.
- requiring the tangible elements of Alternative Solutions to be reflected in the plans and specifications for the building.
- improving the communication of the existence of Alternative Solutions, their limitations (if any) and information regarding their critical elements/systems to end

users (e.g. owners and occupiers (current and prospective), approval authorities, maintenance contractors, the NSW Fire Brigades and other government authorities).

- approval and management of building changes, including how the Planning System can better provide for the protection of Alternative Solutions against building changes that may compromise their effectiveness, or where proposed building changes exceed the design limits, they are safely accommodated.
- the role of the NSW Fire Brigades in the approval process.
- Alternative Solution data collection.

4.2.2 Maintenance of essential fire safety measures

The Building Systems Unit is scoping a project to review the legislation under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* relating to the maintenance (ongoing performance) of 'essential fire safety measures'. These include active and passive fire safety systems, and strategies relating to fire safety alternative solutions (e.g. fire load limitations, evacuation plans).

It is intended the project involve an examination of this legislation to see if any improvements are required to make it more effective and efficient, and to address issues raised. Also, to provide greater confidence that fire protection systems are capable of operating appropriately when required.

A part of this project will consider the future policing and enforcement roles of local government and the NSW Fire Brigades.

This review will influence the aforementioned alternative solutions project, and vice versa.

4.2.3 Building Code of Australia

The Department of Planning works closely with the Australian Building Codes Board and plays a significant role in the ongoing development, reform and maintenance of the Building Code of Australia. The Department provides representation on the Board, the Building Codes Committee (which is the peak advisory body to the Board) and various project committees and working groups.

The Department of Planning, therefore, has a ready conduit for seeking the redress of any issues that arise from the aforementioned projects that relate to the Building Code of Australia.

One of the projects currently being undertaken by the Australian Building Codes Board which is of relevance to the aforementioned matters, particularly the Alternative Solutions project, is the further quantification of the performance requirements of the Code and/or the addition of further Verification Methods to the Code.

4.3 Office of Fair Trading – Review of licensing in the NSW home building industry

On 2 May 2005, the NSW Government announced a *Review of Licensing in the NSW Home Building Industry* and specified the terms of reference for the review. The Government appointed Mrs Irene Moss as the chair of the review assisted by Mr Kevin Rice. The report of the review was released in the latter part of 2006.

Of particular relevance to the issues and options being considered by the fire protection systems working party is the finding of the review that the uniform licensing system in NSW does not differentiate between the levels of skill and risk associated with each occupation. The review found that there is scope for cost savings to be made in the NSW home building industry by reserving licensing for those occupations where risks are significant and making the licensing system more readily understood by the public at large.

A recommendation of the review was that the Government assess each occupation in the home building industry against the following risk factors and consider de-licensing those occupations that do not meet the risk factors. The risk factors are:

- the type of work that is to be licensed poses a significant risk to public health and safety if it is not performed by properly qualified/trained persons, for example, the 'specialist' categories such as plumbers, gasfitters and electricians;
- the type of work being undertaken is critical to the structure of the building;
- the consequences for consumers and third parties from substandard performance of work is likely to be significant;; and
- the work is of a highly technical nature which, if not performed by a properly qualified/trained person, may require costly rectification.

It appears to the working party that an assessment of occupations within the fire protection industry for licensing purposes might well satisfy these risk factors.

The Government has indicated that the *Home Building Act 1989* is to be reviewed and completely rewritten and that the findings of the review will be taken into account during the redrafting of the legislation.

4.4 Industry initiatives

The fire industry associations recognise that the availability of national competency standards and delivery of associated training packages will improve the skills of industry participants. The Fire Protection Association of Australia has advised that national competency standards are currently available (or being developed) that would underpin practically all the qualifications framework to meet the requirements of the fire industry. According to the Fire Protection Association a number of TAFE college and registered training organisations are currently delivering accredited courses developed in conjunction with the Association and provide certificates of attainment that would correlate with a fire protection qualification.

The Fire Protection Association indicates that it has been involved in the development of fire industry competency standards within the Australian Qualification Framework including the development and review of competency standards associated with asset maintenance training packages for fire protection equipment and fire safety systems inspection which provide for trade qualifications at certificate II, III and IV levels and certifier competencies to certificate IV level for fire safety systems inspectors.

The Association is has also developed competency standards for licensing under the Australian Government's ozone protection legislation.

5. Recommendations

The working party notes the above actions currently underway or planned to be taken. However, the working party also recognises that these actions alone may not be sufficient to address all matters of concern. They do not specifically address the issues raised regarding fire protection systems (active and passive fire protection systems). As such, actions complementary to those already being undertaken by the Department of Planning, the Office of Fair Trading and industry may be needed.

The working party recommends the following actions be implemented to address the identified issues and their contributing factors:

5.1 Fire protection systems

5.1(i) Design and approval

- A review of the approval process for fire protection system designs be undertaken. This review should include an examination of:
 - how this function is fulfilled in other States and Territories;
 - the adequacy of the current development control system in this regard;
 - the role of certifying authorities (their approval obligations); and
 - reliance on certification from others as evidence of compliance.

[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1 and 2.]

- The role of the NSW Fire Brigades in the approval of fire protection system designs be reviewed. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 1.]*
- The Building Professionals Board give consideration to extending the application of compliance certificates beyond alternative fire safety solutions to cover other areas of building certification involving fire safety. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 1.]*
- That consideration be given to reviewing and clarifying what constitutes “building work” under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – in order to ensure that installation/modification of required fire protection systems meet the necessary standards and are checked for compliance when necessary. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1, 2 and 3.]*
- The extent of the independence required of the accredited (or licensed) person certifying the design of fire protection systems be clarified. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 1.]*

5.1(ii) Installation

- A review of the process for checking of approved fire protection system installations be undertaken. This review should include an examination of:
 - how this function is fulfilled in other States and Territories;
 - the adequacy of the current development control system in this regard;
 - the role of certifying authorities;

- reliance on certification from others.

[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 2.]

- The role of the NSW Fire Brigades in the checking of fire protection system installations be reviewed. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 2.]*
- An examination be conducted into whether there is a need to introduce additional mandatory critical stage inspections for principal certifying authorities (relating to both passive and active fire protection systems). *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 2.]*
- The extent of the independence required of the accredited (or licensed) person certifying the installation/implementation or commissioning of a fire protection system be clarified. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 2.]*

5.1(iii) Maintenance

- The Department of Planning continue with its scoping for the review of the legislation relating to the maintenance of 'essential fire safety measures'. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 3.]*
- The role of the NSW Fire Brigades in auditing fire protection system maintenance be reviewed. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue number 3.]*
- Refer also to the recommendations under the next heading "Accreditation and licensing".

5.1(iv) Accreditation and licensing

- A cost benefit analysis be undertaken of industry's proposal to require the licensing of all persons and contracting entities engaged in the installation and maintenance (including inspection and testing e.g. persons undertaking inspections/assessments/testing for the purpose of the issue of fire safety certificates and statements by building owners or their agents) of all fire protection systems. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 2 and 3.]*
- The Building Professionals Board continue with its introduction of a system of accreditation of certifiers for the categories of fire safety engineering compliance, building hydraulics compliance, electrical services compliance and mechanical services compliance. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1 and 2.]*
- The Office of Fair Trading as part of the rewriting of the *Home Building Act 1989* consider making sprinkler fitting a licence category in its own right which would restrict the performance of sprinkler fitting work to persons possessing specific competencies in sprinkler fitting rather than general plumbing competencies. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 2 and 3.]*
- The Office of Fair Trading include in its compliance program the regular targeting of compliance with the contractor and occupational licensing requirements of the *Home Building Act 1989* by sprinkler fitting contractors and workers. *[This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 2 and 3.]*

5.1(v) *Information communication*

- Steps be taken to improve the communication of building fire protection system information to end users (designers, installers, authorities, maintenance contractors, owners/occupiers, prospective owners/occupiers, etc.) – including information regarding the extent, capability, basis of design and maintenance of these systems. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1 to 6.*]

5.1(vi) *Education and training*

- The education and training of fire protection system industry practitioners regarding the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the development control system (in so far as they apply to their work) be enhanced. Education/training at TAFE/University should include a sufficient component which covers these subjects to an appropriate level. CPD training on these subjects should also be implemented for the various professions. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1, 2, 4 and 6.*]
- The education and training of certifying authorities regarding their roles and responsibilities in the approval of fire protection systems be enhanced. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1, 2, 4 and 6.*]
- The fire protection industry organisations be encouraged to continue with their efforts to develop national competency standards and associated training packages for occupations within the industry. The competencies standards to be consistent with the concepts under the legislation that applies in New South Wales. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1 to 6.*]
- Each organisation represented on the Working Party, and industry, examine means for enhancing education and continuing professional development of practitioners involved in the fire protection industry. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue numbers 1 to 6.*]

5.2 **Alternative solutions**

- The Department of Planning continue with its review of whether any improvements are required to the NSW Planning System to ensure the adequacy and ongoing integrity of Alternative Solutions under the Building Code of Australia. [*This recommendation is intended to address issue number 4.*]

Please send any comments or submissions to:-

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Final date for submissions: 30 May 2008

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