



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 12 November, 2019

Cladding Crisis: Still So Many Questions

Stuart Grimley MP has fired questions at the Government about the cladding crisis which is now infiltrating regional Victoria including in the Geelong, Ballarat and Surf Coast areas but many have remained unanswered.

During debate of the *Building Amendment (Cladding Rectification) Bill* today, Mr Grimley posed many questions to the Government about why there was such limited information publicly available about the cladding crisis.

The Bill - which passed - will allow the State Government to pursue 'dodgy' builders who use dangerous combustible cladding and legislates a building levy (regional buildings are exempt).

A [state-wide audit](#) of possible dangerously cladded buildings identified 16 within City of Greater Geelong, 8 within the Surf Coast and 6 in the Ballarat area but the exact locations are not known due to risk of arson.

This is despite some metropolitan tenants/home owners receiving letters from the Victorian Building Authority warning them that their home could be dangerously cladded.

After questions from Mr Grimley about the number of affected buildings in the Geelong Region, it became clear the Government still don't know, meaning that the Victorian Building Authority's tally of possibly affected buildings (16 in Geelong region) could be well below initial estimates.

More locally, Mr Grimley asked the Government about the Reg Hickey Stand at GMHBA Stadium as it was revealed last month that it features combustible cladding. It was discovered no timeline has been provided for rectification works to commence at the Stadium, despite direct questions from local MP Stuart Grimley, however the Government stated "no safety risk has been identified".

This is despite mitigation strategies being undertaken by the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust including not allowing smoking near the stand whilst assessments are undertaken by Government.

Mr Grimley asked the Government if any of the already announced \$300m rectification package had been spent in Geelong, Ballarat or the Surf Coast but the Government couldn't say.

Mr Grimley's main point of contention regarding the cladding crisis is the lack of transparency about the exact public buildings that could be covered in combustible cladding, as this could be a school, hospital or library.

Mr Grimley was disappointed that the Government could redirect the building levy revenue into consolidated funds - meaning they could spend the money on whatever they choose - and as such, supported an ultimately unsuccessful Liberal Democrats amendment that sought to have the building levy revenue straight back into the rectification works.

The Justice Party also supported an amendment which would have limited the building levy to four years rather than indefinitely, but this also failed.

A review of the building levy will take place in 4 years.



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Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“Mistakes have been made when it comes to cladding and I hope those people are held accountable for the damage. I welcome the ability for the Government to pursue dodgy builders on behalf of home owners.

I pressed for information about GMHBA Stadium’s cladding situation but the Government either don’t know or aren’t saying anything which is frustrating. I think patrons have a right to know.

However my main concern is that since the uncovering of this huge issue, the Government haven’t been transparent about publicly owned buildings – such as hospitals and schools – being covered in dangerous cladding. But further the inability to find out where they are is distressing.”

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