

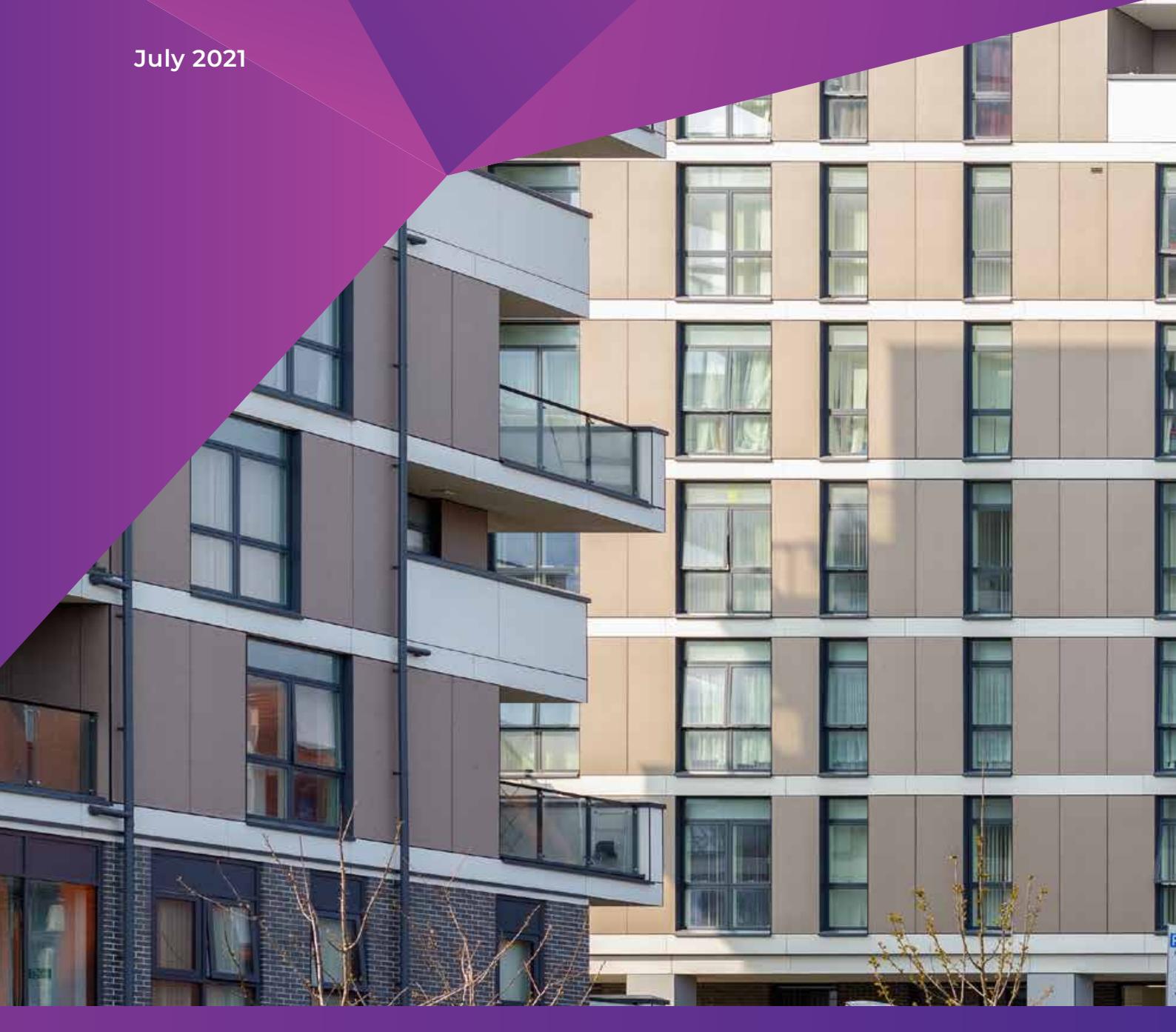


ACT
Government

MAJOR PROJECTS CANBERRA

Does my building have cladding?
Might it be combustible cladding?

July 2021



CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Ways of identifying whether a building may have combustible cladding.....	5
3. Eligibility – when is the reasonable assessment test fulfilled?.....	7
Questions?.....	8

OCT

1. INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government is establishing a grant (rebate) scheme to assist Owners Corporations of multi-unit apartment buildings to undertake initial testing and engineering investigations.

This will enable Owners Corporations to understand the cladding related risk of their buildings and the potential costs for remediation.

The identification of buildings with combustible cladding through testing and assessment will:

- inform building owners whether their building presents a safety risk due to the materials used in the external walls;
- give clear, expert guidance to Owners Corporations as to what actions they need to take to manage the risk level of their building; and
- inform the ACT Government about what level of remediation support might be needed to assist Owners.

One of the criteria of the Scheme is that only Owners Corporations who make a **reasonable judgement that the cladding on their building may be combustible cladding** are eligible for the Scheme. For Owners Corporations interested in applying for the Scheme - this Guide should be read in conjunction with the Scheme Guidelines. This Guide provides tips on which Owners Corporations can base a reasonable judgement as to whether the cladding on their building is combustible cladding.

It is important to note that the only definitive way to know whether a building has combustible cladding is to have the cladding tested by a building professional, such as a fire engineer. This Guide helps Owners Corporations determine whether they should undertake this step.

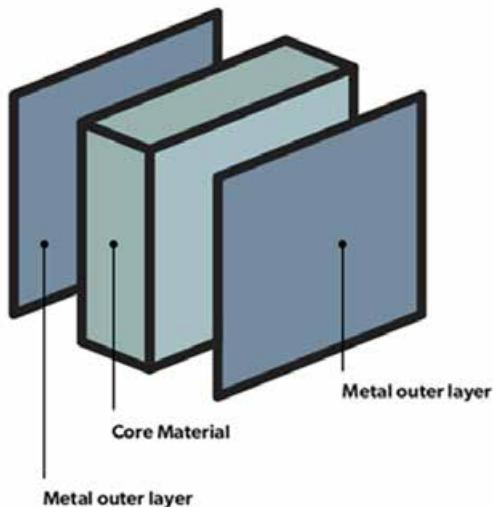
Given that such tests may be costly and time consuming, this Guide may also be used by building owners, of all other types of buildings that are not eligible for the Scheme, if they are uncertain whether they might have combustible cladding on their buildings and are seeking guidance before spending money on testing.

WHAT IS CLADDING AND WHAT IS COMBUSTIBLE CLADDING?

Cladding is one type of building material that can be used on the outside skin on a building. Cladding is used to provide thermal insulation and weather resistance, and to improve the appearance of buildings. Certain types of cladding can catch alight at relatively low temperatures – these are known as combustible cladding. There are two types of combustible cladding:

- Aluminum Composite Panels, and
- Expanded Polystyrene.

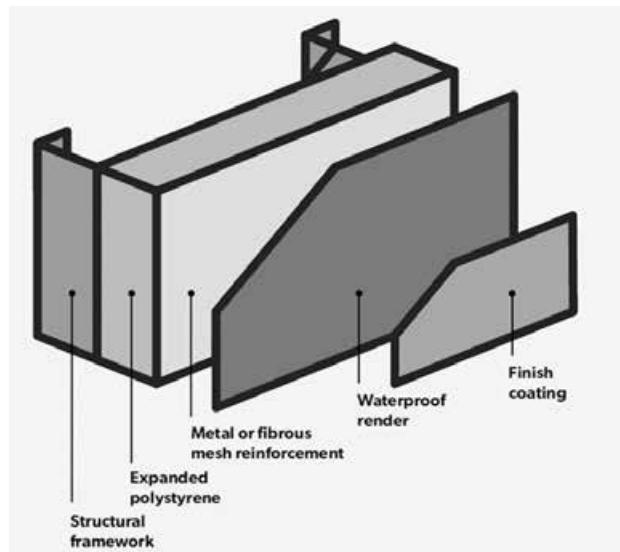
These types of combustible cladding are described below.



Metal composite panels

Metal Composite Panels (MCP) also known as Aluminium Composite Panels (ACP) are commonly used as cladding or applied to a building as part of a cladding system.

MCPs are comprised of a core material laminated between two sheets of metal, such as aluminium, zinc or copper. Depending on the panel, the core may be aluminium, mineral or a polymer. MCP has been used in cladding on walls, balconies, palings, decorative features and around doors.



Expanded Polystyrene

Expanded Polystyrene comprises of expanding foam, foam panels or similar products that are fixed to a structural frame and then sealed, rendered and painted. To identify expanded polystyrene tapping on the wall will produce a hollow thud sound, which is unlike the sound made when tapping brick, concrete or other high-density forms of construction.

02

2. WAYS OF IDENTIFYING WHETHER A BUILDING MAY HAVE COMBUSTIBLE CLADDING

It is not possible to confirm cladding is combustible by looking from the ground.

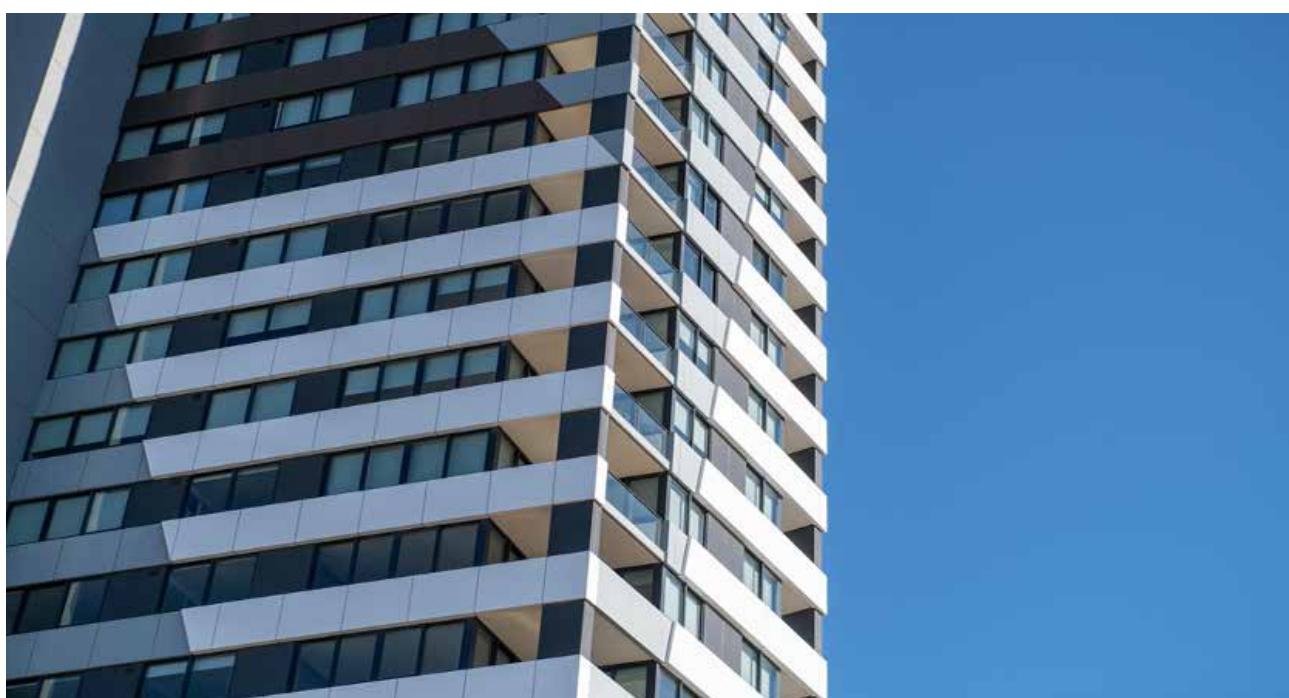
Expert investigations, including removing panels or taking samples for testing, is the only reliable way of differentiating combustible cladding from other types of cladding.

At this stage, the presence of cladding is grounds for reasonable judgement that it may be combustible cladding, unless building owners are satisfied that other information they have, such as documentation of materials actually installed on the building, indicate that a non-combustible cladding product was used.

2.1 VISUAL INSPECTION

A visual inspection of the building may be able to assist you assess whether a building has cladding. Cladding may be white, grey or it may be coloured. It may be used to cover a whole external wall of a building or only part of it, such as around windows or doors or on balconies. While a visual guide may not be conclusive – it is often a good starting point for further investigation. Examples of buildings with cladding are below.

Building with cladding underneath windows



Cladding on one external wall of a building



Cladding interspersed with other materials



Note – the images provided above have been gratefully provided by Fairview

Brightly coloured cladding over entire walls of buildings



2.2 INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

While it is not a requirement of the application for the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme, your Owners Corporation or Strata Manager may want to obtain relevant documents pertaining to the building, such as permits and drawings from the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) or the relevant building certifier. These documents may document the types of building material that was used when the building was being built. However, not all documents record this type of information and the products actually installed on the building may differ from those specified and approved to be installed.

2.3 SPEAK TO THE ORIGINAL BUILDER OR ARCHITECT

Again, it is not a requirement of the application, but an Owners Corporation may want to approach the builder who installed the cladding, the architect who designed the building, or the product manufacturer to seek information they may have on the materials used on their building.

03

3. ELIGIBILITY – WHEN IS THE REASONABLE ASSESSMENT TEST FULFILLED?

If you have taken any or all of the steps above, and are of the view that:

- Your building looks like it has cladding (and therefore that it could possibly be combustible cladding);
- Your documentation indicates that an Aluminium Composite Panel or Expanded Polystyrene System was used; or
- Your architect, builder or certifier has advised you that these products were used on your building;

then this is sufficient to meet the eligibility criteria that you have reasonable grounds to suspect that the building has combustible cladding.

QUESTIONS?

Additional information can be obtained from our website at:

act.gov.au/majorprojectscanberra/our-projects/act-cladding-rectification-program

If you would like to talk to a staff member, please contact us on **(02) 6205 3303** between 9.30am and 5pm daily. You can also email us at **CladdingProgram@act.gov.au**.