

Combustible: FOUR CORNERS

Airs Monday 4th September 2017

Combustible: The dangerous legacy of failed regulation in the building industry

"You shouldn't have a combustible product on the outside of a building of this type, so how has this been allowed to happen?" Fire officer

Across Australia, governments, councils and the building industry are grappling with a problem so large, it almost defies belief.

"It's unquantifiable..." Senior Fire Officer

Residential buildings, hospitals, shopping centres and commercial buildings, have been built with flammable aluminium cladding, posing a potentially serious fire risk.

"As soon as I saw that on television that night, straight away I knew it was a cladding fire." Cladding supplier

It took the catastrophic Grenfell Tower fire in London, which claimed at least 80 lives, to set off alarm bells here, but as Four Corners will reveal, the danger posed by this cladding should not have come as a surprise.

"You can't tell me that if this product, by all reports, has been used widely in the industry for 10 to 30 years, that major suppliers ... didn't know where this product was going to end up." Fire officer

On Monday, Four Corners investigates why huge amounts of this aluminium cladding has been installed on so many of our buildings, and whether a desire to cut costs won out over caution.

"We have, if you will, a builder, a certifier and a fire engineer who are incentivized to reduce cost." Fire Engineer

Insiders say there has been a colossal failure of regulation and oversight.

"There's people out there that would have absolutely no idea what they're doing and they're installing it incorrectly, and they're the people we compete against every day." Builder

With access to the tests now under way on suspect aluminium cladding, we reveal the enormity of the problem facing authorities and ask who will pay to remove and replace it.

"Everyone has someone else to point the finger at. The product of deregulation and self accreditation, this process of abrogation of responsibility is that no one is responsible." Federal politician

Combustible, reported by Debbie Whitmont and presented by Sarah Ferguson, goes to air on Monday 4th September at 8.30pm. It is replayed on Tuesday 5th September at 10.00am and Wednesday 6th at 11pm. It can also be seen on ABC NEWS channel on Saturday at 8.10pm AEST, [ABC iview](#) and at abc.net.au/4corners.