

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 

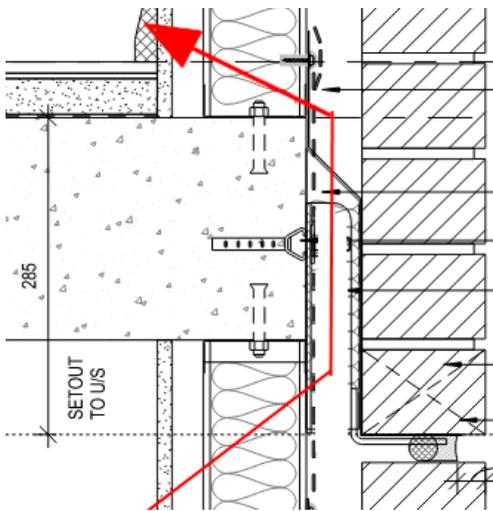
Welcome to our second newsletter. Hopefully everyone is coping during these times.

Newsletters will be issued throughout the year to keep members informed of what the SFS Committee (national and state) are doing.

The unfilled role of Conference Coordinator has been filled, please see below.

Each newsletter will also be posted in the SFS website: <http://societyfiresafety.com.au/newsaevents>

We would like to use this forum to discuss industry concerns in relation to building practices. Please contact Sarnia Rusbridge if you have any particular areas of concern you would like addressed.



External walls & cavity barriers

Where should slabs and bounding walls finish? At the inner face of the external wall or the outer face? Often the construction stops at the inner face, such that cavities occur, providing paths for fire spread. Is a metal shelf angle adequate fire stopping? And what about floors where the brick spans two levels so there is no shelf angle?

Cavity barriers are not specifically mentioned in the BCA other than in CV3 (not mandatory) and Specification C1.13 (fire-protected timber). Should fire engineers be looking at the details of external walls and raising this as a potential concern? Should we be requiring detailing as per Approved Document B from the UK for example, regardless as to whether we are involved with the design of the external walls?

Some questions to get everyone thinking. If you'd like to discuss this further, head to the SFS LinkedIn and join the discussion on this topic.



National Conference Coordinator position has been filled.

René Hutter is a fire safety engineer and bushfire practitioner, who possesses over 18 years of experience having worked throughout Europe and Australia, in both the public and private sectors.

René has worked on significant complex projects from stadiums to airport terminals to high-rise mixed-use developments and recently with government departments for the review of combustible cladding. René also has interests in bushfire and has recently achieved Level 2 accreditation in Bushfire Planning & Design with the FPAA.

Outside of work, René enjoys paddle boarding and retro style camping in his 1975 VW kombi.

Practice Notes and Guides

NSW has previously prepared Practice Notes in relation to glazing (internal and external use) and final inspections, and is now proposing to open these up to all states to convert these to Practice Guides.

A Practice Guide is proposed to be prepared to assist with the use of the existing 'Cladding' Practice Guide.

Please keep an eye out for calls to participate in these working groups.

Verification Method

SFS issued a draft practice guide on the VM. Comments have been received from members, with the comments being currently reviewed and a response to the comments prepared.

Quantification of Performance Requirements

ABCB are still proposing to include quantified performance requirements in BCA 2022. The extent of this is still to be determined. SFS is participating in discussions with the ABCB via videoconference.

ABCB has engaged consultants to begin gathering the data that will be required for the performance requirements.

Warren Centre

The Warren Centre has issued Report 5 (Competencies). Please check out their website to download and read all of the reports.

<https://thewarrencentre.org.au/project/fire-safety-engineering/>

Australian Standards

Public comment draft for AS 3959 has been issued, comments due 26 June 2020.

A proposal has been put forward for the revision of AS 1668.2-2012 (the use of ventilation and air-conditioning in buildings-Mechanical ventilation in buildings) and an amendment to AS 1668.4-2012 (the use of ventilation and air-conditioning in buildings - Natural ventilation of buildings) is proposed.

Insurance Seminar

The NSW Chapter held a Technical Information Session on Fire Safety Engineering & Contractual Risk Management in 2019. A draft contract has been prepared, which will be issued to members after an upcoming seminar on 12 August 2020.

VIC

A seminar was held in relation to the Verification Method. This was initially intended as a Victoria only event with a similar event planned in Sydney later in the year. Due to Covid-19 the event was moved online and turned it into a national event. The event was well represented with more than 240 participants. The event was recorded, and it is intended to make the recording available soon.

Elections were held, and the new VIC committee consists of:

- Kjetil Pedersen - Chair
- Jarl Skold – Deputy chair
- Blair Stratton – Past chair
- Ulf Johansson - Secretary
- Kate Nguyen – CPD Coordinator
- Tony Minhinnick
- Simon Widjaja
- Mathew Freeman

Kjetil represented SFS, along with EA, in a stakeholder dialogue session on the topic of “Improper Service Penetration of Fire and Smoke Walls in Class 2 to 9” at the request of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) to explore the findings of BehaviourWorks Australia’s research into this topic.

Kjetil represented SFS and provided insights and the perspective from fire safety engineering viewpoint on building regulations and linked topics to NOUS Group in a recent interview. NOUS Group are conducting a review of the building regs on behalf of the VBA.

Kjetil, on behalf of SFS, is providing feedback via to EA to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on the proposed combustible cladding ban in Victoria. The Minister for Planning in Victoria has declared his intent to prohibit the following external wall cladding products from being used by any person in the course of carrying out any building work in connection with the construction of a building:

- expanded polystyrene in external wall cladding systems on buildings of Type A or Type B construction; and
- aluminium composite panels with a core or lamina comprised of less than 93 per cent inert mineral filler (inert content) by mass in external wall cladding systems on buildings of Type A or Type B.

Any person is able to make a submission in relation to the above.

Submissions are to be made no later than 31 October 2020.

Submissions can be emailed directly to DELWP:

cladding@delwp.vic.gov.au

Should you have any comments, suggestions or concerns relating to any of the above, or other, matters, please contact any of the representatives on the Vic committee.

NSW

Edmund Ag and Sarnia Rusbridge represented SFS, along with EA, in front of the NSW Legislative Council Public Accountability Inquiry into the regulation of building standards, building quality, and building disputes. Report can be found here ([link](#)).

SFS members are representing EA sub-committees of the Certifier Practice Guide Reference Group with the NSW Government.

The Design and Building Practitioners Bill has been passed. SFS will be involved in going discussions with the FPAA and Building Commissioner as to the implementation of this.

SFS and FRNSW, along with other stakeholders are discussing issues relating to cladding with the NSW Government. Clarification has been provided by the NSW Government that the cladding ban does not automatically apply to existing buildings.

Based on this meeting, FRNSW has raised concerns with several cladding assessment reports they have seen that are qualitative and/or have solely relied on a Certificate of Conformity that is no longer valid. It also appears in general that assessments are not in accordance with the SFS Practice Guide. Another common issue is that products are not being appropriately identified as required by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 'Guide for the Assessment of Buildings with Combustible Cladding'. They would also like to remind members that FRNSW have some information regarding external combustible cladding on their webpage:

<https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9323>

SA/NT

A quarterly update emails has been sent to all SA/NT members and a virtual committee meeting will be held in the coming weeks. Please contact the committee with any issues or suggestions.

Seminars

SFS anticipates that there will be a lot more events being hosted online (or with a physical location with combined online access) going forward. This will mean we can more easily reach our members in more remote regions as well as;

1. not having to do the same seminar in multiple locations, meaning we can free up speakers and timeslots and instead have more varied seminars, and
2. being able to use presenters that may not otherwise be easy to access for a face-to-face seminar.

Upcoming Events

NSW will be hosting a National webinar on the 8 July regarding Fire Safety Engineering in Existing Buildings. A flier will be issued once speakers are confirmed.

VIC will be hosting a National webinar on Bushfire, date to be advised.