



Independent certification **THE ONLY WAY FORWARD FOR INSULATION INDUSTRY**

A national insulation certification scheme has been launched which overcomes the serious, widespread issue of the continuing flood of non-compliant insulation products and services into Australia & New Zealand.

The Insulation Australasia (IA) scheme is based on the premise that all insulation products and services should be 3rd party certified as compliant to Building Code of Australia standards, which will ensure that consumers get products that are fit for purpose and can be installed to deliver the performance level they paid for.

Insulation Australasia (IA) is a product agnostic industry association representing Australian and New Zealand insulation manufacturers, wholesalers, importers, fabricators and installers as a single voice to Government, the public and the building and construction industry. It represents virtually all insulation product types currently available in the Trans Tasman region.

IA Chairman, Scott Gibson, says the crucial issue of non-compliant building products and services has been compromising the whole of the Trans-Tasman building industry for the past 20 years and it had to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Gibson continued that the Trans-Tasman insulation industry is currently riddled with non-compliant product in the aftermath of the Home Insulation Program.

"Unfortunately certified product compliance in our industry is the exception not the rule, so Insulation Australasia sees itself playing a crucial role on behalf of Trans-Tasman regulators in delivering industry-wide self-regulation of all insulation products and installation services.

"With no mandatory third party certification program in place until now, the industry is susceptible to fraud through unscrupulous trading companies and manufacturers who misrepresent performance, doctor certificates and counterfeit compliance logos and industry accreditation.

Furthermore this jeopardises the jobs and livelihoods of those legitimate industry participants who do manufacture, supply and install insulation products that do meet Australian and New Zealand product and installation standards.

"Last year's HIA housing industry summit in Sydney identified the problem that inconsistent compliance regulations are promoting this uneven playing field between ethical manufacturers that comply with standards and those manufacturers and importers who take advantage of the current lax regulatory framework.

"It's clear that manufacturers who do the right thing are being disadvantaged against those that neither invest in producing products that meet Australian standards nor programs to demonstrate compliance."

Mr. Gibson, says that after the belting the industry wrongfully received in Australia following the Home Insulation Program of 2009/10, his members' primary aim is to restore faith in the industry and promote the internationally established fact that the cheapest energy is the energy that's saved, and that well-made and correctly installed insulation products have a meaningful cost effective contribution to this outcome.

“When you consider that insulation above all other components of a building has the most significant impact on energy consumption over the life of that building you would expect a strict regulatory environment around its manufacture and installation.

“Sadly this is not the case and IA has identified that this needs to change to ensure both consumer protection and a sustainable industry.”

“With energy prices expected to rise by as much as 40% over the next five years, there’s an increasing urgency to continue to improve the regulatory environment around building insulation products and installation, particularly given that about 60% of Australian homes are still inadequately insulated.”

Best ever opportunity

Mr. Gibson said the Australia and New Zealand insulation industry now faces it’s best ever opportunity to promote world’s best-practice in energy efficiency and insulation technology in the pursuit of lower carbon emissions and energy costs within the built environment.

He said IA has registered some major achievements since its late 2011 launch, including:

- Successfully applying to the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) for funding to establish a nationwide insulation installer course to be recognised by State Governments, the HIA, MBA and trade unions, with industry stakeholder consultations will begin after 1 July 2013
- Gaining membership of the Standards Australia BD058 insulation product committee (currently finishing its review of the AS3999:1992 installation standard) + the FP018 Fire Committee which is currently reviewing AS 1540.4 Methods for fire tests on building materials, components and structures
- Full membership of the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) as a full member, giving IA access to the drivers of Australian building energy efficiency policy.

He said it’s an established fact that the Trans Tasman building sector has the biggest potential to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions, both in the short and in the long term, ahead of many of the much touted renewable initiatives currently on the political agenda.

“Governments need to do more to promote insulation’s environmental and saving benefits, particularly when you consider that in Australia now only 60% of homes are insulated, with many of them under-insulated.

“Every fossil energy unit, or kWh of electricity unnecessarily used to heat or cool buildings could and should be kept for other purposes, for which alternatives are not available or less convenient”, Mr Gibson said.

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