



Plain Language Statement

At what cost? Cladding concerns for owners

Plain Language Statement

Dr Simon Lockrey
School of Design
RMIT University
(03) 9925 9021
simon.lockrey@rmit.edu.au

Dr Trivess Moore
School of Property and Construction Management
RMIT University
(03) 9925 9071
trivess.moore@rmit.edu.au

Dr David Oswald
School of Property and Construction Management
RMIT University
(03) 9925 1091
david.oswald@rmit.edu.au

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project '***At what cost? Cladding concerns for owners***'. We are interested in learning more about scale of the problems owners of property affected by combustible cladding face day to day across Australia, particularly those living in apartments. This information sheet describes the project in straightforward language, or 'plain English'. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

We are conducting primary research at RMIT to better understand the problems owners of property affected by combustible cladding face day to day across Australia.

Why have you been approached?

You have been approached because; you are an owner of property affected by combustible cladding; and/ or you have insights about what owners of property affected by combustible cladding face day to day across Australia.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

For two decades, the Australian construction boom in high density residential buildings has run unabated. As this acceleration in construction has led to new building techniques, higher resourcing requirements and policy changes to keep up with demand, which has led to a culture of significant building defects estimated at affecting between

65-80% of buildings built (Shergold and Weir 2018, Johnston et al 2019). These defects are attributed to failures of policy, regulatory policing, training and practice, and owners are often left to pay for rectification with a culture of building actors seeking to avoid responsibility i.e. through corporate restructure and legal loopholes (Shergold and Weir 2018, Johnston et al 2019, Lockrey 2019).

Inappropriate cladding is a major defect commonly detected in new medium and high-density buildings (Johnston et al 2019). In 2017, combustible cladding fuelled the Grenfell tower fire in the UK, which killed 72 people, as well as led to fires in Australia and overseas. As such Australian authorities acted to ban such cladding. Nearly two years on from the Grenfell disaster, there is ongoing tension between policymakers, the building industry and owners about how to resolve the problem of combustible cladding (Lockrey and Moore 2019). At this stage Australian apartment owners face a bill that could run into billions of dollars to replace combustible cladding.

Little information is available about the scale of the problems owners face day to day across Australia, particularly those living in apartments. At this stage, no review has been conducted about what has happened to them financially, socially, behaviourally and spatially. This study looks to explore such issues owners are facing in the face of living with combustible cladding on their homes.

Given you are an owner of property affected by combustible cladding; we would like to hear about your experiences of the scale of the problems you face day to day. This research involves a 30-60 minute audio-recorded in-person or telephone interview where we would like to ask you a range of open-ended questions. Your answers will form the basis of range of peer reviewed reports, journal articles, conference paper/s and/ or press releases. The interviews of key stakeholders will help inform the study, with the following types of questions asked:

- Are you an owner of property affected by combustible cladding? How big is it/ how many dwellings in your building?
- What have the social effects of being an owner of property affected by combustible cladding?
- Has being an owner of property affected by combustible cladding affected your residential status? (i.e. spatial effects)
- Has being an owner of property affected by combustible cladding affected your behaviour?
- What have been the financial implications of being an owner of property affected by combustible cladding?

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you would like to volunteer – you would be required to complete two tasks.

1. Read the questions above prior to an interview, and sign the consent form attached
2. Participate in either a face to face or telephone interview after reading the pre-defined questions. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed to assist us in capturing the detail of the interview.

What are the risks or disadvantages associated with participation?

Participation in voluntary, there are no perceived risks outside of participating, if at any time you are uncomfortable you will be welcome to stop participating, While the risks of the study are low, there is the potential for misinterpretation of the information you provide, so opportunities will be given for you to review its representation and clarify where necessary. Given the small sample size and the stakeholder group is publically known, there is a risk of identification, however every attempt will be made to remove identifying information if you require it.

What are the benefits associated with participation?

Participation will provide insight into helping to inform the responses to the cladding crisis, which may include government support, policy, regulatory changes and changes to the industry. The knowledge gained also helps build a body of knowledge and a case for further research in this area.

What are my rights as a participant?

As a participant, you have the right to:

- Withdraw your participation at any time, without prejudice.
- The right to have any questions answered at any time.
- The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed provided it can be reliably identified.
- The right to request that audio recording be terminated at any stage during an interview.

What will happen to the information I provide?

The privacy of the personal information you provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where you have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. The results of the research will be kept securely at RMIT for a period of 5 years before being destroyed. Participants can have identifying information removed if they so desire.

This research is being undertaken for an audience of housing stakeholders, policy advisors, media and academics. In the future there may be additional opportunities for the data to be used in further research; however we will re-contact participants to request permission to use it in any unanticipated ways. Confidentiality related to any further use will be discussed with you at that point in time.

Confidentiality will be treated on a case-by-case basis, being your choice to remain anonymous or be identified in the research. We will assume your information is to remain confidential unless otherwise stated by you and will use pseudonyms/codes in reference to your data. Also, if particular buildings, governments or building industry stakeholders relevant to your situation are sensitive, for instance litigation targets, we can also assist in keeping them confidential at you request. We will share a draft of the research findings with you to solicit feedback prior to submission for publication.

The data will be stored on secure RMIT network, only accessible by the project researchers, whilst hand notes will be kept in locked cabinets on campus.

The outcomes of the project will be made public through reports, conference papers and/ or peer reviewed journal articles. Further dissemination may include media releases and general aggregated results posted on RMIT University websites. For the latter, consent will be sought from participants via email if their data are to be used. If you have further questions please contact Simon Lockrey on (03) 9925 9021.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Lockrey



Simon Lockrey
Lecturer
School of Design
RMIT University

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers listed in this document, then you may contact:

Reviewing HREC name	RMIT University
HREC Secretary	Peter Burke
Telephone	03 9925 2251
Email	human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Mailing address	Research Ethics Co-ordinator Research Integrity Governance and Systems RMIT University GPO Box 2476 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Consent Form

RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews or Disclosure of Personal Information

PORTFOLIO OF Design and Social Context
SCHOOL/CENTRE OF School of Design
Name of participant: _____
Project Title: At what cost? Cladding concerns for owners
Name(s) of investigators: (1) Simon Lockrey Phone: 03 - 9925 9021
(2) Trivess Moore Phone: 03 - 9925 9071
(3) David Oswald Phone: 03 - 9925 1091

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interview - have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me.
4. I give my permission to be audio taped Yes No
5. I acknowledge that:
 - a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study to participate in 1 x 1 hour interview.
 - b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
 - c) The project is for the purpose of research. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.
 - d) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to _____ (researcher to specify). Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used.

Participant's Consent

Name: _____ Date: _____
(Participant)

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers listed in this document, then you may contact:

Reviewing HREC name	RMIT University
HREC Secretary	Peter Burke
Telephone	03 9925 2251
Email	human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Mailing address	Research Ethics Co-ordinator Research Integrity Governance and Systems RMIT University GPO Box 2476 MELBOURNE VIC 3001