

AGED CARE — FIRE SAFETY SYSTEMS

1532. Ms M.M. Quirk to the Minister for Emergency Services:

Can the Minister advise what the current government policy is in ensuring fire safety and alarms in nursing homes and aged care facilities?

Mr J.M. Francis replied:

All nursing homes built today come under the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire safety installations. Buildings are classified within the Building Code of Australia by a numbering system in which Nursing homes are Classified as a 9c — Aged care building.

Numerous fire safety systems are installed within aged care buildings depending on the size of the construction:

- Age care buildings have fire sprinklers installed throughout;
- Fire hydrants are also installed once the total building floor area exceeds 500m²;
- Automatic smoke detection and alarm systems are installed;
- Buildings are to be divided into areas not more than 500m² by smoke-proof walls; and
- Fire compartments must be separated from the remainder of the building by fire walls.
- Fire extinguishers are installed.

Any Aged Care Facility that has a prescriptive requirement to have a connection to a fire control station as required by the Building Code of Australia will be required to use the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Direct Brigade Alarm network.

All alarms connected to this network pass a rigorous compliance assessment prior to being connected to the Direct Brigade Alarm network. This in essence requires that the installed fire detection and suppression systems must be designed, installed and commissioned to the relevant Australian Standards.

On-site Direct Brigade Alarm inspection to verify the veracity of the supplied certifications.