ALL NSW NURSING HOMES TO HAVE FIRE SPRINKLERS

NSW Planning and Infrastructure Minister Brad Hazzard and NSW Minister for Ageing and Disability Services Andrew Constance have thanked the aged care industry for working with the Government to ensure all nursing homes in the state are fitted out with fire sprinkler systems within three years.

“The tragic events at Quakers Hill highlighted the need for better fire protection in aged care facilities,” Mr Hazzard said.

“The NSW Government has worked with the aged care industry to establish programs for installation of sprinklers.

“With the cooperation of the industry, NSW is on track to have all facilities fitted out by or before March 2016, giving residents and their families much greater assurance.”

Of the 885 Commonwealth-accredited aged care facilities registered with the NSW Government, almost half are already fully fitted out with fire sprinkler systems.

Of those still to install the systems, over a quarter have committed to install sprinklers by September 2014 and the remaining providers have committed to meeting a March 2016 deadline.

“I thank the industry for working constructively with the Government to achieve this important outcome for our aged care residents and their families,” Mr Constance said.

“Residents of aged care facilities are a vulnerable group and we know sprinklers not only help reduce a fires’ intensity but also helps buy critical time to safely evacuate residents.”

The NSW Liberals and Nationals introduced laws requiring automatic fire sprinkler systems be installed in residential aged care facilities following the 2011 Quakers Hill nursing home fire, which resulted in the tragic loss of many lives.

Aged care providers affected by the March 2016 deadline will be required to submit fire sprinkler implementation plans for each of their facilities by September 2013 and report on their progress every six months.

A newly established Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee (FSSIC) will monitor the installation of the systems, set requirements for implementation plans and progress reports. It will publish implementation plans and progress reports and report regularly to the Government.

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