

Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee Supplementary Report

April 2015

Purpose

This report supplements the March 2015 Annual Report of the Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee by providing updated information on the installation of fire sprinklers in existing residential aged care facilities in NSW.

This life safety program, which has been running since 1 January 2013, now has less than one year to run to the deadline for the majority of aged care facilities to complete their installations (ie. 1 March 2016).

This supplementary report is based on the latest data including February and March 2015 progress reports submitted for all remaining facilities and the applications received in February for 49 of these facilities to postpone their installation completion date by up to one year.

The latest data confirms the conclusion reached in the 2015 Annual Report that good progress has been made and a high level of industry cooperation is apparent at the half way point in the program.

Current status

As at 8 April 2015:

- 242 facilities had concluded the program
- 80 facilities were in the process of completing their installations
- 144 facilities were in planning, design or approval phases of their installations.

This means that over 600 facilities now have sprinklers out of the over 880 facilities counted at the beginning of 2013.

The breakdown for the 18-month group (required completion by 1 September 2014) and the 3-year group (required completion by 1 March 2016) is shown below.

Figure 1: Facility installation status as at 8 April 2015

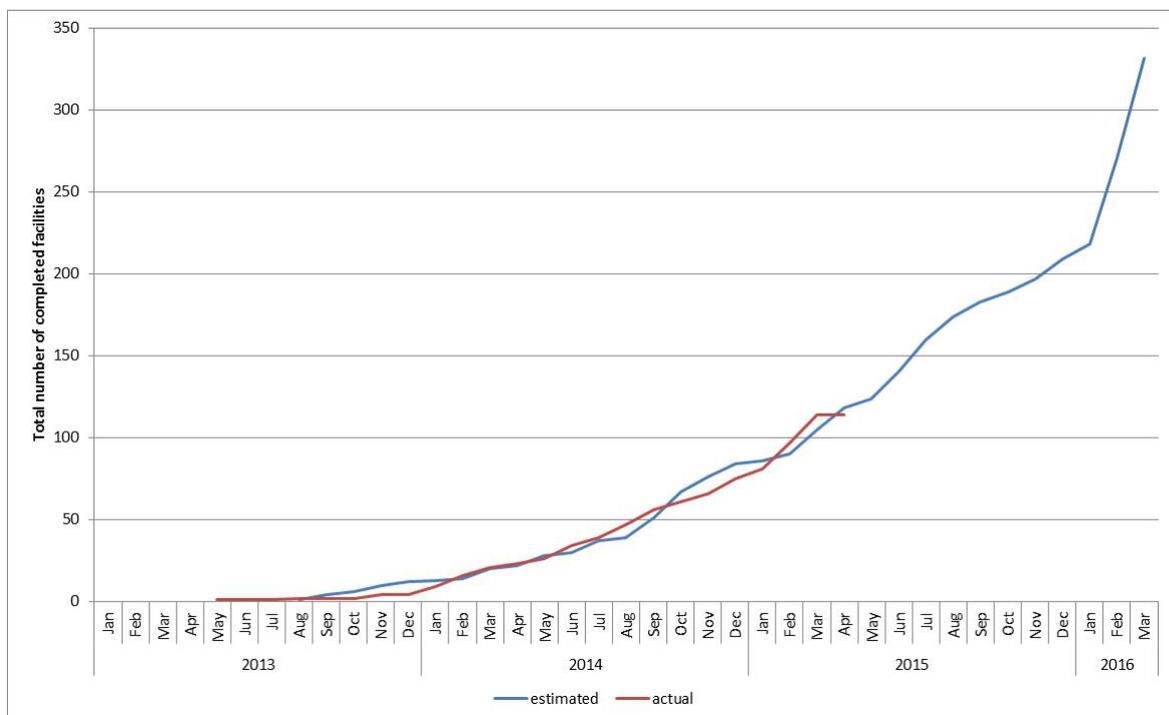
Facility installation status	18-month group	3-year group
Not yet started	0 (0.0%)	15 (4.2%)
Project planning	0 (0.0%)	28 (7.9%)
Design phase	0 (0.0%)	44 (12.5%)
Approval phase	1 (0.8%)	71 (20.1%)
Installation phase	17 (13.3%)	63 (17.8%)
Concluded program	110 (86.0%)	132 (37.4%)
TOTAL	128 (100%)	353 (100%)

From the 18-month group, one facility that was granted a postponement is due to complete installation soon.

In addition, seven facilities that started installing without obtaining planning or building approval beforehand (including some 18-month facilities), have completed their installations and are in the process of completing documentation to independently certify that the system complies with relevant technical standards and to facilitate maintenance of the system to the required standard.

With installations for facilities in the 18-month group virtually complete, program monitoring is firmly focused on the 3-year group. This group has been tracking well with most aged care providers so far achieving their completion date goals.

Chart 1: 3-year group – total actual completions compared with estimated completions
(estimates supplied by aged care providers on quarterly basis; actual completions information supplied as they occur)



Upcoming issues

Overall, the program has made very good progress to date and the aged care industry has shown a high level of support for the Government's safety initiative.

Some factors are anticipated, however, to slow down the progress of some installations.

The Implementation Committee is currently assessing postponement applications for 49 facilities. This assessment will include reviewing fire safety reports for each of these facilities.

The Committee has recently established a sub-committee to fast-track the review of the fire safety reports that accompany postponement applications. The full Committee will continue to determine postponement applications against the overall postponement criteria, including input from the fire safety reports.

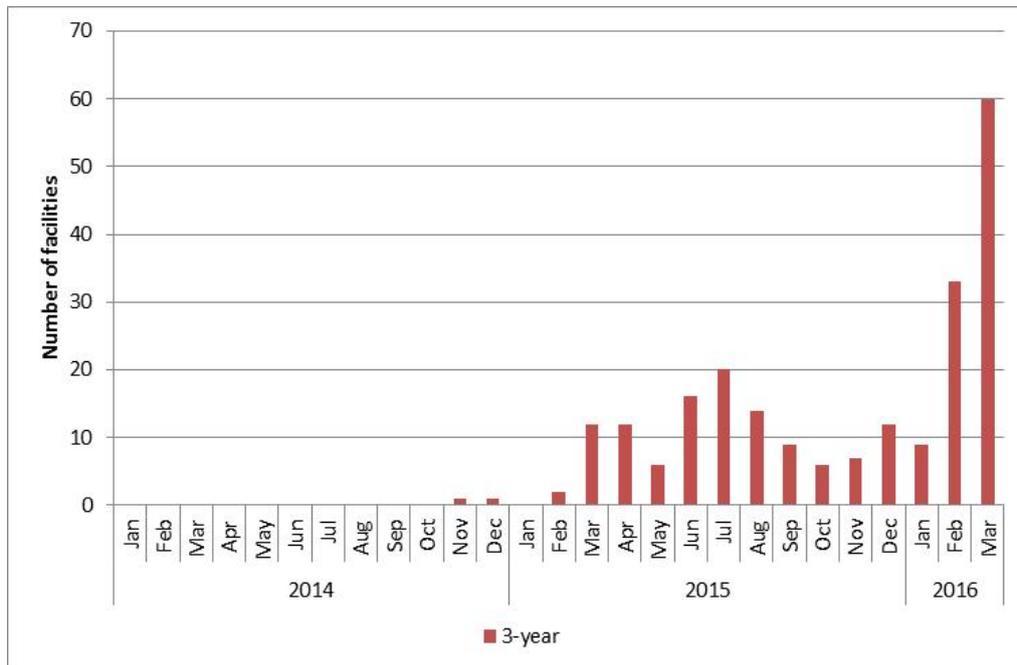
These applications are demonstrating a number of patterns in the market. One is the replacement of older buildings with new building stock – new residential aged care buildings must include a fire sprinkler system.

It is clear that aged care providers are weighing up whether to install sprinklers in their older building or whether to replace the building entirely. Replacement can mean upgrading the building to meet current resident preferences such as single room with ensuite, replacing the older model of four beds to a room.

An issue for the fire sprinkler program is whether the new facility will come online to meet the deadline of 1 March 2016 (where a postponement application was not submitted or is not granted) or March 2017 if the maximum postponement is approved.

Another issue is that there are some signs of potential constraints on supply of designers and installers of sprinkler systems. The distribution chart below shows a peak in demand at the end of the program. This peak should be moderated by the determination of postponement applications and setting of new deadlines in some cases. It may also be the case that this cluster of estimated completions is due in part to cautious reporting by some aged care providers. The Committee will continue to monitor supply and demand issues and advise Government on this important matter.

Chart 2: 3-year group – distribution of providers’ estimated completion dates as at 8 April 2015



A small number of facilities have cited funding issues as a potential delay. This will be considered when the Committee assesses these postponement applications. In assessing applications, the Committee will continue to consider life safety issues together with other relevant issues, such as financial impacts on services and impacts on the provision of beds for the community.