

The Hon Tim Ayres
Minister for Industry and Innovation
Minister for Science
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

Via email: senator.ayers@aph.gov.au

24 June 2026

Subject: Construction industry concerns regarding the closure of CSIRO's fire testing facility

Dear Minister

We write on behalf of the Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF), representing Australia's peak construction, engineering, design, building and fire industry organisations.

Collectively, our organisations represent a significant proportion of Australia's construction industry and the businesses, professionals, manufacturers, contractors and asset owners responsible for the design, construction, certification, operation and maintenance of the nation's built environment.

We are writing to express our concern regarding the proposed closure of CSIRO's full-scale fire testing facility at North Ryde and the implications this may have for Australia's future fire testing, research and technical assessment capability.

While the issue may initially appear to be a fire safety matter, the implications extend far beyond the fire protection sector.

The facility supports critical activities across the construction supply chain, including product development and certification, standards development, building compliance, infrastructure delivery, manufacturing innovation, insurance assessment and the evaluation of emerging construction technologies.

For decades, the North Ryde facility has provided an independent, nationally recognised capability relied upon by industry, government, regulators, researchers and insurers.

The facility has supported the development of Australian standards, informed regulatory frameworks, enabled product innovation and provided the evidence base required to assess the fire performance of materials, systems and emerging technologies.

Importantly, the facility currently represents Australia's only nationally recognised full-scale fire testing capability of its kind.

Should this capability be lost before an alternative facility is identified, funded, established and operational, Australia would have no equivalent domestic capability available to support critical testing, research and technical assessment activities.

This would impact not only fire safety outcomes, but also housing delivery, critical infrastructure projects, advanced manufacturing, product innovation, regulatory decision-making and Australia's broader sovereign technical capability.

The importance of maintaining access to independent fire testing capability will only increase as Australia continues to adopt new construction methodologies and technologies, including mass timber construction, modular and prefabricated building systems, battery energy storage systems, renewable energy infrastructure and advanced manufacturing solutions.

Our collective view is that any transition should be carefully planned and coordinated to ensure continuity of capability, expertise and services.

In particular, there should be a clear commitment that existing capability will remain available until replacement arrangements are identified, funded, established and fully operational.

Equally important is the preservation of the specialist fire science expertise and institutional knowledge that has been developed over many decades and which would be difficult to replace if lost.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Australian Government work with CSIRO, industry and other stakeholders to:

- Maintain existing capability until a replacement solution is operational.
- Preserve specialist fire science expertise and institutional knowledge.
- Ensure continuity of testing, research and technical assessment services.
- Identify and evaluate future models for Australia's fire testing and research capability.
- Engage with industry to understand current and future testing requirements.
- Develop a long-term strategy that protects Australia's sovereign fire testing and research capability.

We believe there is a significant opportunity for government, industry and research organisations to work collaboratively to identify a sustainable pathway forward that preserves this important national capability while supporting Australia's broader objectives for housing, infrastructure, productivity, manufacturing and innovation.

Given the national significance of this capability, we respectfully request a meeting with you and relevant officials to discuss the proposed closure and its implications for industry.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Shannon Battisson LFRAIA
Chair
Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF)

On behalf of the following ACIF member organisations:

- Australian Institute of Architects
- Association of Consulting Architects Australia
- Fire Industry Alliance
- Fire Protection Association Australia
- Master Electricians Australia
- Design Institute of Australia
- Consult Australia
- Building Designers Association of Australia
- Society of Construction Law Australia
- Design Matters
- Association of Consulting Architects
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
- Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors
- Insulated Panel Council of Australia
- Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association
- Australian Association of Vertical Transport
- Interior Fitout Association
- National Association of Women in Construction