

MEDIA RELEASE

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Another round of sub-standard Chinese cabling threatens Qld homes

The Australian Cablemakers Association (ACA) has again called for government action after the Electrical Safety Office QLD (ESO QLD) issued a prohibition on non-compliant, imported cabling, imported and sold by Brisbane-based SKL Cables Australia.

A 2013 batch of SKL-branded product, manufactured in China and imported by SKL, has been found to break down and become brittle prematurely.

ACA Chairman Andrew Davenport said the imported electrical products have the potential to cause fires, injury or even death if live cabling becomes exposed.

“ESO QLD is warning that the Material used as electrical installation on the cable is not a suitable compound and does not comply with Australian safety standards,” Mr Davenport said.

“We are pleased that ESO QLD has identified this risk, and taken such swift action it has to halt sales and installation, as most Australians would be unaware that importers can bring products on to the Australian market without any testing or independent verification that they meet the necessary safety standards,” he said.

In the past 18 months, the ACA has successfully lobbied for the recall of Ecables Copper Clad Aluminium RE 110 Insulated power cables, and a range of Infinity and Olsent-branded cables. Neither met Australian Safety Regulations.

“In both cases, while the products have been recalled there are many hundreds of homes and businesses where these faulty cables have been installed and remain in place. They are a ticking time bomb just waiting to go off.

“This will pose a serious risk of fire or electric shock in years to come, yet nothing is being done to strengthen the regulations that allowed these sub-standard products to be sold in the first place.

“Furthermore, the regulators do not have the resources to ensure such dangerous products are removed from all installed locations.

“Sub-standard imported electrical products, particularly electrical cables, are threatening the lives and safety of Australians,” he said.

In both the Infinity and the Ecables cases, the product had manufacturing flaws that meant they were not even close to reaching the Australian standard and posed a very real risk to human safety and life. Yet it required independent testing funded by the industry to detect the failures.

Mr Davenport said it was time state and territory regulators reviewed the overall system of certification for electrical products, to ensure sub-standard imports could not easily be placed on the Australian market.

“Almost every day we are hearing new concerns about the quality of cables,” Mr Davenport said.

“There is clearly a failing with the certification and the follow-up process, and until it is fixed consumers will continue to be placed at risk by sub-standard products.

“Australian manufacturers established the Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) in 2011 to address the existence of dangerous, non-compliant and counterfeit cable products in the Australian market, and we will continue to report any failure to comply with Australian standards to the relevant state and federal authorities.

“However it surely is also the responsibility of electrical regulators to test products and weed out those that fail to meet the required standard,” he said.

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Media contact: SAS Media and Communications: (07) 3221 9222

The ACA has been formed to represent the interests of Australia’s cable manufacturers in interactions with governments, government authorities, as well as industry bodies. It launched the Approved Cables Initiative (ACI) to promote safety standards by arranging independent performance testing of Australian and foreign manufactured cables, enforcing and upholding Australian cable specifications and standards, to meet community expectations in areas such as energy efficiency and electrical and fire safety.