

Public Release – Position Paper 01.2021 Revised February 2021

The Industry Association of Building and Property Inspectors in WA Inc – Inspect WA is pleased to announce the release of its Position Paper on Roof Leaks and Structural Defects.

Background

There were four key issues that contributed to the release of this Position Paper:

1. Buyers should be aware, Roof leaks and Major defects to the Roof Exterior and associated items are specifically excluded from the REIWA Australian Standard Pre-Purchase Inspection for Major Structural Defects annexure. i.e. not contractually obligating on the seller to remedy.
2. Some building inspectors are reporting on roof leaks as Major Structural Defects.
3. Under the REIWA Structural Building Annexure, reporting a roof leak in isolation as a Major Structural Defect would make the seller responsible for rectifying the roof leak.
4. Some clients (buyers) are asking (putting pressure on) building inspectors to change their report defect category to Major Structural Defect to have the seller rectify the non-structural defect under the terms of the REIWA Annexure.

The Associations position is:

1. A roof leak is not a Structural Defect in isolation.
2. A roof Leak may be reported as a Major Defect/Maintenance Item.
3. The consequential damage caused by a roof leak to a Structural element may result in a Structural Defect in the future.
4. The consequential damage caused by a roof leak may have caused a Major Structural Defect E.g. Wood Decay Fungi and/or Significant Steel deterioration i.e. Rust, but the roof leak itself is not a Major Structural Defect.

The Association recommends that Building Inspector Members do not report on a roof leak as a Major Structural Defect in isolation but report roof leaks as a Major Defects and/or Maintenance Items.

If the consequential damage caused by a roof leak to a Structural element has resulted in a Structural Defect, report the damage to the Structural Element(s) as a Major Structural Defect(s) e.g. Wood Decay Fungi and/or Significant Steel deterioration i.e. corrosion of a structural steel member, but the roof leak itself is not a Major Structural Defect.

Important note in regard the widely used REIWA Pre Purchase Building Inspection Annexure

In Western Australia, the widely used “REIWA Australian Standard Pre-Purchase Inspection for Major Structural Defects Annexure dated 10/19” will not cover a Buyer for the issue described in this position paper.

The REIWA Annexure specifically excludes non-structural items including Roofing and Roof Plumbing.

A Buyer wishing to have the issue described in this position paper:

- 1) repaired by the seller and or
- 2) compensated for by the seller and or
- 3) provide the basis for Contract Termination

should include a “Special Condition” with their Offer to Purchase Contract or alternatively, undertake a pre offer building inspection such that their “Offer to Purchase” can reflect the costs of remediation of the item described.

Committee
Inspect WA