



# Nursing home fire protection

**Aged care facilities across NSW are now required to install automatic sprinkler systems to reduce the fire risk for elderly and vulnerable residents under a recent NSW Government initiative.**

Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard has announced the mandatory installation of automatic sprinkler systems in all new and existing accredited residential aged care facilities in NSW.

“In response to the tragic Quakers Hill Nursing Home fire in 2011, the government has committed to decisive action to ensure our most vulnerable are protected,” Mr Hazzard said.

Woolacotts Consulting Engineers has an 80 year heritage of engineering excellence with deep roots in the design of health and aged care facilities.

We are appointed to the NSW Department of Finance and Services panel of prequalified construction

practitioners as principal engineering design consultants.

We have an extensive knowledge of the Australasian health facility guidelines (AusHFG), a common set of guidelines and specifications for planners and designers of health facilities.

An automatic sprinkler system is one element of our fire services engineering. Other wet fire considerations include hydrants, hose reels, egress paths, fire rated doors and walls. Dry fire considerations include smoke and heat detectors, fire indicator panel, alarm signalling equipment into NSW Fire Comms, emergency warning and intercommunication systems, and emergency exit lighting and signage.

It is an unfortunate fact that fire services are not the only elements within care facilities that are falling behind regulation. The presence of hazardous materials and the condition of structural elements as well as mechanical and electrical services all contribute to the overall health of aged care facilities.

Conducting an overall engineering audit while reviewing sprinkler compliance is a cost effective way to identify other hazards and plan for future capital works.

As independent consulting engineers we offer our clients focused engineering solutions with no vested interest in any one product or material. Our role is to respond to our clients' needs.

# Relevant commissions

- **Centenary Institute – Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown**  
Hydraulic and fire compliance audit report
- **The Palms Nursing Home, Kirrawee**  
Design and specification of new fire services and retrofit of sprinklers and other fire services in existing buildings
- **Casuarina Grove, Hamlyn Terrace**  
Design and specification of fire services for new specialist aged care facility for intellectual disability and complex needs
- **John Paul Village, Heathcote**  
Design and specification of new fire services
- **Mayflower Retirement Village, Gerringong (Uniting Care)**  
Design and specification of new fire services
- **University of Western Sydney Clinical School at Blacktown Hospital, Blacktown**  
Design and specification of new fire services
- **Wollongong Hospital, Wollongong proposed new sub acute ward, Block C**  
Structural engineering for fire walls
- **Parramatta Court House, Parramatta**  
Design and specification of retrofit fire services including sprinklers
- **Newington College, Stanmore**  
Design of upgrade and extension to hydrant, hose reel and sprinkler system in existing heritage building and new extension
- **Campbelltown TAFE, Campbelltown**  
Upgrade of fire hydrant system for compliance
- **Greenwich Presbyterian Church, Greenwich**  
Upgrade of fire hydrant system for compliance
- **Centenary Building, The Scots College, Bellevue Hill**  
Audit of wet fire services
- **NSW Land and Housing Corporation, Belfield, Belmore, Campsie, Croydon, Wiley Park, and Kingsgrove housing estates**  
Condition and compliance report for water, gas, electricity, sewer and stormwater drainage
- **Dalwood House, Seaforth (NSCCAHS)**  
Structural condition audit of mental illness facility built circa 1890.
- **Australian Council on Health Care Standards**  
Termite damage repair and audit report
- **Bourol House, Kiama Hospital, Kiama**  
Structural condition audit of heritage health facility built circa 1880
- **Warrina House, Wahroonga (NSCCAHS)**  
Structural condition audit of mental illness facility built circa 1920

Woolacotts has a long list of experience designing sprinkler systems in health and aged care facilities. Undertaking an overall engineering audit while reviewing sprinkler compliance is a cost effective way to identify other hazards and plan for future capital works.

The new regulation will begin in January 2013. Accredited aged care facilities will be given 18 months to retrofit sprinklers.

If you would like more information about your compliance fire obligations or an overall engineering review of your facility, please contact Jeremy Bierer on +61 2 8061 1820 or [jbierer@woolacotts.com.au](mailto:jbierer@woolacotts.com.au).