

## Do we need to lift our waterproofing game?

One of the recurring themes of ACRA board meetings is **whether to open membership to related trades, especially waterproofing.**

So far at least, it remains a requirement that concrete repair be a core activity of any member company.

**But what is the relationship between waterproofing and repair?**

### Tag team fixes

Judging from the experience of ACRA's members, **it's a pretty close relationship!**

At any given time dozens of unit buildings on Sydney's northern beaches in particular are under repair.

True, the maritime environment plays a large part in their decay.

But the question shedding new light on our topic is: **how many balcony repairs would be unnecessary if the waterproofing had been adequate in the first place?**

### She'll be right!

**Incredibly, units are still being built with no proper waterproofing on balconies and podium decks.**

And, as usual, it's the lawyers who stand to benefit the most as owners bring case after case against developers and builders.

In a recent case the author was involved with, **the builder argued that a podium slab didn't have to be waterproof because the space beneath (a car park) wasn't habitable.**

**Never mind that the water pours through the cracks, drips caustic solution on the cars and forms stalactites to rival Jenolan Caves.**

And a material supplier once told me that he sells mainly second-tier membrane products to the new construction market because **the builders won't bear the cost of anything better.**



CARPARK STALACTITES RUIN DUCO

No surprises there! But when the same building comes up for repair, he's able to sell premium products to owners who are desperate to fix the problems.

**What other industry would get away with such an approach?**

So, since ACRA members are mostly specialists in both remedial waterproofing and repair, the future looks rosy indeed—for them at least! **Although not so good for the hapless owner/investor in the built environment.**

If the industry can't get its act together and waterproof its structures better, then **ACRA members will have to be around for many years yet to pick up the pieces.**

Some builders are trying hard to improve matters, and their efforts are to be loudly applauded.

**But there's no sign of the work drying up just yet.**

### Have your say

Use the "You say" hyperlink on ACRA's home page to expound on these or any other relevant issues. Such as on...

- ACRA accepting waterproofing members.
- legislating better waterproofing standards in new buildings.
- legislating regular inspections of cantilver balconies.

**We'd love to have your thoughts.** ■