

Public Release – Position Paper 04.2021– March 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 Elevated moisture levels in masonry and concrete walls.

Background

The key issues that contributed to the release of this Position Paper:

1. That elevated moisture levels in masonry and concrete walls is being reported as a major structural defect in some pre purchase building inspection reports which were being prepared in accordance with AS 4349.1

The Associations position is:

1. Masonry and concrete walls are porous and water will transfer through these structures.
2. The existence of elevated moisture in masonry and concrete walls will not meet the requirements to be classified as a Major Structural Defect in accordance with AS 4349.1
3. The existence of elevated moisture in masonry and concrete walls may cause accelerated deterioration (i.e. fretting) of mortar, brick or stone in masonry and concrete walls. In certain circumstances the deterioration of components of the wall may lead to a major structural defect, but the moisture itself will not.
4. The existence of elevated moisture in masonry and concrete walls may be classified as a major non-structural defect.

The Association recommends that Building Inspector Members clearly articulate in all pre purchase building inspections reports produced in accordance with AS 4349.1 where there is elevated moisture levels in masonry and concrete walls in unexpected places.

The Association recommends that Building Inspector Members clearly articulate in all pre purchase building inspections reports produced in accordance with AS 4349.1 where there is elevated moisture levels in masonry and concrete walls whether the moisture has deteriorated structural elements to the extent that a Major Structural Defect exists.

The Association recommends that Building Inspector Members clearly articulate in all pre purchase building inspections reports produced in accordance with AS 4349.1 where there is elevated moisture levels in masonry and concrete walls whether that moisture is contributing to mould or damp conditions likely to be a safety hazard.

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 specially excludes non-structural items including roof covers and the timber battens that support them.

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
March 2021