



## Media Release

Monday, 4 September 2023

### Victorian regulators visit Warrnambool for Build Aware construction safety blitz

Four Victorian regulators are joining forces in Warrnambool this week to ensure safety on construction sites, as part of the weeklong Build Aware initiative, which aims to ensure workers are meeting their safety, environmental, building and plumbing compliance obligations.

From September 4 to 8, inspectors from the Victorian Building Authority (VBA), Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), WorkSafe and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) will visit sites in Warrnambool as part of a construction safety blitz.

Build Aware has previously visited regional areas including Mildura, Bass Coast, Shepparton, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Wodonga, Geelong and Bendigo. Joint activities delivered by the regulators include industry trade breakfasts, joint inspections and educational presentations to local TAFE students.

Each regulator will target different areas relevant to their organisation's safety and compliance remit.

The VBA is focusing inspections on construction in alignment with the bushfire assessment levels, fire rating and waterproofing for building and roofing, as well as gasfitting compliance for plumbing.

Energy Safe is focusing on obligations for individuals and companies when working near overhead powerlines and underground energy assets.

WorkSafe is focusing on raising awareness of employers' obligations around risks associated with crystalline silica dust, including the preparation of hazard control statements for high-risk silica work.

EPA is focusing on increasing awareness of the General Environmental Duty (GED) and environmental laws that apply to the construction and demolition industry, to prevent harm to human health and the environment.

For more information, visit [Victorian Building Authority](#), [WorkSafe Victoria](#), [Energy Safe Victoria](#) and [Environment Protection Authority](#) websites.

#### **Victorian Building Authority State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini**

*"Build Aware provides a great opportunity to visit Warrnambool and engage with local practitioners. It informs our understanding of building and plumbing education needs and compliance issues in the region," he said.*

*"The VBA will target its efforts on ensuring that construction work complies with bushfire assessment levels, fire rating and waterproofing for building and roofing, and gasfitting compliance."*

#### **Energy Safe CEO Leanne Hughson**

*"Energy Safe will be ensuring that construction workers are safe around electricity by building awareness of electrical and gas hazards that occur during all stages of construction. This includes the risk of delivery trucks hitting powerlines, ensuring electricians follow proper process when energising installations, and preventing gas or water main pipes strikes during excavation."*

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**WorkSafe Director of Construction and Earth Resources Matt Wielgosz**

*“We’re reminding employers that the dangers of inhaling crystalline silica dust are not exclusive to engineered stone. Materials such as brick, concrete and marble also contain the potentially deadly mineral.”*

*“Employers must ensure the right safety control measures are in place for the cutting and grinding of these common construction materials to protect workers against debilitating illnesses like silicosis and lung cancer.”*

**Environment Protection Authority South-West Regional Manager Tanya McAteer**

*“EPA is looking for typical building site pollution that can cause offsite impacts like dust, contaminated stormwater, sediment, paper and plastic packaging, and newcomers like polystyrene scraps from the wafflepods used when laying concrete.*

*Where businesses are ready to do their best we provide advice, but our priority is the environment, and we can step up to official notices or fines if necessary.”*

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