

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **A TIMELY REMINDER TO CHECK YOUR BALCONY**

The VBA has reminded property owners, balconies and decks need to be checked and maintained regularly following the collapse of a balustrade in South Yarra on the weekend that saw a woman taken to hospital with serious injuries.

The woman, in her 20s, fell nine metres from the third story of her Toorak Road apartment.

The VBA's Director of Technical and Regulation, Joseph Genco, said the incident in South Yarra is a reminder structures can look safe to the untrained eye but may be weakened due to exposure to the elements.

"For maintenance checks and repairs to balconies, decks including their balustrades/barriers, the VBA recommends engaging a registered builder or structural engineer," said Mr Genco.

"It's concerning that many people are unaware of the load limits of their structures and have not undertaken a safety check or performed any regular maintenance."

Timber balconies and decks, including their balustrades and barriers should also be inspected for deterioration, particularly in coastal areas where the combination of salt and rain can be particularly damaging.

Property owners should check the structure is properly fixed to, or that the beams run into the building.

They should also ensure the balustrade/barrier or handrail and sub-structure are inspected annually for signs of deterioration and in this case the mortar.

The VBA advises property owners to look out for:

- Puddles of water at the base of posts or on the deck surface
- Rotting or loose balustrades/barriers or handrails
- Loose or rusted brackets and bolts
- Cracked concrete or signs of leaning
- Cracked or weak mortar or dislodged brickwork/masonry
- Stress fractures in glass balustrades/barriers.

**ENDS**