



VBA Mail

14 October 2014

Dear Subscriber,

Welcome to this edition of the Victorian Building Authority's email newsletter, VBA Mail.

- Check your drawings are complete
- Overflow provision requirements for box gutters
- Changes to the Fencing Act
- Drouin building surveyor fined for illegal works
- Victorian building permit activity for August 2014
- Victorian compliance certificate activity for August 2014
- Careers at the VBA

Check your drawings are complete

The VBA is reminding all building practitioners who undertake design work that they need to ensure drawings are complete and accurate before the applicant can submit for consideration to the relevant building surveyor.

Last month the VBA released the findings from its state-wide audit on building permit files, which identified a need for greater detail and accuracy in plans and drawings. Under the *Building Regulations 2006* (the Regulations), all plans and drawings must include the relevant details needed to demonstrate that the building work will comply with the Regulations, the *Building Act 1993* and the Building Code of Australia. Building surveyors must not approve drawings or plans that do not include all the required information.

For plans to comply with building legislation, designers need to make sure site plans and drawings:

- include key information, such as:
 - site levels
 - stormwater drainage
 - dimensions and setbacks from boundaries
 - location of other buildings and structures on the same allotment and on adjoining allotments
- clearly differentiate between existing buildings and proposed building work, in the case of alterations and additions
- include specific details for builders to follow, rather than general notes.

To support designers in achieving greater compliance, the VBA will improve existing guidance material and develop additional resources for practitioners, as well as conduct an audit of registered practitioners undertaking design work. The VBA will also provide the audit data to the Building Practitioners Board to develop improvements to the assessment and registration process for draftspeople.

The Building Designers Association of Victoria (BDAV) has welcomed the findings from the VBA's audit and has reinforced the need for all building practitioners to meet a high professional standard.

“Everybody in the building industry has an obligation to make sure their work is carried out professionally. BDAV encourages all designers and others preparing documentation – whether they be building designers, draftspersons, architects, builders or owner-builders - to ensure they understand and comply with their requirements under the building legislation,” BDAV President Alastair McDonald said.

Anyone with a technical enquiry can contact the VBA for professional advice. Phone 1300 815 127 or email technicalenquiry@vba.vic.gov.au

For more information about the standards and documents required for building permit applications, refer to [Practice Note 2014-62](#).

[A summary of the audit findings](#) is available on the VBA website.

Overflow provision requirements for box gutters

The VBA wishes to clarify the requirements for overflow provision where box gutters discharge via a rainhead. An illustration in a recently released VBA mail article (5 August 2014) wrongly depicted the rainhead above the overflow weir as totally enclosed.

To ensure that adequate overflow provision is made and any surcharge is accommodated, the overflow weir of the rainhead is to be 25mm below the sole of the gutter and be fully open above the weir at the front of the rainhead.

Plumbers are reminded that roof drainage systems need to be designed and installed with appropriate overflow provision. Failing to install appropriately sized and positioned overflow devices can lead to serious damage to buildings and contents.

For more information, refer to the [VBA's information sheet – Overflow provision for box gutters](#).

Changes to the Fencing Act

On 22 September 2014, amendments to the Fences Act 1968 in Victoria were brought in, resulting in changes to liability, contributions between owners and urgent fencing works.

While the *Fences Act 1968* and fencing disputes fall outside of the VBA's jurisdiction, it should be noted that any boundary fences higher than 2m requires a building permit. All building work costing more than \$5000 must be undertaken by a registered building practitioner.

For information on preventing or resolving a dispute regarding a fence on your property, contact the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria on 1300 372 888 or visit www.disputes.vic.gov.au

Drouin building surveyor fined for illegal works

Seven allegations, including approving stages of building work that did

not comply with the building permit at two properties in Beech Forest and Drouin South, have been proven against a Drouin building surveyor.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) carried out an investigation into the professional conduct of building surveyor John Austin and referred the matter to the Building Practitioners Board (BPB) for inquiry.

Mr Austin was fined \$2000 and ordered to not issue any further building permits from 1 June 2014, after finding that he:

- issued a building permit for domestic building work when he could not be satisfied that the work was to be carried out by a registered builder or covered by the required insurance
- approved stages of the building work that did not comply with the building permit
- did not give the relevant council a copy of any documents relating to the application for an occupancy permit
- issued an occupancy permit without the required compliance certificate
- issued a building order for minor work to the builder instead of to the owners.

[Read the full media release](#)

Victorian building permit activity for August 2014

Total number of permits issued in August 2014: 8288

- 5.9 percent lower than the same month last year
- 10.3 percent lower than the previous month

Total value of permits issued in August 2014: \$2.3 billion

- 18.2 percent higher than the same month last year
- 0.6 percent lower than the previous month

[View the report](#) for a breakdown of permit activity by building use.

Victorian compliance certificate activity for August 2014

**Total number of compliance certificates lodged in August 2014:
28,403**

- 0.9 percent higher than the same month last year
 - 8.3 percent lower than the previous month
-

Careers at the VBA

Become a part of the regulator for the building and plumbing industries.

Customer Service Officer

The Customer Service Officer is responsible for delivering support to the Customer Services team, which provides a central processing point for all incoming enquiries and complaints.

The salary package (Band 2) will be in the range of approximately \$42,000 per annum (plus 9.5 percent superannuation).

There is one permanent position and two 12-month fixed-term positions available.

Applications close on Thursday, 23 October 2014.

All vacant VBA positions are advertised on the [Victorian Government Careers website](#).

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