Media Release

31 August 2015

Plumbers to face disciplinary proceeding for recycled water connection incident

Two plumbers involved in the connection of recycled water to a Cranbourne East school will face disciplinary proceedings to determine appropriate penalties. The issue was discovered earlier this year.

Following an investigation by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA), the two, who are licensed plumbers, will face the disciplinary proceedings next month.

As the regulator of plumbing practitioners, the VBA investigated the matter and found that the pipes originally installed by a plumber were not correctly marked as recycled water pipes. In Victoria, supply lines carrying recycled water must be colour-coded purple with appropriate information at outlets and other visible connection points to identify the pipes as carrying recycled water.

The VBA investigation also found that another plumber at a later stage signed a compliance certificate for other plumbing work which was not undertaken or supervised by that plumber.

The issue was detected by a maintenance worker at St Peters College Cranbourne East campus in March 2015, and the College notified South East Water. Once the incorrect connection was identified, immediate action was taken to cap the drinking fountain and appropriate authorities were notified.

The Department of Health and Human Services immediately began an assessment of the potential for any impact on the health of the school community, which indicated that the risk of any bacterial or viral illness from drinking the Class A recycled water was low.

Water retailers providing recycled water are responsible for carrying out inspections of commercial and industrial properties, including schools, for recycled water connections prior to and at the time of the commissioning the recycled water meter.

Plumbing regulations and standards are in place to protect the health and safety of the public and the integrity of water supply and wastewater systems. Plumbing practitioners have an important role in the community to ensure the plumbing work they carry out complies with these regulations and standards.

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