Reforms for Building Industry Bring New Powers for VBA

The Andrews Government today announced a series of reforms that address long term issues within the legislative framework governing the building industry in Victoria. These reforms will significantly improve the ability the VBA has to regulate the industry.

The VBA CEO Prue Digby welcomed the reforms and said they will strengthen the protections afforded to consumers and ensure the quality of buildings across Victoria.

“The decision to empower the VBA to register, discipline, monitor and enforce compliance is an example of how these reforms will streamline processes and provide consumers and practitioners with greater security, confidence and certainty,” said Ms Digby.

Among the key components of the reforms will be powers for the VBA to direct building practitioners to fix non-compliant and defective work, time-limited registration periods and protection for consumers.

The reforms will deliver:

- Strengthening the power of Victoria’s building regulator to compel builders to fix non-compliant work and prevent a six-month renovation turning into a lengthy legal dispute;
- Replacement of the Building Practitioners Board and the transfer of its registration and discipline functions to the Victorian Building Authority, better integrating regulation of the industry;
- a new show-cause disciplinary process administered by the VBA that will streamline the disciplinary system to support the delivery of quality and timely outcomes;
- time-limited registration of building practitioners, which will require all building practitioners, including building surveyors, to demonstrate maintenance of competency on renewal of registration;
- the introduction of dispute resolution orders, which will require rectification of non-compliant building work or payment to builders where work is complete;
- prohibiting the builder from appointing the building surveyor on behalf of the owner, which will support the independence of the building surveyor and the objective performance of their statutory functions;
- closing loopholes that enable unregistered builders to circumvent regulatory requirements by acting as owner-builders or working for owner-builders;
- genuine owner-builders will be better supported and informed to ensure they are aware of all the risks and responsibilities of an owner-builder;
- owner-builders will be restricted to one project every five years, and the VBA will have the power to inspect work on site;
- new disciplinary processes and sanctions will be introduced to streamline the disciplinary systems to support the delivery of quality and timely outcomes;
- improved dispute resolution with the establishment of a new dispute resolution service – Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria with a Chief Dispute Resolution Officer, conciliation officers and technical assessors who will be able to make findings and recommendations as to the building work in dispute;

The VBA will continue to work with industry groups, practitioners and consumers to implement the Reforms

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