

## Principal Fire Safety Engineer to boost VBA fire safety programs

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has appointed respected fire engineer Dr Weng Poh to the position of Principal Fire Safety Engineer to extend its fire safety programs.

As Principal Fire Safety Engineer, Dr Poh will work closely with Victoria's State Building Surveyor, the Statewide Cladding Audit and other operational areas of the VBA on matters related to fire safety.

Dr Poh will also advise the VBA on a range of strategic issues relating to fire safety in the building and plumbing industries, including regulatory frameworks, practitioner competencies and key stakeholder relationships.

Victoria's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said the appointment will raise the profile of fire safety engineering amongst the state's 24,000 builders, building surveyors and other practitioners.

"Fire safety engineers are vitally important in the design and construction of complex buildings, especially where building technologies and practices continue to evolve, and performance solutions have an increased role in the assessment of building safety," Mr Cialini said.

"Their work requires a strong understanding of how people, structures and fire safety systems respond to fire – knowledge they rely on when contributing to safe building designs.

"Dr Poh's extensive experience as a fire engineer will increase our regulatory oversight of this critical area of building safety while raising awareness of the profession throughout the industry."

Dr Poh comes to the VBA with rich experience across the research, education and private sectors.

He currently serves as Lead Fire Safety Engineer and National Technical Director of Umow Lai – a major building services engineering consultancy – where he has gained a wide range of experience formulating practical, cost-effective fire engineering solutions for various types of buildings.

He was also extensively involved in the Fire Code Reform Centre Projects of the 1990s, when performance-based design methodologies were first developed in Australia. This work included the development of methodology for the fire safety designs of buildings.

Dr Poh is an Adjunct Professor within the College of Engineering and Science at Victoria University and has published extensive research in journals and conference papers.

Dr Poh will officially join the VBA on 12 August 2020.