



## Media Release

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### Keep balcony maintained and your guests safe

Before Victorians with balconies enjoy summer with friends and family, they need to make sure it's safe first.

The state building regulator has warned homeowners to regularly check and maintain any balconies at their properties as more people visit over the warmer months.

The Victorian Building Authority's (VBA) State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said balconies can be a serious safety risk if not properly built and maintained.

"Timber balconies can be impacted by insect attack and decay, while concrete balconies can be made unsafe when concrete cracks and flakes or when reinforcement corrodes, often due to moisture," he said.

"Balustrades can be made of various materials such as concrete, steel or timber and need to comply with building regulations and standards. Simple things such as re-tensioning tension wire balustrades, checking and tightening fixings and treating signs of corrosion greatly improve the long term safety."

Mr Cialini said Victorians should look for signs of wear and tear on their balconies.

"Before you have visitors over make sure you take a look at your balcony and check if there are any signs of structural issues.

"There are many things that can affect the structural integrity of a balcony, deck or balustrade. These could include poor connections, poor maintenance or pest damage such as termites.

"Water is often a contributor, with poor drainage, ponding water, cracked tiles, timber rot and metal corrosion possible signs that maintenance is required or that experts should be called in to inspect.

"The earlier these are investigated and causes addressed the less costly the work will often be, we urge owners and tenants to carry out visual inspections yearly and be wary of floors or balustrades that deflect excessively to protect themselves and their guests."

It is important to be aware of the load capacity or total mass your deck or balcony is designed to carry.

Homeowners should consult the original specifications if they have access to them or have a structural engineer or registered building practitioner conduct an assessment.

Warning signs to check for include puddles of water at the base of posts, puddles of water on the deck or balcony surface, rotting or loose balustrades and loose or rusted brackets and bolts, cracked concrete or signs of leaning, cracked or weak mortar in brick structures and dislodged brickwork/masonry.

Most well-maintained timber balconies should last for at least 20 years, and a well-maintained concrete balcony should last for 40 to 50 years.

Anyone wanting to replace or build a new balcony or deck must apply for a building permit and have the balcony appropriately designed and using registered practitioners.

For more information about keeping your balcony, deck or balustrade safe, visit the [VBA website](#).

#### Media Enquiries:

VBA Media  
0417 854 245 or [media@vba.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@vba.vic.gov.au)