

## Get your balconies, decks and balustrades checked, so you can have fun in the sun

With the fine summer weather well and truly upon us, it's time to check your balconies, decks and balustrades for structural stability and signs of deterioration.

Termites, wet rot, environmental conditions and loading can all affect the structural integrity of balconies, decks or balustrades, compromising their lifespan and eventually making them unsafe.

Structures exposed to salt water, sea spray or other corrosive environments are also at risk of increased deterioration, as water-borne salt accelerates the corrosion of unprotected steel, reinforcing steel and fixings.

While a well-maintained timber balcony or deck should last for a good number of years, and a well-maintained concrete balcony even longer, all outdoor structures should be inspected on a yearly basis.

Signs of deterioration or structural problems include:

- puddles of water at the base of posts or on the deck or balcony surface;
- rotting or loose balustrades/handrails and loose or rusted brackets and bolts;
- cracked concrete or signs of leaning;
- cracked or weak mortar; and
- dislodged brickwork/masonry.

The hot weather also means plenty of parties and outdoor entertaining. But before you invite friends and family around for a barbecue, check that your balcony, deck and balustrades are designed to bear the additional load of people and equipment.

The VBA's Executive Director Operations, Mark Rossiter, said the annual inspection and upkeep of balconies, decks and balustrades was an essential part of everybody's home and property maintenance routine.

"Balconies, decks and balustrades can be dangerous if not properly built and maintained," Mr Rossiter said.

"Take the time to give your outdoor areas a thorough inspection. If you see anything unusual or you're unsure about the structural integrity of your balcony, deck or balustrading, avoid the area and contact a registered builder or structural engineer."

For more information about keeping your balconies, decks and balustrades safe to use all year round, read the VBA's [Fact Sheet](#) or contact your local council.

The VBA reminds home and property owners to always use a registered builder or structural engineer to carry out maintenance checks and make repairs to balconies, decks and balustrades.

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