

# Media Release

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## VBA urges home owners to be alert for termite activity

Victorian Building Authority CEO Prue Digby today urged home owners to be alert for termite activity in and around their homes this summer.

“Recent media reports indicate that the weather patterns over the spring and early summer have provided ideal breeding conditions for termites.” Ms Digby said. “While it is the responsibility of each council to designate areas within its municipality that are termite prone, it should also be recognised that termites can and do relocate their nests. It is important for a home owner to take personal responsibility and ensure they inspect their homes carefully at least every 12 months.”

Concealed in locations that often go undetected, termites destroy timber internally, leaving only a wafer-thin layer to protect them from the outside environment.

There is no predictable pattern or height restriction to their damage, with termite-infested sites found in roofs and even high-rise construction.

Termite activity is often difficult to detect as it usually occurs in concealed areas.

Regular visual inspections in and around your home are recommended to identify any potential termite activity. Things to look for include:

- weak timber that breaks easily revealing wafer thin layers– skirting boards are often the first point of damage
- changes in corner fascia under gutters, as termites are attracted to damp or moist areas
- mud-like tubes or material around external footings/brickwork, or internal fittings like service pipes and electrical plugs
- cracks/holes in timber or plaster with a fine dust residue.
- surrounding trees, wood piles and garden beds (up to a 50 metres radius around the home) to identify if a colony is active nearby.

If you suspect any termite activity you should engage an expert to conduct a full inspection.

Should you uncover termites do not disturb them and try to put things back as they were.

Surface spraying and ripping out floorboards, architraves or other building material may kill a few termites in those timbers but in doing so you have lessened the chances of an expert effectively treating the main nest.

Depending on preferences and construction, an approved pest controller can assist with the best type of treatment, which besides chemical spray options, may include reticulation and/or baiting systems.

Termites regularly re-infest with multiple nests attached to the colony at a radius of 50-plus metres.

“If you do discover an infestation, it is prudent and responsible to immediately notify your local council.” Ms Digby said