VBA demands rectification on dangerous Footscray excavation site

An inspector from the Victorian Building Authority’s (VBA) proactive inspection team has helped avert a potential disaster discovered during an inspection of a building site in Footscray in November 2015.

As part of the VBA’s enhanced proactive approach to enforcement and consumer protection, a VBA inspector attended an apartment building development in Footscray after being notified of a major excavation that was affecting the adjoining properties.

The VBA inspector attended the site and found that the excavation of approximately four metres in depth had been vertically cut up to the title boundaries on the rear and two sides of the allotment. Part of the excavation cuts had collapsed, putting neighbouring properties and driveways at risk of further collapse.

The VBA inspector contacted the local council which resulted in the issue of an Emergency Order on the building practitioner to make the site safe by either backfilling the site or installing propping certified by an engineer.

The relevant building surveyor for the excavation site was immediately notified of the situation and after inspecting the site:
- issued a building order to stop work
- issued a building order for minor work to backfill the site cut for stability.

The builder imported approximately 15 truckloads of fill to stabilise the site cuts and to make the site safe. This took several days to resolve.

The builder has now been clearly advised of his responsibilities and his future work will be monitored by the VBA.

VBA Director Enquiries and Dispute Resolution David Wolf said “the overall response is a great example of the benefits achievable when the Victorian Building Authority, the relevant building surveyor and the local council work together to ensure the work and protection work is carried out in accordance with the legislation and building permit”.

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