

Victorian Building Authority welcomes the establishment of Cladding Safety Victoria and the announcement of a building regulatory review

The Victorian Building Authority welcomes the State Government's decision to establish Cladding Safety Victoria and undertake a thorough review of building policy.

Cladding Safety Victoria will initially be established within the Victorian Building Authority, with rectification work on 15 apartment buildings identified by the Statewide Cladding Audit to start immediately.

Cladding Safety Victoria will provide support and funding to apartment owners to remove cladding on their buildings.

While Cladding Safety Victoria supports owners and residents through the rectification process, the VBA will continue its important work of identifying, inspecting and assessing multi-storey buildings across the state.

When an apartment building has been audited and assessed as having heightened fire safety risk, it will be referred to Cladding Safety Victoria. The VBA will continue to issue Building Notices and Orders, checking rectification work as it progresses and confirming that the completed works are safe and compliant with regulatory requirements.

Owners of buildings outside the scope of Cladding Safety Victoria, such as private hospitals, private schools and aged care facilities, will continue to liaise with the VBA.

The VBA's Chief Executive, Sue Eddy, said the establishment of Cladding Safety Victoria provides a clear plan for the advancement of rectification works across the state.

"This announcement enables thousands of Victorians to commence the cladding rectification process, making their buildings and homes safe and compliant," Ms Eddy said.

Since December 2017, the VBA's Statewide Cladding Audit team has inspected over 2200 properties, finding around 900 buildings that need to be rectified to some degree.

Ms Eddy said the statewide audit is ongoing, with the VBA expecting to find more buildings that will need some work to limit fire safety risks. Inspection of a further 500 sites will take place over the next 12 months.

"The VBA has extensive monitoring and enforcement programs under way. Practitioners whose work does not meet building standards can expect the VBA to use the full force of its regulatory powers to stop them."

From today, anyone seeking more information about replacing combustible cladding can call the telephone support line on 1300 456 542 or email support@claddingsafety.vic.gov.au.

The formation of Cladding Safety Victoria is one of 35 actions recommended in a report released today by the Victorian Cladding Taskforce. Nine specific recommendations apply to the VBA and have been accepted.

The VBA acknowledges the work of the Co-Chairs of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce, the Hon. Ted Baillieu and Professor the Hon. John Thwaites.

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Ms Eddy also welcomed the Government’s decision to undertake a comprehensive review of building policy and legislation.

“The regulatory system needs modernisation and firmer measures to protect owners and residents in the face of the culture, commercial drivers and growing complexity of some parts of the building industry,” Ms Eddy said.

“The VBA has gained insight into the industry, through challenges like the combustible cladding issue, which gives us a broader understanding as to where the system needs to be reformed.

“We will be contributing to the review and implementing its outcomes to deliver better protection for building owners and occupants. This review will create a stronger building industry in which reputable practitioners thrive.”

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