Victorian regulators join forces across Ballarat during five day safety blitz

Four Victorian regulators carried out almost 120 inspections across Ballarat work sites as part of last week's Build Aware campaign, identifying a range of risks.

Inspectors from Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), WorkSafe, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) visited sites across the Ballarat area between Monday, 5 and 9 September.

The Build Aware campaign works to ensure the construction and demolition industries are meeting safety, environmental and building and plumbing compliance obligations with each agency focused on a specific area of safety.

During the week, ESV inspectors saw strong compliance across 20 sites, inspecting battery installations and residential and road construction sites.

Inspectors focused on ensuring construction workers and machinery operators were aware of and maintained appropriate clearance distances from overhead and underground electrical assets, such as high voltage powerlines.

The VBA's authorised officers carried out 41 building and plumbing inspections with timber framing, gutters, and downpipes, structural provisions and workers failing to display their permits being the key issues identified.

WorkSafe inspectors visited 33 construction sites, identifying issues such as electrical safety, fall prevention, and site amenities, fencing and hygiene. Inspectors issued 18 improvement notices and five prohibition notices as well as spotting 10 safety issues that were fixed immediately.

EPA inspectors carried out 24 inspections across residential and commercial building, providing compliance advice on containment of waste as well as sediment control and waffle pods.

Over the past four years, Build Aware has targeted regional areas including Shepparton, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Wodonga, Bendigo, Geelong, Latrobe Valley and Warrnambool.

Representatives from the agencies also presented to more than 80 carpentry, plumbing, painting and cabinet making students at TAFE Ballarat.

For more information, visit the Victorian Building Authority, Worksafe Victoria, Energy Safe Victoria and Environment Protection Authority websites.

ESV Commissioner and Chairperson Marnie Williams

"Our inspectors got a lot out of the week, visiting a range of sites, from road constructions to battery audits with strong compliance right across Ballarat."

Victorian Building Authority State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini

"It was a great week in Ballarat, our team went to more than 40 construction sites in the area; what we found highlighted the ongoing need for proactive inspections, with half of the sites inspected deemed medium risk."

"The VBA aims to deliver a positive impact through our role as regulator, promoting safe and resilient buildings, and ensuring communities such as Ballarat reach their potential by supporting a thriving and trusted industry that acts with integrity.

WorkSafe Director Construction and Earth Resources Matthew Wielgosz

"Build Aware is a great opportunity to highlight important safety messages to employers and workers in the construction industry, including those who are just starting out in their trade and those with many years of experience."

"This includes issues such as fall prevention, electrical safety and housekeeping, as well as less familiar risks such as the dangers of exposure to crystalline silica dust, which can cause life-changing, even fatal diseases such as silicosis."

EPA South West Regional Manager Carolyn Francis

"The week was a great success. As part of our inspections and at the trades launch event, we provided a lot of information and advice about what we expect to see in place to protect the environment.

"We will continue to educate and inspect sites and will work with our regulatory partners, like Ballarat City Council on a more coordinated approach to enforcement for sediment controls and polystyrene waste."