Media Release

For immediate release

VBA issues order for fire safety danger

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has issued an emergency order in response to safety concerns for a property in Brunswick.

The VBA issued the order on Wednesday, 12 February 2014 after investigating the three-storey building in Victoria Street, which includes a factory and warehouse. VBA’s Acting Director Compliance and Performance Murray Smith said the investigation found several issues with the building.

“The problems identified with the building meant that there was a risk to life and safety,” Mr Smith said.

“We issued an emergency order to ensure this dangerous situation is fixed.”

The problems identified included:

- the building did not meet the fire resistance rating required
- fire sprinklers were not installed, despite the building permit indicating that they would be
- a fire hydrant was not installed
- there was no provision for smoke hazard management
- the exit doors had been fixed shut
- there were no emergency lights and exit signs.

“The owner must now carry out work to make the building safe or prevent access within four days, in order to comply with the emergency order. If they fail to do so, the owner may be fined up to $70,000,” Mr Smith said.

All buildings in Victoria, other than a house, shed or garage, must meet certain fire safety requirements under the Building Regulations 2006. Once the construction of a building is complete, the building owner is then responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the fire safety features and measures in place.

The VBA’s Chief Executive Officer Prue Digby said that as the industry regulator, protecting the safety of the public is a priority.

“We will take action when we consider a situation or building to be dangerous.”

Ms Digby said anyone who is unsure about the fire safety features and measures required for their building should contact a building surveyor or visit the VBA website at www.vba.vic.gov.au for more information.

ENDS

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