

## Know what to look out for when buying an apartment

Potential Victorian homebuyers should do their due diligence before making the important financial investment of buying an apartment, the state building regulator has warned.

With the [easing of restrictions](#) now allowing Victorians to inspect properties the Victorian Building Authority is reminding consumers to know what to look for, including any defects or issues such as mould.

The VBA's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said consumers should read all documents, such as the Section 32 statement, and research the history of the property.

"Buying an apartment is a big investment so make sure you know everything you can about a building before purchasing it, you should read the seller's Section 32 statement and review information from the owners corporation, if it is available," he said.

"You may also wish to ask for and review the previous owners corporation minutes from Annual General Meetings to give you a better understanding of the building's history."

A Section 32 statement, also called a vendor's statement, is a legal document that must be factually accurate and complete.

According to [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#), this statement outlines the information a property seller must disclose to prospective buyers, such as the name of the relevant planning scheme and details of any undischarged mortgages or charges applying to the land.

A buyer might be able to withdraw from the contract of sale before settlement if the Section 32 statement contains incorrect or insufficient information. The Section 32 statement has details of current fees, insurance cover and any potential or existing legal claims affecting the property.

Section 32 statements are sometimes prepared up to 12 months before the sale of a property.

"Before settlement, buyers should ask for a new owners corporation certificate, which may incur a fee charged by the owners corporation, or make a time to inspect the owners corporation register and records."

Potential buyers should talk to the owners corporation or building manager and ask:

- if any Emergency Orders or Building Notices have been issued and whether they have been complied with - this information should be disclosed in the vendor's statement
- if the insurer has made any enquiries about the building and what the results were
- for evidence that the building's essential safety measures (fire doors, smoke alarms, sprinklers, fire hydrants etc.) are installed and properly maintained

Visit the VBA website for [more information on buying an apartment](#) and [read the checklist](#) created by Consumer Affairs Victoria.