



Media Release

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New water damage research provides insights for safer homes

Ways to reduce water damage and the risk of mould in Victorian homes have been highlighted in new research.

The research, commissioned by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) in partnership with the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency (VMIA) and Victoria University, was undertaken to identify problematic building or plumbing work that could result in water damage and indoor mould.

Led by Dr Tim Law, the research was based on VMIA accepted domestic building insurance claims data between July 2018 and November 2020 overlaid with VBA data about building surveyors, builders and building permits.

The VBA's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said insights from this research will help to identify improvement opportunities for building design, construction, certification and regulatory oversight.

"The VBA is using these research insights to inform its Proactive Inspections Program (PIP) and its continuing focus on areas of compliance risk that could cause water ingress and moisture damage," Mr Cialini said.

"Waterproofing and drainage have been among the top risks highlighted in our quarterly PIP reports – we are sharing these findings with practitioners to better educate the wider industry on how to improve the quality of building and plumbing work in high-risk areas."

Water damage is one of the most common problems encountered in buildings and complaints to the VBA and claims to VMIA.

Practitioners are invited to a webinar hosted by the VBA on Thursday 9 February, where Dr Law will share the research results and present on the causes and impacts of water damage and indoor mould in Victorian buildings.

Mould in buildings can be an indicator of the presence of an underlying moisture problem in a building.

A key cause of water damage is due to a lack of understanding of roofing and waterproofing requirements among designers, building surveyors and builders. Poor storage of materials can also contribute to water damage during construction that may create ongoing building issues.

Mr Cialini said that the VBA would take enforcement action against any practitioner found to be demonstrating poor practices that may cause water damage to homes.

"Practitioners are expected to follow building processes that result in buildings that are durable and resilient to the elements in accordance with the building regulations. To protect consumers the VBA will not hesitate to discipline and penalise poor performers accordingly," he said.

Consumers wanting to prevent mould in their home are advised to look out for early warning signs of water ingress or moisture damage.

If you have leaking pipes, or damp on ceilings or other water related problems in your building, make sure you take steps to hire a registered or licensed practitioner to fix these.

Tips offered by Better Health Victoria can assist those who have health concerns and reduce the risk of mould.

To find out more about water damage research visit the VBA website and for information on mould in rental properties visit Consumer Affairs Victoria.

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