

Introduction

The Government has established the Victorian Cladding Taskforce to investigate the extent of non-compliant wall cladding on buildings in Victoria and make recommendations for any systems improvements to restore confidence that fire safety issues are being addressed appropriately.

The 2014 fire at the Lacrosse building in Docklands highlighted the fire safety risks arising from the non-compliant use of cladding products - specifically aluminium composite panels - as external wall cladding on high-rise residential buildings. The original Victorian Building Authority audit of 168 high rise residential and public buildings in the Melbourne CBD and inner urban areas following the Lacrosse fire identified 51 percent of those buildings audited had cladding fitted in a non-compliant manner.

The taskforce will bolster the state's ability to detect and address non-compliant cladding, and ensure residents, owners' corporations and building managers are better informed about the issue.

The establishment of the Taskforce recognises the need to review our existing response and make recommendations for system and any other improvements to ensure the high standard of safety and prevention Victorians deserve.

Functions

The Victorian Cladding Taskforce will:

1. Review the VBA audit, develop a scope, methodology, timetable and oversee a comprehensive audit of relevant buildings in Victoria to identify instances of the use of inappropriate cladding material that poses a risk to public health and safety.
2. Develop a process for prompt rectification to protect the health and safety of building occupants and make recommendations on any cost implications.
3. Review and recommend any enforcement and/or potential disciplinary action arising from the state-wide audit to the VBA for action
4. Examine the effectiveness and make recommendations to improve the current compliance, certification and enforcement regime for ensuring practitioners comply with relevant regulations and legislation.
5. Provide advice to the Minister for Planning and Government on how best to mitigate non-compliant uses of cladding material in Victoria in the future.
6. Advise relevant agencies on communications:
 - a. to residents, owners and building managers about what actions they can take to satisfy themselves of the safety of their buildings, and
 - b. actions required to protect the health and safety of occupants of affected buildings in Victoria.
7. Review and recommend improvements to the existing Victorian system for fire safety in buildings.

Membership

The Taskforce will be co-chaired by the Hon Ted Baillieu and Professor the Hon John Thwaites.

The remaining membership is drawn from Senior Officials of relevant regulators and related bodies, including:

1. Dr Owen Donald, Chief Commissioner Victorian Building Authority
2. Mr Paul Barker, Chair Worksafe Victoria
3. Mr Greg Wilson, Secretary Department of Justice and Regulation
4. Mr Nick Foa, Deputy Secretary Finance and Infrastructure and Director of Housing, Department of Health and Human Services
5. Mr Rob Spence, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Association Victoria
6. Mr John Prendergast, President Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors' Group
7. Mr Paul Stacchino, A/Chief Fire Officer, Metropolitan Fire Brigade

Victorian Cladding Taskforce Terms of Reference

8. Mr Craig Lapsley, Emergency Management Commissioner
9. Ms Christine Wyatt, A/Secretary Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

The Taskforce may consider establishing a stakeholder reference group to assist its inquiries which may include representatives of the building and development industries, representatives of workers in those industries, and representatives of consumers.

It is envisaged that the work of the Taskforce will be undertaken by working groups drawn from the organisations represented on the Taskforce and by engaging independent expertise as required

Relevant government departments and authorities will cooperate and assist the Taskforce as required.

Office of the Taskforce

The Taskforce will be supported in its work by the Office of the Taskforce (the Office) overseen by a Chief Executive Officer, Mr Stan Krpan.

The Office of the Taskforce will provide all necessary secretariat and policy support, development and advice required by the Taskforce in delivering their Terms of Reference. This includes any procurement, obtaining any legal or other advice required by the Taskforce to inform their deliberations.

The Office Secretariat will be responsible for the administration and operations of the Taskforce.

Corporate services will be provided by DELWP to enable the establishment and proper functioning of the office in agreement with the Secretary DELWP.

Timelines

The Minister for Planning has requested interim recommendations on immediate issues and an outline and timetable for further work by 31 October 2017.

Following receipt of the interim report, the Minister for Planning will further consider the tenure of the Taskforce.

Dated

17/7/17


The Hon. Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning