



Victorian Building Authority external wall cladding audit report

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) recently released its audit report on external wall cladding, following a fire at the Lacrosse Apartments in Melbourne's Docklands in November 2014. The audit findings provide valuable information and lessons for practitioners in Western Australia on the use of external wall cladding.

Recommendation

It is recommended that building practitioners and those involved in the use of external wall cladding take time to read the findings from the VBA audit.

The audit report can be found on the VBA website and some links are provided below:

- [Media release of 17 February 2016](#);
- [VBA External Wall Cladding Audit Report 17 February 2016](#); and
- [Industry Alert issued February 2016](#).

Key aspects

There are various issues identified in the report. Some of the key aspects are listed below:

- In April 2015, the Melbourne Fire Brigade Post Incident Analysis of the fire found that the use of aluminium composite panelling in a non-compliant way had contributed to the spread of the fire.
- Appropriate use of external wall cladding is detailed in the Building Code of Australia (BCA) but the Lacrosse Apartment's use of its external cladding was not compliant raising the question of how many other buildings may have a similar cladding issue.
- Practitioner understanding of the BCA:
 - Decisions made by different practitioners at different stages – during design, material specification, design approval and construction – appear to have contributed to cladding being used as a component of external walls in ways that do not comply with the BCA.
 - The VBA audit identified that practitioners have differing degrees of understanding of the requirements of the BCA and the specification for components of an external wall.

The VBA has published an industry alert to assist in the understanding of the BCA requirements. Whilst the industry alert is in context with Victorian legislation it provides useful guidance to builders, building surveying and other practitioners on determining compliance of the external wall attachments being used for a particular case in accordance with the BCA.

Related documents

- [Industry Bulletin 54 External wall cladding – fire safety](#)
- [Melbourne Fire Brigade Post Incident Analysis Report](#)

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.

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Building Commission | Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
Level 1, 303 Sevenoaks Street, Cannington WA 6107
P: Locked Bag 14, Cloisters Square WA 6850
T: 1300 489 099 | F: 08 6251 1501
E: BCinfo@dmirs.wa.gov.au
W: www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/building-commission

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