



Figure 1 The Concourse at Chatswood is cladded is similar to that which contributed to a London tower fire last year in which 72 people died.

NORTH SHORE

Combustible cladding costly at The Concourse at Chatswood

Steven Deare, North Shore Times

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A leaked \$8.3 million estimate for reducing the fire risk of combustible cladding at The Concourse at Chatswood is premature, according to Willoughby Council management, who have tried to dismiss the leak.

The Concourse's Alucobond cladding is similar to that which contributed to a London tower fire last year in which 72 people died, and action is required.



Figure 2 The blaze at Grenfell Tower last year. Picture: Natalie Oxford

Replacing it is one of the options. Council staff would not discuss other possibilities while a tender was under way.

The council's cost estimate for replacement, mentioned during a briefing, was revealed recently by Cr Stuart Coppock.

He was concerned about the financial impact to ratepayers.



Figure 3 Willoughby councillor Stuart Coppock at The Concourse, Chatswood.

However Willoughby's acting general manager Greg McDonald told the *Northern District Times* he could not confirm the figure as tenderers were yet to offer their price.

The council has a preferred set of tenderers for the job, but is yet to issue its technical requirements.

Mr McDonald said once these were issued, tenderers would give a detailed response as to how they would improve safety. This response would include their price.

“So we can't confirm (\$8.3 million) because we haven't got any tender prices back,” he said.

“It's premature to throw numbers about.”



Figure 4 The Concourse is a popular place to relax in Chatswood

The council has a funding reserve for The Concourse which could cover costs.

However a spokeswoman said the council would also seek to recover costs where appropriate.

The Concourse continues to host activities as the building has been deemed safe.

Safety measures include sprinklers throughout the interior, smoke detection, portable extinguishers, hydrant points, fire alarm, fire escapes and evacuation plans.



Figure 5 Pianist David Fung is one of many performers who have played The Concourse recently. Picture: Adam Yip

The Concourse is one of up to 25 buildings in Chatswood and 435 across the state found to be high risk following a government and fire service review in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire.

The high risk buildings' locations have been kept confidential, although those with access have revealed some sites.