**BUSINESS**

## Building watchdog orders 677 buildings on Gold Coast to undergo independent audit on combustible cladding

Kirstin Payne, Gold Coast Bulletin

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 Subscriber only



PROPERTY owners in more than 670 buildings on the Gold Coast have been asked to cough up \$2.7 million in three weeks to prove their homes are not about to go up in smoke.

The Queensland Building Construction Corporation (QBCC) has declared 677 buildings must undergo an independent audit — at an estimated cost of \$4000 each — as part of its crackdown on combustible cladding.

And they have until May 29 deadline to do or face fines of up to \$20,000.

## [COAST UNIT OWNERS COULD BE HIT WITH MASSIVE BILLS OVER CLADDING AUDITS](#)



The Grenfell Tower went up in flames, claiming 72 lives. / AFP PHOTO / Natalie Oxford / Natalie OXFORD /

The State Government's Safer Buildings Combustible Cladding Checklist was introduced last year to ensure buildings did not have the same cladding that turned the Grenfell Tower into an inferno in 2017, claiming 72 lives.

If the Gold Coast buildings are found to have the cladding, owners could be up for hundreds of thousands of dollars in reparation works.

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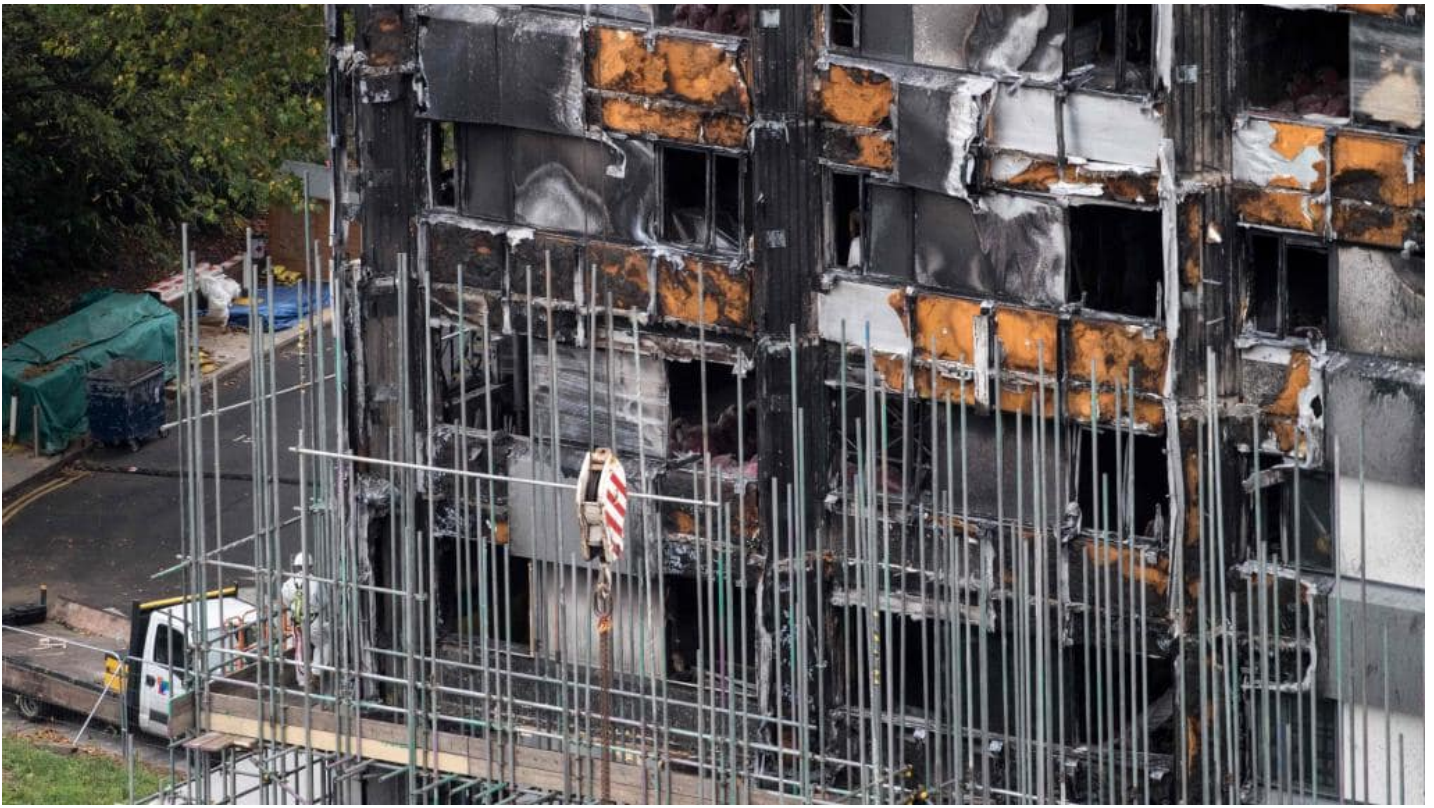
[‘I despise the people who do this’](#)

Coast body corporates said the process had major flaws and claim they have not been given enough time to lock in experts.

“It very frustrating — I would say it is turmoil,” said the body corporate chairman of a Surfers Paradise tower.

[THOUSANDS CLAMOUR TO REGISTER UNDER CLADDING LAWS](#)





caffolding is seen with coverings at the base of the burned-out-shell of Grenfell Tower. / AFP PHOTO / CHRIS J RATCLIFFE

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His building has been ordered to undergo the costly check. However, he claims it is concrete without cladding.

“I understand problems happen, but we have no cladding yet need to fork out or risk insurance issues down the track.

“We have been quoted \$3500 to \$5000 to have the building certified to prove there is no cladding, which is an extra cost to all the unit owners.”

Industry experts including registered building inspectors told the Bulletin the audits would cost between \$4000 and \$6000.

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FES has raised grave concerns about the use of flammable insulation in the Cairns Performing Arts Centre's (CPAC) construction. PICTURE: JUSTIN BRIERTY

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A building management consultant said a shortage of experts able to certify buildings will lead to a bottle neck.

“There are that many buildings left to check it would appear very hard to achieve buildings in three weeks,” he said.

“We have been hearing people are unable to meet deadlines all over the place, some have been granted extensions, others have not.

“We don’t have the people to do all the approvals, I know of consultants that are already at capacity for work, Townsville and other regional areas are in the same position.

“Body corporates committees are waking up to the issue too late.”

[GOLD COAST SCHOOL INSPECTED FOR DANGEROUS CLADDING](#)





The State Government's Safer Buildings Combustible Cladding Checklist was introduced last year to ensure buildings did not have the same cladding that turned the Grenfell Tower into an inferno in 2017. (Photo by Carl Court/Getty Images)

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The consultant said a majority of the city's 1300 body corporates had already paid for professional advice for the first stage of the cladding checklist.

It involved an audit by individual owners who signed a statutory declaration to register their building. The Bulletin has been told a number body corporate officials were unwilling to take on the personal liability and therefore sought professional help.

Mick de Brenni, the Minister for Housing and Public Works, said that 5026 buildings state wide will take stage two of the review. At the estimated \$4000 inspection fee, it will cost them a collective \$20 million.

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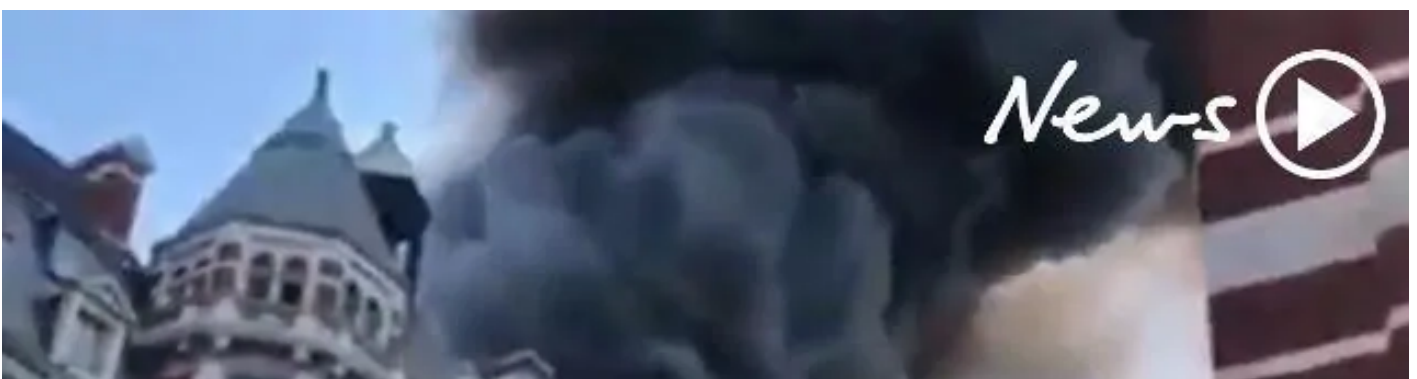


This program was designed to crack down on careless use of building materials that put lives at risk, and building occupants have a right to know if their building is at risk,” Minister de Brenni said. Picture: Getty Images

“This program was designed to crack down on careless use of building materials that put lives at risk, and building occupants have a right to know if their building is at risk,” Minister de Brenni said.

Mr de Brenni said building owners who already knew or suspected they had combustible cladding on their building were able to progress directly to part three and hire a fire engineer, saving the cost of engaging a building industry professional.

“The main issue here is that tenants deserve a right to know that the buildings they are living or working in are free from the risk presented by combustible material. This is about protecting people’s lives through responsible Government processes that ensure buildings are safe.







## Massive blaze in London hotel

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“The Queensland Government consults with all of our stakeholders and as such I will be meeting with the Strata Community Association next week.”

Shadow Minister for Housing and Public Works Michael Hart said the process had been a “complete mess”.

According to the Burleigh MP, those who missed the original deadline or misunderstood the website were also moved to stage two of the process.

“It has been disastrous for homeowners,” the Burleigh MP said.

“We don’t want to see the tragic events of Grenfell from two years ago here in Queensland.

“The main issue though is the Palaszczuk Labor Government’s failure to talk to the people this will impact.

“Thousands of Queenslanders are being left in limbo and their household budgets could soon cop a nasty whack, all because Labor has stuffed up a straightforward process.”

“The Minister needs to give more time to these homeowners.”