

## PARRAMATTA

# Fire and Rescue identify 171 potentially combustible buildings in Parramatta

**Hundreds of potential death traps have been identified in Sydney's west, with an investigation under way into whether they contain the same dangerous cladding that was blamed for the 2017 Grenfell tower fire.**

Matt Taylor, Urban affairs reporter, Parramatta Advertiser

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The 2017 London Grenfell tower disaster, where faulty building materials helped spread a devastating fire, turning the residential complex into a flaming coffin for the 72 people who died. Here combustible cladding was blamed for spreading the fire. Picture: AFP

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Hundreds of Parramatta residents are living in potential death traps as Sydney's second city becomes one of the state's biggest investigation

## hot spots for buildings with combustible cladding.

The *Advertiser* can exclusively reveal that Parramatta has a whopping 171 buildings at risk of containing the dangerous aluminium composite combustible cladding.

Of those buildings identified by Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW), 125 are residential and 46 are commercial buildings.

By comparison, neighbouring councils The Hills and Ryde have a total of 63 and 17, respectively, that are under investigation.

Both the NSW Cladding Taskforce — which was established after the London Grenfell tower disaster two years ago — and Parramatta Council have refused to disclose the locations for legal reasons.

However, it is understood there are at least 31 “high-risk” buildings at Wentworth Point.



Various cranes and constructions sites around Sydney being developed.  
Construction cranes at Wentworth Point near Homebush. Picture: Toby Zerna

The taskforce says FRNSW has identified 629 buildings across the state as being high-risk.

Parramatta Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson said the combustible cladding concerns were a “huge” problem for the city.

“The number of buildings with this material are shocking — and all I can tell you is we’re working on it,” Cr Wilson said.

“This is a huge problem, but it doesn’t surprise me that we have so many buildings with it.

“There was a big push for it about 15 to 20 years ago. The reason they were put in was for thermal insulation and to become a five-star green building.”

Asked why the council was not being more transparent about the locations, he said: “The council doesn’t want to spread panic when it’s not required.

“To throw people out of their houses is a big, big thing.

“We’ve only had one cladding disaster, which happened overseas, so I am waiting till we get the experts’ advice on this.”



Parramatta Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson. Picture: Angelo Velardo

A council spokeswoman said none of the 171 buildings in Parramatta with cladding concerns had been fixed yet.

“However, the process of rectification has started on a number of buildings,” the spokeswoman said.

“None of the buildings in the Parramatta LGA have been evacuated to date. And there have been no fines issued in respect to external cladding to date.”

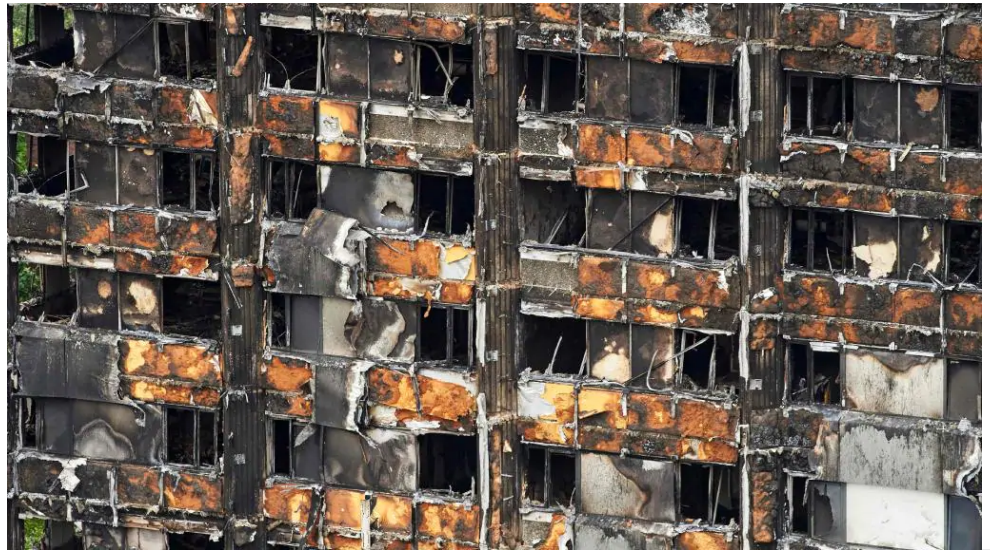


She said council's deadline to enforce the orders was "directly dependent on the nature of the issues".

"Some can be fixed easier than others in which case council's deadlines will be more stringent," the spokeswoman said.

"Others require a significant amount of work and involve significant costs.

"In those cases, temporary measures are installed to mitigate the risks and allow for the rectification to take place. In those situations, the deadlines are longer."



The charred remains of cladding are pictured on the outer walls of the burnt out shell of the Grenfell Tower. Picture: Niklas Halle'n

A taskforce spokesman said it had held an extensive audit program since it was established in June 2017.

"More than 185,000 building projects around the state have been reviewed," the spokesman said.

"And more than 33,000 letters have been sent or hand-delivered to building owners, residents and local councils.

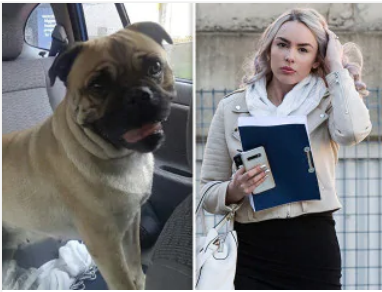
"These letters were sent to the owners of identified buildings to provide information about risk reduction and the engagement of suitable fire-safety practitioners to undertake assessments of building fire safety."

He said the number of buildings requiring further assessment had increased as more owners listed their building on the cladding register.

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“As at July 4, 629 buildings have been identified by the NSW Cladding Taskforce as requiring further assessment as a high priority because they appear to have cladding in a quantity or configuration that may pose an increased risk to occupants and firefighters in the event of a fire,” the spokesman said.

“For this reason, these buildings have been rated as higher risk. It should be noted that the rating of a building as ‘high risk’ does not equate to a determination that the building is in breach of state regulations.

FRNSW has referred these properties to the relevant consent authority.”