

Qudos Bank Arena ordered to strip cladding over fire risks

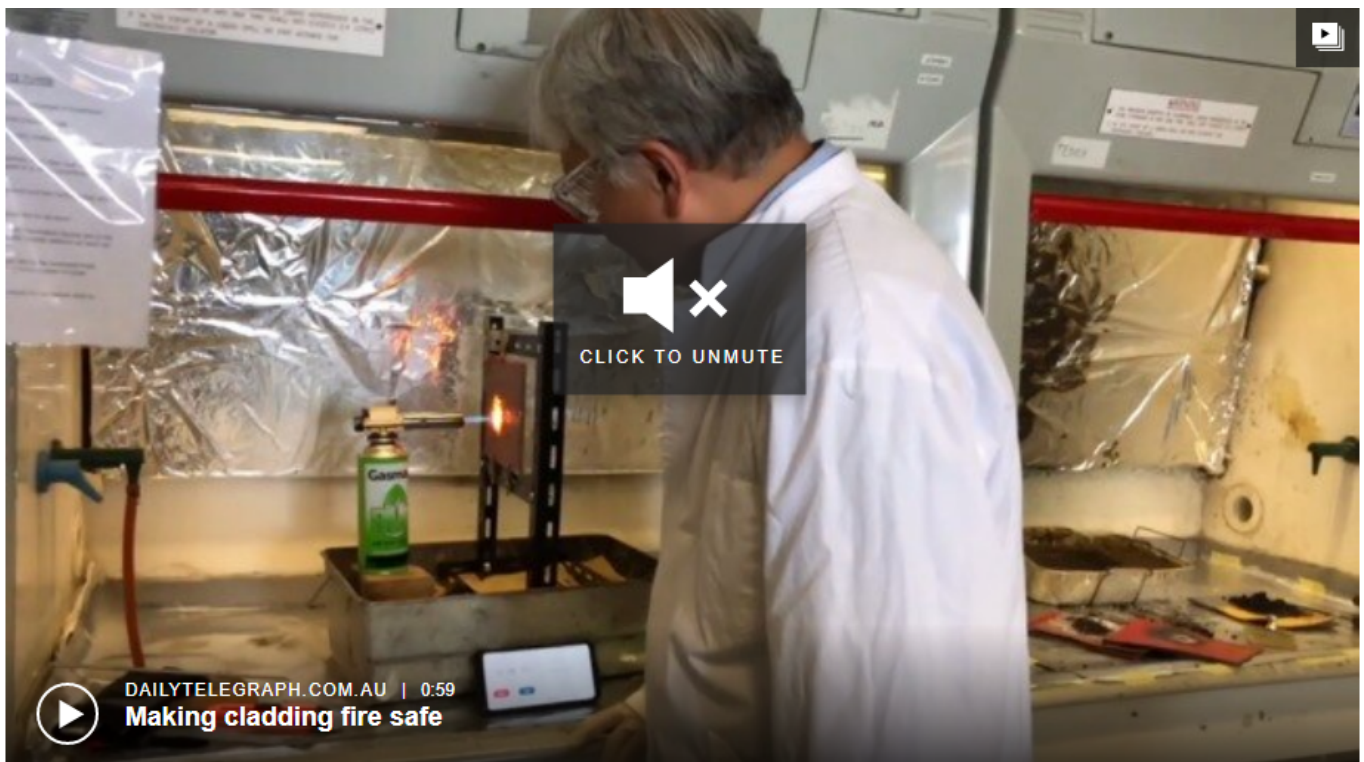
It hosts some of Sydney's biggest sporting and entertainment events – and was recently turned into a mass jab clinic. But the venue has been found to have potentially dangerous cladding.



David Barwell [Follow](#)

2 min read September 23, 2021 - 3:44PM North Shore Times

[2 comments](#)



UNSW researchers have created a paint for cladding that protects it from fire.

One of Sydney's largest sporting stadiums will be required to strip combustible cladding from the 21,000 seat complex amid fears over a potential fire risk.

The Department of Planning has issued Qudos Bank Arena with a fire safety order after a site inspection on August 13 found combustible aluminium composite cladding panels on exterior sections of the stadium.

The fire safety order requires the cladding to be replaced with non-combustible materials along with implementing measures to reduce fire risks until the rectification works are completed.



The order follows a site inspection last month.

The Department of Planning said about 30 per cent of the panels on the exterior of the building will be required to be replaced under the order with a deadline of February 2023.

The arena is one Sydney's premier sporting and entertainment hubs with a crowd capacity of up to 21,032 and was opened in 1999 ahead of the Sydney Olympics

In more recent times the arena has been refashioned into a mass vaccination hub, partly used to vaccinate the 24,000 Year 12 HSC students from the eight coronavirus-hit council areas of Sydney.



The arena is one of Sydney's leading sporting and entertainment hubs.

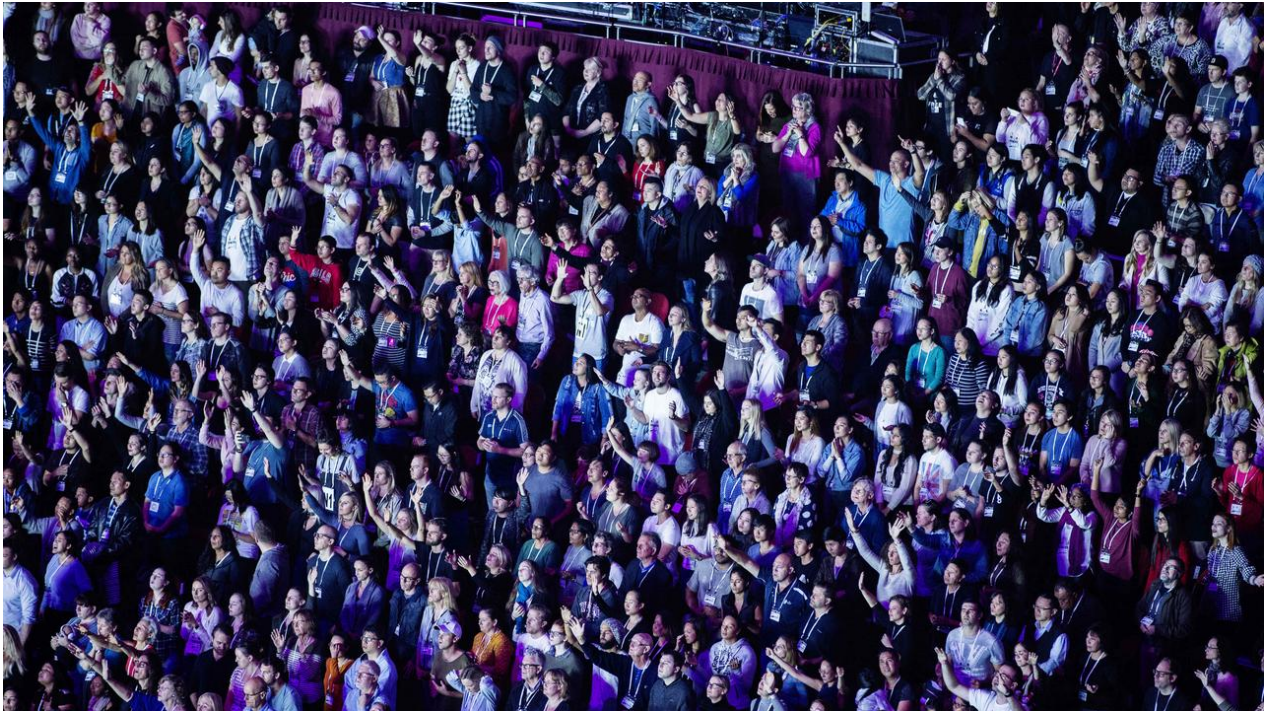
In a statement, a Qudos Bank Arena spokesman said the task of replacing the cladding is expected to begin later this year.

He said the works would not have an impact on future events at the site.

"We have been working collaboratively with the Department of Planning and other relevant authorities on this project for some time and our plans are well progressed," he said.

“Interim management measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of all occupants is maintained until the replacement works are complete.

“The safety of our patrons, clients and staff is our number one priority at all times and we have, and will continue, to ensure all necessary measures are taken.”



The stadium can seat more than 20,000 spectators.

The order comes as latest figures show 372 buildings across NSW are under review for external wall cladding or where remediation is underway as of February this year.

The figures are published by the NSW Cladding Taskforce which was set up in the wake of the Grenfell tower disaster in London in 2017.

Aluminium composite cladding panels previously met the state’s building regulations – including at the time of Qudos Bank Arena’s construction in 1999.



A photo of the site during its construction in 1999.

In August 2018, a product ban was slapped on aluminium composite cladding containing more than 30 per cent Polyethylene – a material that can contribute to how easily the cladding burns and potential to spread fire.

The Department of Planning said Qudos Bank Arena is required to provide an inspection report issued by an accredited certifier, certifying that the replacement panels and method of installation comply with the Building Code of Australia.

Interim safety measures at the site include testing the building's fire safety systems and clearing areas near the panels of combustible materials.

Various other Sydney sites have been issued similar fire safety orders in recent months including buildings at UTS in Broadway and at the Randwick Hospital campus.