

# Work underway to remove combustibile cladding from McDonald Jones Stadium

- [Max McKinney](#)

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Pictures: Max Mason-Hubers

WORK has begun to remove combustibile cladding from McDonald Jones Stadium.

The highly flammable cladding is similar to what fuelled London's Grenfell Tower inferno in mid-2017.

It was [first identified when Venues NSW undertook a review of its properties](#) shortly after the London tragedy as part of a state-wide audit by the NSW Government Cladding Taskforce, which found more than 1000 buildings covered in the material.

The audit was in response to the Grenfell Tower blaze that killed 71 people, as well as the Victorian Lacrosse building fire at Docklands in 2014, which tore through 13 floors in 11 minutes.

Both were fuelled by the polyethylene cladding.

Some cladding at McDonald Jones Stadium was removed in early 2019.

Venues NSW CEO of the time Paul Doorn said the cladding was "used for aesthetic appeal" and "was not part of the core structural elements of the stadium".

He then told the *Herald* last June cladding had been removed from two internal stairwells and areas of the internal concourse in the western grandstand.

The remaining cladding being removed in the current works is mainly on the exterior of the grandstand's stairwells and ticket boxes. Internal cladding in the ground floor foyer, level 2 foyer and level 2 corporate corridors will also be removed.

Venues NSW had planned for the works to begin earlier this year but they were delayed.

The indefinite suspension of the NRL and A-League seasons, along with restrictions on most events, is expected to allow the contractor undertaking the work to finish the job in a quicker than expected time.

The works are expected to be wrapped up before the end of the financial year.

"Following the completion of cladding remediation works at McDonald Jones Stadium in early 2019, Venues NSW has commenced the final stage of works which includes the removal of all remaining external and internal non-compliant cladding," acting Venues NSW chief executive officer Joe Achmar said.

"We will continue to provide a safe venue for our patrons, venue hirers and staff."

Newcastle state MP Tim Crakanthorp was not aware of the cladding removed from the stadium in early 2019 but said the works were "well overdue".

"It's simply not good enough that it's taken this long," he said.

The latest works are worth \$5 million, according to government tender records.