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Melbourne residents evacuated from extreme-risk cladding building

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Residents of a 17-unit block in south-eastern Melbourne were ordered to evacuate by the local City of Kingston on Friday morning after fire safety experts inspected the building and decided the extensive use of combustible cladding and failed fire safety measures made it unsafe to live in.

Council authorities gave residents of 121 McDonald Street in Mordialloc 48 hours to leave the building, after an expert panel comprising the Victorian Building Authority, MFB and a fire safety engineer, rated the fire safety risk at the site as extreme and recommended the council use its powers to issue an Emergency Order to vacate the site.

There are going to be hundreds more of these buildings.

— Sahil Bhasin, Roscon

"The panel assessed the site as at the highest risk factor and council has responded to protect the safety of residents," Kingston Mayor Georgina Oxley said.

"We need greater regulation and accountability in the construction sector to ensure our community is not left living in sub-standard, unsafe homes and facing enormous rectification costs."

The extreme fire risk from the extensive use of cladding was compounded by fire safety measures such as emergency lights that did not function properly - in part as a result of water damage caused by cladding that was not installed properly, a source said.



Flat out: more problematic buildings will come to light as audit processes reach the suburbs. **Pat Scala**


While the building is one of the first to be evacuated after coming to the attention of authorities in [Victoria's cladding audit process](#), more will come to light as the audit process works its way through the outer suburbs - where price was the major factor in construction - said Sahil Bhasin, the general manager of building services company Roscon.

"There are going to be hundreds more of these buildings," Mr Bhasin told *The Australian Financial Review*.

"There are buildings on the outskirts that are just completely made in aluminium composite panels or expanded polystyrene. In the 'burbs the reality is they use the cheaper building materials because people are just after housing stock. They're not really concerned about what it's made out of."

Victoria is [no longer the only Australian city to have suffered cladding-related fire](#). The *Financial Review* this week reported that residents of a Canberra high-rise apartment building avoided potential tragedy this month when a smouldering cigarette set fire to a cloth-covered sofa on the apartment balcony, which ignited combustible cladding on the wall and balcony of a second-level unit.

Five firefighting vehicles rushed to Glebe Park Apartments on the afternoon of August 7 and extinguished the fire that spread to 100 per cent polyethylene-core panels.

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