

**EXCLUSIVE**

## Fiona Stanley Hospital flammable cladding still not removed four years after deadly Grenfell Tower disaster

**Rebecca Le May** The West Australian  
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 Fiona Stanley Hospital. Credit: Peter Bennetts/Peter Bennetts

Flammable cladding at Fiona Stanley Hospital has still not been removed more than four years after WA Health revealed the fire hazard in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster in London.

Aluminium composite panels were identified as a combustion risk following the June 2017 tragedy, which killed 72 people, and the earlier Lacrosse high-rise inferno in Melbourne in 2014.

WA Health announced in March 2019 that work would “soon commence on a remediation strategy to replace” such panels on the exterior of buildings across the FSH site.

But works are underway at just one building within the Murdoch precinct: the single-storey Susan Teather Early Learning and Development Centre for infants to five-year-olds.

“Tender processes for other buildings on the FSH site are in progress, with total costs yet to be determined,” Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson recently revealed in State Parliament, responding to questions from WA Liberal leader Libby Mettam.

Work to replace combustible cladding at Perth Children’s Hospital, the QEII Medical Centre and Joondalup Health Campus is also at an early stage.

“As a result of the complex design and construction of Perth Children’s Hospital, the preparatory works to remove selected panels for fire testing is a significant undertaking,” Ms Sanderson said.

“A crane is on site at the Perth Children’s Hospital in preparation for the fire testing of the panels and investigative works planned to commence in early 2024.

“Joondalup and QEII remain under consideration by Government.”

WA Health said work on the early learning centre was expected to be complete some time next year and did not provide a target date for the rest of the FSH site and QEII buildings, saying a tender process was underway.



Perth Children's Hospital. Credit: Mogens Johansen/The West Australian

At Joondalup, remediation works would coincide with a redevelopment project that is expected to be finished in 2025 while at PCH, initial works were underway along with further testing to inform next steps.

“WA public hospitals are equipped with fire safety features, and health service providers carry out comprehensive staff fire safety training, regular fire hydrant testing, and evacuation drills,” a WA Health spokesperson told The West Australian.

Ms Mettam said it was “astounding” and “extraordinary” that “real action” had not been taken despite potential fire risks being identified years ago and money being allocated.



📷 Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson said works for all but one building on the Fiona Stanley Hospital site were still at the tender stage. Credit: Iain Gillespie/The West Australian

“There hasn’t been any urgency in addressing the clear and known risks,” the shadow health minister told The West.

“The former failed health minister Roger Cook said the situation was under control in 2021 and steps were being taken to address it.

“The Health Minister is still kicking the can down the road with no clear timeframe on when these works will actually be undertaken.

“I urge the Cook Labor Government to stop talking about it and get on with it.”

A State-wide audit of public buildings prompted by the Grenfell disaster, which was complete in 2000, identified 50 requiring remediation work, with the Building and Energy Division of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety confirming just 18 had been completed as of this week - the same number as at the end of June.

Of the private buildings that were audited, 52 were referred for further action, with 45 completed to date, up three since June 30.

“Building and Energy, along with local government permit authorities, is continuing to monitor the progress of cladding remediation on affected buildings,” a spokesperson said.

“Building occupants and the public can be reassured that interim fire risk mitigation measures are in place at all remaining sites until works are completed.”

The spokesperson said several agencies including the departments of health and education had used a more robust audit scope than the minimum set out by Building and Energy.

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