

# University of Sydney ordered to strip cladding from \$385m research, education hub

A top Sydney university has been ordered to remove combustible cladding from a \$385 million campus building as new figures show almost 400 buildings in NSW are being investigated for cladding.



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

The University of Sydney has been ordered to strip combustible cladding from a state-of-the-art campus building amid fears of a potential fire risk.

The Department of Planning issued the university with a fire safety order on March 30 after a site inspection found combustible aluminium composite cladding panels covering sections of the Charles Perkins Centre in Camperdown.

The department said the cladding was located on exterior walls of the six-storey building which cost \$385 million to build and opened in 2013.



A photo of the Charles Perkins Centre in Camperdown.

The complex is recognised as one of Australia’s leading medical research, clinic and education hubs and has a capacity for up to 950 researchers and 1400 students.

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

In a statement, the University of Sydney said it was now taking steps to comply with the department’s order and



The building is a leading research hub.

“The fire safety order identified 16 different cladding elements that require removal and replacement on the Charles Perkins Centre, located in various areas on the outside of the building,” a university spokeswoman said.

“Replacement panels will be in accordance with the requirements of the order and fully compliant with the current legislation and codes.”

The university spokeswoman said interim fire safety measures would be in place at the campus including fire detection and warning systems, up-to-date emergency evacuation procedures, clear exit paths within and from the building, and supervision of maintenance works that may occur within the buildings.

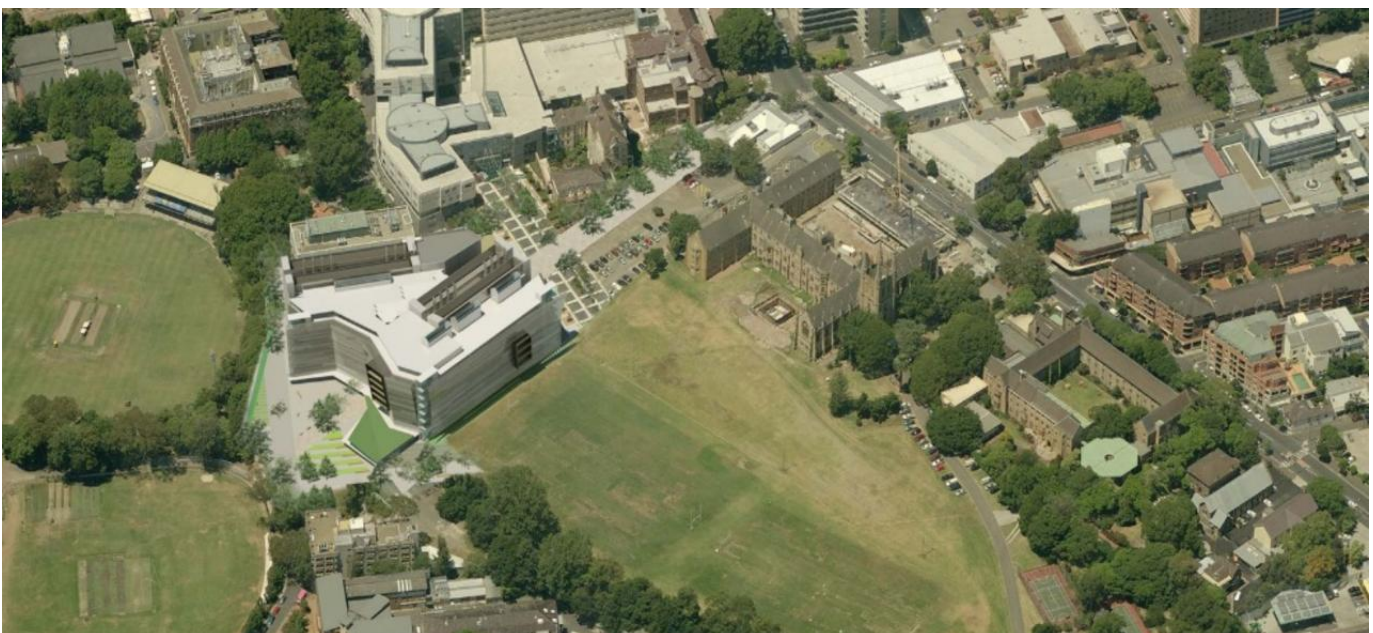


The department has set a July 2023 deadline for the works to be completed.

“While any remediation works may cause minor disruption, we’re working hard to minimise any inconvenience for our students, staff and visitors,” the spokeswoman said.

“The safety of our students and staff is always our highest priority and we have a range of interim fire safety measures in place to reduce any fire safety risks associated with the cladding until the rectification work is complete.”

The order comes as latest figures show 391 buildings across NSW are under review for external wall cladding or where remediation is underway as of February this year.



The Charles Perkins Centre opened in 2013.

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.

The University of Sydney said it could not disclose the estimated cost of replacing the panels as the figure – undertaken by an independent quantity survey – was commercial in confidence.

The latest fire safety order is not the first time the university has had to remove aluminium composite panels with remediation previously focusing on buildings including the Sydney Law School.

“Our buildings that have already had their aluminium composite panels removed and replaced remained operational during remediation works,” the university spokeswoman said.



A photo inside the building.

“For our Sydney Law School, we’ve also taken the opportunity to replace the previous cladding with an indigenous public art installation created by artist Michael Jalaru Torres.”

As part of the order, the university will also have to provide a completion report to the Department of Planning to certify the replacement panel works comply with the Building Code of Australia.

A department spokeswoman said “the department will continue to regularly monitor compliance with the order”.