

VIC NEWS

Cladding concern sparks real estate agents to spruik buildings using safe materials

Real estate agents are now promoting the safety features of properties, including “non-combustible cladding” after several terrifying apartment block blazes.

Josh Fagan, Sunday Herald Sun

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Fears over flammable cladding has led to a trend of real estate ads boasting safe cladding as a selling point.

A growing number of listings for apartments and townhouses have highlighted the fact they are built from non-combustible external material.

Real estate agents said it was a new way to spruik a property's safety features, given heightened fears over fire risk.



Fire crews at an apartment tower fire in Spencer St in February. Picture: Andrew Henshaw

Uncertainty over potential costs of removing cladding had also made it a more pressing issue, Real Estate Institute of Victoria senior vice president Leah Calnan said.

“No one wants to be in a situation where they are of pocket thousands of dollars because they failed to do their research upfront,” Ms Calnan said.

A recent listing for an off-the-plan townhouse in Cheltenham featured the headline that it was built from non-combustible panels.

Hodges Mentone director Andrew Plousi said that had become a key talking point.

“For a lot of buyers it’s the very first question they ask,” Mr Plousi said.

“People are talking about it. It’s much more prominent now, we’ve seen that trend probably over the past few months, because of recent events.”



odges Mentone director Andrew Plousi says buyers are asking about safety features.

Mr Plousi said savvy buyers were acutely aware of the risks involved in fire safety, and potential impact on insurance premiums.

He said most developers were also moving toward using non-combustible materials.

A [high-rise apartment fire in Spencer St in February](#) prompted the state government to start a cladding taskforce.

The taskforce has so far identified almost 500 buildings in Victoria as having “extreme or high risk” combustible cladding.

The state government is believed to dedicating funds to help apartment owners remove flammable cladding from their homes.

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Presence of dangerous cladding has to declared in the Section 32 document.

Ms Calnan said: “Obviously the Section 32 contains important information. In addition, if you are buying into a high raise apartment it is important to read the Body Corporate minutes and take the time to speak to the Owners Corporation Manager or the Property

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Manager so you are aware of any issues associated with the building.”