

UNSW College of Fine Arts issued order to remove combustible cladding from multimillion-dollar campus

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A photo of the campus.

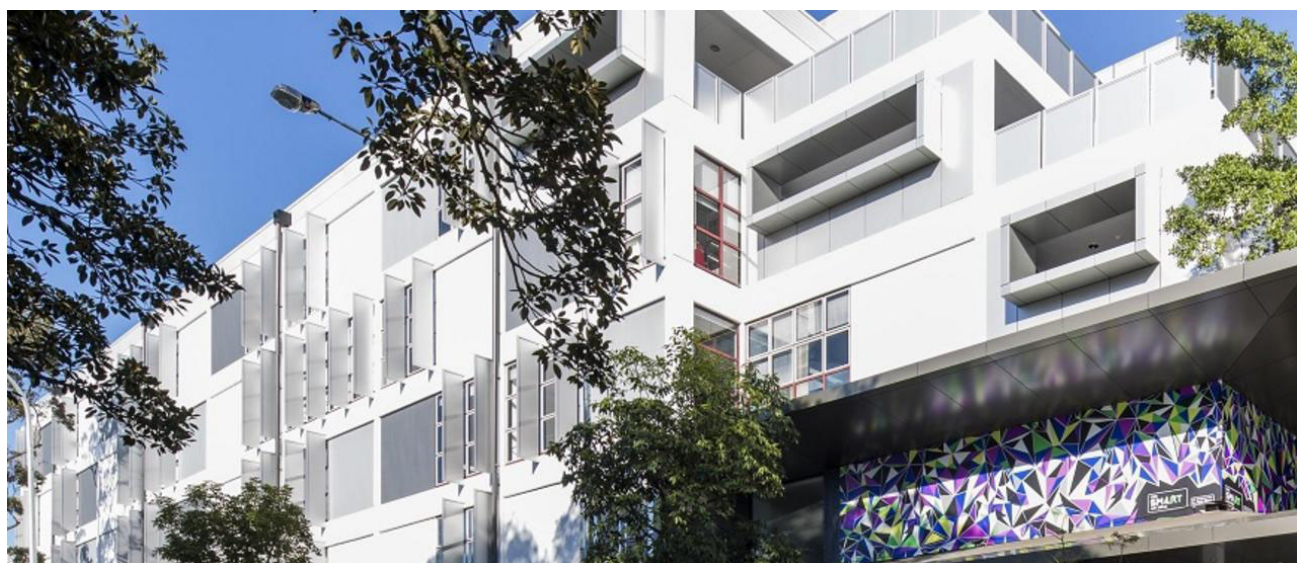
A top Sydney university has been ordered to strip combustible cladding from its state-of-the-art campus building amid fears of a potential fire risk.

The Department of Planning issued the UNSW College of Fine Arts with a fire safety order after a site inspection in April found combustible aluminium composite cladding panels covering sections of the campus.

The cladding is located on exterior walls of the Paddington college which is recognised as one of Australia's leading art and design schools.

It boasts galleries, labs for creative robotics, audio visual studios and facilities for complex media productions such as motion capture.

The campus underwent a major \$60m redevelopment in 2014 that included building new and upgraded facilities.



A photo of the Paddington college.

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 NSW said it was now taking steps to comply with the department's order and was aiming to complete the works by the department's December 2024 deadline.



A photo of the campus.

“UNSW Sydney is currently undertaking site investigations and designs. A comprehensive final building review is underway to identify any instances of small-scale and localised aluminium composite panels,” a spokeswoman said. “UNSW Sydney will meet deadlines agreed with by the authorities.”

The university spokeswoman did not disclose the estimated cost of replacing the panels but said interim fire safety measures would be in place at the campus.

“Our commitment to compliance with all relevant legislation is steadfast, and we will continue to liaise with the necessary government agencies on this matter,” the spokeswoman said.

“The health and safety of our students, staff and visitors is always our utmost priority at UNSW Sydney. A range of interim measures have been put in place to manage potential risks during this transition period.”



The college is located in Paddington.

A Department of Planning spokeswoman did not confirm how many panels would be required to be removed and replaced as part of the order.

The spokeswoman said the department would continue to monitor compliance with the order.

Latest figures show 391 buildings across NSW are under review for external wall cladding or have remediation work underway, as of February.

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.

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