

QLD NEWS

2700 Queensland buildings still yet to be cleared of flammable cladding

Three years since a scheme to identify Queensland buildings covered in deadly flammable cladding was established, residents and workers of 2700 buildings across the state are still in the dark.

Thomas Morgan, Urban Affairs reporter, The Courier-Mail

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Residents and workers in more than 2700 buildings across Queensland still have no idea whether their buildings are potentially deadly fire traps, with the state's process for identifying flammable cladding slammed as being "slow" and secretive.

It comes more than three years since the deadly Grenfell Tower disaster in London, which killed 72 people and sparked a flurry of checks globally for combustible cladding.

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The Queensland Building and Construction Commission has refused to reveal just how many buildings have been identified with the dangerous material, nor could say how many have been rectified since the Safer Buildings program began in 2018.

But the QBCC said 300 buildings had entered the third and final stage of the assessment process, and another 2,400 were in the second stage.



Cladding was removed from the facade of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Picture: AAP Image/Robert Shakespeare

"Those building owners who are completing Part 3 of the Safer Buildings program are required to engage a fire engineer to undertake a closer investigation of their building," a QBCC spokesman said.

"It is important to note these buildings have not been identified to have a cladding fire risk, however, further investigation is warranted," the spokesman said.

"For some buildings, simple changes to management and maintenance practices may be sufficient to fully address any risks identified by a fire engineer."

Building owners have until May next year to complete Part 3, three years after the process began.

Of the roughly 19,700 buildings assessed since 2018, over 17,000 have been cleared, meaning the status of 2,700 buildings is still unknown.

The Safer Buildings process has drawn the ire of the Strata Community Association of Queensland, which has slammed it as slower than other states.

“There are still 2,700 buildings that we don’t really know whether they’re safe or not,” president James Nickless said.



 The remnants of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Picture: CHRIS J RATCLIFFE / AFP

“The lack of transparency around what we are now saying is 2,700 buildings – that’s still an unacceptable risk,” Mr Nickless said.

“Queenslanders are still in the dark as to whether they have dangerous cladding and need to do something about it.”

He said other states had enacted government-led task forces that had inspected buildings themselves, rather than allowing building managers to lead the process.

“They identified those materials much earlier than we have,” Mr Nickless said.

“I think (Queensland’s scheme) could’ve been done quicker and more efficiently if it was a government task force.”