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Potts Point Ikon building in \$420,000 facade fix

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Combustible aluminium composite cladding on Sydney's Ikon tower in Potts Point has residents of the prestigious building at odds with developer Mirvac over who will pay for the proposed \$420,000 rectification work.

Owners of the converted former Landmark Royal Hotel at 81 Macleay Street, in which [RODE Microphones owner Peter Freedman purchased the penthouse last year for a reported \\$16 million](#), have submitted plans to the City of Sydney to replace combustible Alucobond cladding around the ground-level entrances and some upper windows.





The proposed fix for Sydney's Ikon tower in Potts Point will only reduce combustible cladding around high fire-risk areas, such as around apartment windows on the 13th floor. **James Alcock**

Like many residential buildings of its era, the 185-unit building that won an industry award for urban renewal in 2004 is faced with the potentially costly task of replacing façade materials linked to building fires such as Lacrosse and Neo200 in Melbourne and London's disastrous Grenfell Tower blaze.

"The Ikon Apartments building presents a high risk of undue fire spread via the facade," a report by consultancy RED Fire Engineers says.

"The building has a combustible external facade."

More discussions needed

The proposed remedy, which the City of Sydney still has to approve, is a cost-effective solution that would only remove combustible cladding in parts of the building where fire could most likely break out. However, it's unclear who will pay for the fix. Residents and Mirvac are still understood to be in discussions.

Strata Manager Dianne Smithers said she had been instructed by the Ikon owners corporation not to comment.

A Mirvac spokeswoman said the building's cladding complied with relevant rules at the time it was built.



Combustible cladding around ground floor entrances of Sydney's Ikon building will also be replaced under the proposed fix. **James Alcock**

That argument may not hold, however. In a highly-anticipated judgment in February, [a Victorian tribunal ruled](#) that combustible cladding on Melbourne's Lacrosse tower did not comply with building code requirements at the time it was built in 2011-12.

The number of buildings with combustible cladding is growing. At its last update in February, the NSW Cladding Taskforce said it had identified 447 buildings as being higher risk because of the quantity or configuration of combustible material on them.

The largest developers, at least, are working to resolve the problem. In Melbourne, where [the building regulator is taking another look](#) at buildings - including [some by Mirvac at Yarra's Edge in Docklands](#) - that it previously ticked off as safe.

Lendlease [last year replaced combustible panels on its 303-unit residential Exo tower](#) at 55 Merchant Street in Melbourne's Docklands with solid aluminium sheets at its own – undisclosed – cost.

But apartment owners in buildings developed by smaller developers, or by builders that have since disappeared, have fewer options. Builder [Hickory's decision last year to put subsidiary H Buildings into administration](#) prevented owners from pursuing cladding-related damages claims.



The city declined to comment on Tuesday. Architect Mark Bullen did not respond to a request for comment. RED Fire Engineers technical director Jonathan Barnett, who consulted on the building, declined to comment.

But Dr Barnett said Victoria's building procedures, with proposed rectifications assessed by the Building Approvals Board, made it easier than in NSW to allow solutions that included partial - rather than full - cladding replacement.

"We have a process [in Victoria] which allows cost-effective engineering," Dr Barnett told the *Australian Financial Review*.

In NSW, which last year retrospectively banned ACP cladding with a 30 per cent or greater polyethylene core, it was possible, but harder to achieve, Mr Barnett said.

"It's not the consistent approach used in Victoria," he said.

The Ikon building sits on a site that was once home to the Chevron, Niko and Landmark Hotels and is in one of the busiest inner city streets of Sydney. Macleay Street runs into Kings Cross.

As a luxury tower, the 18-floor building also features a pool, spa, sauna and a gym. Last week, a one-bedroom apartment sold for \$1.450 million.



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