

PARRAMATTA

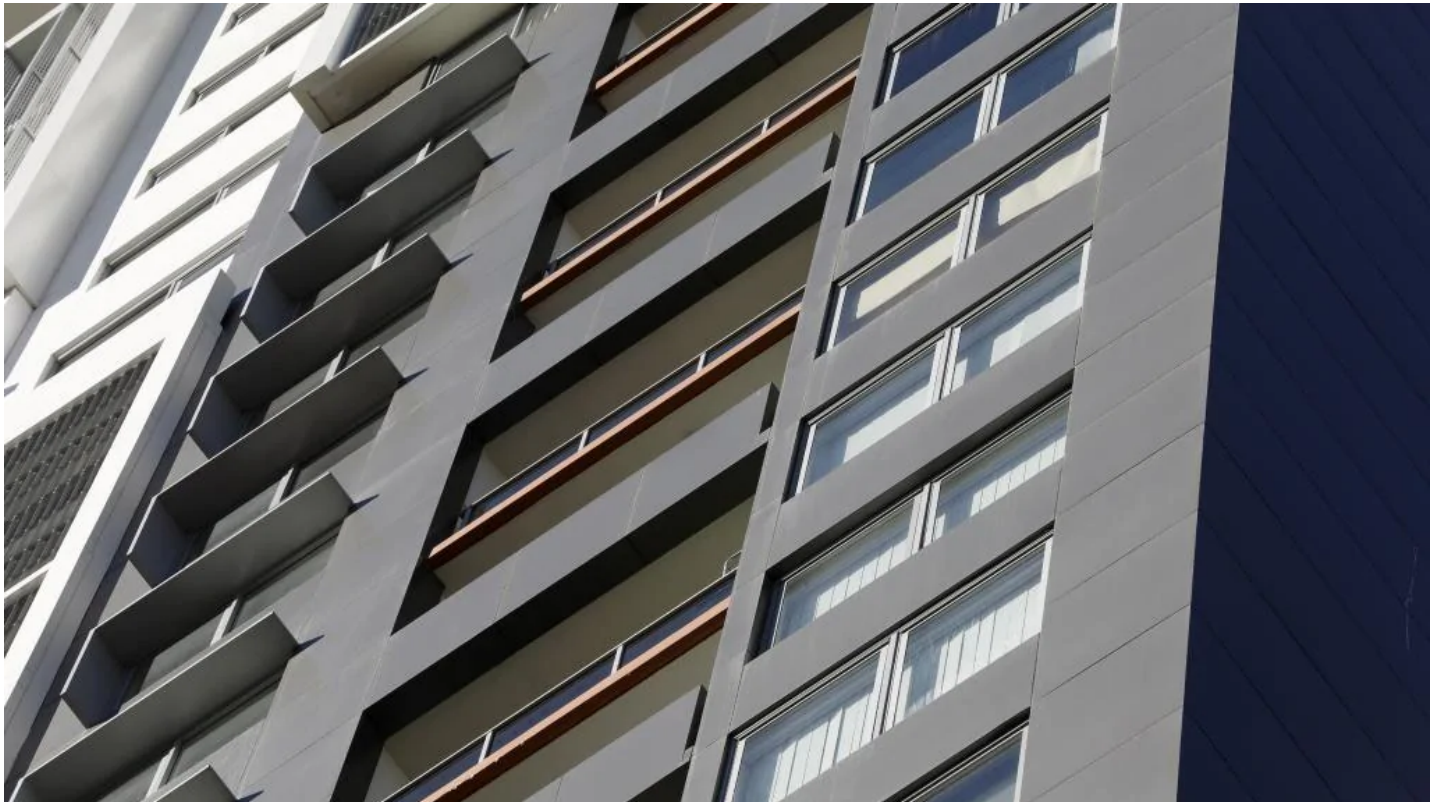
Increase in combustible cladding fears 'lowering' price on apartments: Procriv

Owners may be forced to sell their homes for 'peanuts', according to a western Sydney councillor, if state and federal intervention into the combustible cladding drama isn't made soon.

Matt Taylor, Urban affairs reporter, Parramatta Advertiser

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Hunter St, Parramatta, is the site of a dispute between owners and developer Jean Nassif over combustible cladding issues.

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A Parramatta councillor fears some residents will be forced to sell their homes for “peanuts” if the state and federal governments don't stump up more funding to help urgently remove flammable cladding in their buildings.

As apartment owners in Parramatta launch the state's first legal action against a builder over combustible cladding concerns, Labor councillor Patricia Procriv called on the state and federal governments to take greater responsibility to fix the potential death traps.


“This is a big national problem — and it demands an urgent response from the state and federal governments to get the concerns fixed now before any serious event occurs,” Cr Proxiv, whose plea received backing at Monday’s council meeting, said.

“Council has a responsibility to all residents — and financially, many residents can’t do this without more state and federal support.

“People who are already mortgaged to the hilt are going to be forced to sell their place for peanuts, because they just won’t be able to afford to pay for their buildings to be fixed.

“There can’t be anymore buck-passing by governments on this serious issue. It needs to be dealt with now. People’s lives are at risk.”



 Parramatta Labor councillor Patricia Proxiv (Dundas ward).

A Parramatta Council spokeswoman said it had undertaken initial site inspections at 174 buildings in the local government area suspected of having external combustible cladding, with 74 so far cleared as “compliant”.

“Of the 100 buildings still under investigation, six were recently found to have the non-compliant cladding installed, and council is in the process of issuing orders to ensure these buildings are rectified,” the spokeswoman said.

The *Advertiser’s* cladding coverage last week created national media headlines as we uncovered the number of “high-risk” buildings across the state [had increased from 447 to 629 over the past six months](#).

‘I AM SCARED’

Parramatta Rise apartment owners are suing Toplace Construction over the aluminium cladding on the 28-storey tower.

The company is defending the action and argues its cladding is compliant with state laws.


Toplace, owned by developer Jean Nassif, admits in its defence to the Supreme Court action that the cladding is Vitrabond FR, but it also claims that even if it does have a Polyethylene core greater than 30 per cent it can still be used under the 2017 Act.

Medical student Harleen Aulakh, who rents an apartment at the Hunter St building, was “shocked” and “horrified” when told last week about the dispute over the cladding.



 Sean Nassif, Parramatta property developer and model/actor wife Nissy. INSTAGRAM IMAGES



 Harleen Aulakh, 23 year old student, studying to be a doctor, works at Nepean Hospital. Harleen is renting at 29 Hunter St, Parramatta.

“I have lived here since January and have experienced countless fire alarms go off,” the 23-year-old said.

“We haven’t received any information from building management or the body corporate.

“We have seen how fires can spread with combustible cladding so, of course, I am scared.”

When construction on Parramatta Rise was completed in 2015, aluminium-polyurethane cladding was still legally approved by building authorities and widely used throughout Sydney and NSW buildings.

‘SHOCKING NUMBERS’

Granville State Labor MP Julia Finn claims the State Government’s weak building laws has led to the cladding crisis.

“This is a government that has let developers run amok, with insufficient regulation or oversight for far too long,” Ms Finn said.

“The numbers (of buildings of cladding concern) are shocking.”

Ms Finn responded to comments by Parramatta Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson last week that council was leading the push for aluminium-based cladding to achieve green five-star ratings when she was mayor in 2004.



Man charged over false carjacking claim



Granville MP, Julia Finn (AAP Image / Angelo Velardo)

“This wasn’t about achieving green building status at all,” she said. “In my whole time on council, there was never a push to encourage aluminium-based cladding to improve the environmental sustainability of buildings.

“Not all cladding is flammable; the highly flammable stuff is cheaper.”

Parramatta State Liberal MP Geoff Lee said this was a matter now for councils to complete the building investigations.

“Parramatta Council is currently assessing the sites to see if they need remediation or not. If anyone has any concerns, I’d encourage them to get in touch with council,” Mr Lee said.

HOSPITAL TREATMENT

Westmead Hospital has been given a clean bill of health after it was one of 4621 public health buildings across NSW assessed for having flammable, aluminium-based composite panels.

“The review found buildings at only five hospital sites where all ACP cladding needed to be removed,” a NSW Health spokeswoman said, before adding that Westmead was “not” a site of concern.



Westmead Hospital. (AAP IMAGE / Angelo Velardo)

“Work to remove cladding from four of these buildings is now complete. The fifth building is expected to be complete by June 2020 and interim fire-safety measures are in place until the work can be completed.”

NSW Health did not reveal the locations of the buildings that requires rectification works.



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