

# The West Australian

## Hospital cladding cost tops \$40 million, as PCH testing shows all panels are flammable



**Dylan Caporn** The West Australian  
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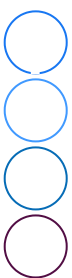


Perth Childrens' Hospital. Credit: Justin Benson-Cooper/The West Australian

Flammable cladding on some of WA's biggest hospitals will finally be removed nearly seven years after 72 people died in the UK's Grenfell Tower fire due to similar panelling.

After the June 2017 blaze at the 24-storey London apartment block, the government took two years to confirm that hospitals across the State also had non-compliant aluminium cladding.

Five years on from that, taxpayers will foot a more than \$40 million bill to remove it.





 Perth Children's Hospital. Credit: Justin Benson-Cooper/The West Australian

Shadow health minister Libby Mettam said it was “grim” that the problem had taken so long to be addressed.

“They have known about flammable cladding on four Perth hospitals since 2019, but it took questioning in Parliament for Roger Cook’s Health Minister to admit just 28 panels have been removed from one hospital since February 2023,” Ms Mettam said.

“Having the money is one thing – at least she managed to get some funding for something other than Metronet – but getting on with the job of keeping WA patients safe is something else entirely.

“Half a decade on, the Health Minister owes WA an explanation about her lack of urgency and why she seems so comfortable risking the lives of patients and healthcare professionals in hospitals with flammable cladding.”

New figures released in last week’s State Budget reveal the Health Department has budgeted \$41 million to remove cladding from WA hospitals.

Those costs included nearly \$17.5 million for the work at Fiona Stanley Hospital in Murdoch and almost \$20m for the QEII Medical Centre in Nedlands.



 Libby Mettam. Credit: Riley Churchman/The West Australian

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 Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson. Credit: Danella Bevis/The West Australian

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While no costings have been estimated for Perth Children's Hospital, testing of 28 panels removed in November last year found that all were flammable.

A further \$14 million has been budgeted in the training portfolio to remove cladding at the Central Regional TAFE in Geraldton and the North Metropolitan TAFE in Joondalup.

Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson defended the time it had taken, saying that her department had addressed the "high-risk sites first".

"We have undertaken rectification or remediation work at King Edward Memorial Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Rockingham Hospital, St John of God Midland Public Hospital – which was a massive project," the Minister said.

"Important preparations must be completed before remediation works can be carried out, including a business case, burn tests, and planning to ensure sites can remain operational during construction.

"Additionally, each hospital site is different and has its own challenges that must be considered and mitigated.

"We need to ensure the remediation work does not compromise the functionality of the hospitals, which the Liberal Leader would understand if she knew anything about running the public health system."