Building regulator issues more than $180,000 in fines

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has given more than $180,000 in penalties over the last three months to building practitioners breaching industry legislation.

A total of 29 building practitioners have been fined a total of $180,750 between December last year and February this year for a variety of breaches of the Building Act and building regulations.

With breaches ranging from using false certificates of insurance, issuing building permits inconsistent with applicable planning permit requirements, failure to comply with directions to fix non-compliant work and failure to call for mandatory inspections, VBA executive director David Brockman says that it is a practitioner's responsibility to comply with rules and regulations to keep everyone safe.

"The VBA takes its role as regulator seriously, promoting safe and resilient buildings, and ensuring communities and industry reach their potential," Mr Brockman says

"We do this by supporting a thriving and trusted industry that acts with integrity, and by taking action against those who do not follow the rules."

Mr Brockman says the VBA works to ensure consumers have trust in the industry and that practitioners that do the right thing aren't hindered by those who break rules and put lives at risk.

"Regulating Victoria's built environment does more than ensure safety – it helps industry and community reach economic and social potential," says Mr Brockman.

"We maximise the industry's contribution toward social and economic recovery and growth, by creating confidence to build with and invest in an accountable, compliant industry that is active and well-regulated."

The Victorian Building Authority encourages consumers to ensure their tradespeople are properly registered. (iStock)

2021 was a record year in terms of Victorian building permit approvals. Data shows that 127,792 permits, worth $44.6 billion were issued - an increase of 12.66 percent from 2020.

In December 2021, the VBA suspended a building practitioner for using fraudulent building insurance certificates. The practitioner was subsequently disqualified from working for three years.

For practitioners who have had an action brought against them, they can apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a review of the decision.

Victorians are encouraged to ensure that tradespeople are registered with the relevant authority, which can be found at www.vba.vic.gov.au/find.

There is also an online portal for consumers to use should they experience difficulty with plumbers or builders, which can be found at www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers/complaints.

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