

More Homes More Opportunity



The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Minister for Planning

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NEW BUILDING WATCHDOG WITH TEETH TO PROTECT VICTORIANS

More homes mean more opportunity – that’s why the Allan Labor Government is delivering more protections for Victorian homebuyers, giving them peace of mind whether they’re building, buying or renovating a home.

Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny today announced an overhaul of the building regulator, replacing the Victorian Building Authority with a new more powerful watchdog – Building & Plumbing Commission – to oversee building and plumbing industries across the state.

For the first time, the Regulator will bring together all aspects of building quality control – regulation, insurance and dispute resolution – into a single agency.

The watchdog will also be given tough new powers to protect Victorian families – and their homes.

Currently, the regulator can only direct builders to fix substandard work before occupants move in. Under new rules the Building & Plumbing Commission will be able to direct to fix work not just before move-in day – but beyond. The Government will work with industry to define the eligible time period.

New powers will also enable the watchdog to stop apartments with serious defects from being sold, as well as increased reporting requirements before occupancy certificates are signed off on new builds.

While most builders do the right thing, we’ve seen that some dodgy operators continue to cut corners and break rules. It’s why the watchdog will be resourced with new boots on the ground, with a 50 per cent increase in auditors and frontline inspectors, as part of a \$63.3 million investment in this year’s Budget.

The watchdog will also be tasked with leading an inspection blitz, including a crackdown on unregistered building and plumbing work.

Victorians will have better access to insurance if things go wrong – eliminating the need for complex and costly legal claims against builders who do the wrong thing.

Apartment buyers will also have stronger financial protection, with developers required to provide a bond to cover the cost of fixing poor work for buildings over three storeys. The new bond will be the first step towards introducing a new 10-year insurance product for apartment buildings, with next steps to be developed in consultation with an industry working group.

Further changes will be made to dispute resolution processes as part of the transition to the Building & Plumbing Commission, creating more certainty for Victorians and industry, and more streamlined pathways to resolve disputes.

The Government is also working with industry and consumer groups on reforms to ensure the rules around domestic building contracts are clear and fair, with legislative change expected in 2025.

The Victorian Building Authority’s CEO Anna Cronin has been leading a major transformation of the Victorian Building Authority’s performance and culture since her appointment in July 2023.

Earlier this year, Ms Cronin commissioned an independent review into concerns raised by consumers about historical practices by the VBA, which has been released today. That report confirms what many already knew, that significant changes are needed to better protect Victorians building or renovating a home.

That's exactly what the Government is doing. Consultation with industry and consumer groups will continue to guide the implementation of these reforms.

Alongside delivering new social and affordable homes and Australia's largest housing project – the Suburban Rail Loop and its six housing precincts – a new more powerful regulator is just one of the ways Government is supporting Victorians that want to buy a home.

It's also just one of a series of announcements the Government will make this week about more homes, more support for industry, infrastructure and parks, and more opportunity for renters, owners and buyers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny

“For most of us, building a home will be the biggest investment we ever make, and Victorians rightly expect to get what they pay for – a properly built home.”

“For those building, renovating or buying a home, the new Regulator will mean peace of mind. For those found doing the wrong thing, it'll mean consequences.”

Quote attributable to Assistant Treasurer Danny Pearson

“When something goes wrong with their home the last thing families need is a complex and frustrating legal process – that's why we're making it simpler to access insurance through our one-stop shop for consumers.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams

“We're implementing these reforms to protect Victorians building or renovating their home – our one-stop shop will ensure consumers know where to go for advice and support.”