

Media Release

Build Aware

9 June, 2022

Victorian regulators visit work sites during Latrobe Valley safety blitz

Four Victorian regulators carried out more than 120 inspections across Latrobe Valley work sites as part of last week's Build Aware campaign.

Inspectors from Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), WorkSafe, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) visited sites across the Latrobe Valley between Monday, 30 May and Friday, 3 June.

The Build Aware campaign works to ensure the construction and demolition industries are meeting safety, environmental, building and plumbing compliance obligations with each agency focused on a specific area of safety.

During the week, ESV inspectors visited 15 sites, checking to see if excavators, mobile cranes and tipper trucks were being operated too close to overhead powerlines.

VBA's authorised officers carried out 70 building and plumbing inspections and 12 plumbing audits. Top risks identified by the VBA included incorrect site signage, timber framing, roof cladding and fire separation.

WorkSafe inspectors visited 30 sites across the region with inspectors reminding employers about the risks associated with exposure to asbestos and crystalline silica, including the recent changes to the OHS regulations when working with materials containing crystalline silica.

EPA inspectors carried out nine inspections and found compliance on sites across Traralgon was generally good with only minor issues associated with the containment of waste, which were resolved once identified.

Over the past four years, Build Aware has targeted regional areas including Shepparton, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Wodonga, Bendigo, Geelong and Warrnambool. Joint activities delivered by the regulators include industry trade breakfasts, joint inspections and educational presentations to local TAFE students.

As part of the week, representatives from WorkSafe and ESV presented to more than 160 carpentry, plumbing, electrical, engineering and civil construction students at TAFE Gippsland's Morwell and Yallourn campus.

For more information, visit the Victorian Building Authority, Worksafe Victoria, Energy Safe Victoria and Environment Protection Authority websites.

ESV Commissioner and Chairperson Marnie Williams

"Heavy machinery operating close to powerlines has been an issue for ESV of late with almost daily incidents reported earlier this year."

"This was a great chance for us to get out and remind industry of the real dangers of working too close to high voltage powerlines."

Victorian Building Authority State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini

"Regional Victoria is experiencing a large increase in building work and it is important that regulators also increase their presence in the regions."

"This was a great opportunity for VBA to engage with local practitioners and other regulators so we can better support each other in the delivery of safe buildings."



WorkSafe Director Construction and Earth Resources Matthew Wielgosz

“The campaign, including a trade breakfast, TAFE presentations and inspections, provided an opportunity to highlight the serious and life-threatening illnesses that can result from exposure to hazardous materials such as asbestos or crystalline silica dust.

“Employers were reminded of their obligations to take all reasonable safety precautions during demolition work and when working with hazardous materials. Three improvement notices were issued to remove or reduce major risks to health and safety.”

EPA Gippsland Regional Manager Jess Bandiera

“These inspections were productive and helped to promote the message that compliance with the various regulations that operate on a building site are there for a really good reason.”

“The reaction from industry was positive and EPA was very pleased with the level of compliance and the general willingness to learn more about the regulators’ roles.”

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