

18 October 2018

Ms Rachel Nicol
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Nicol

INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF SONIA SOFIANOPOULOS

I am writing in response to the findings made by Coroner Jacqui Hawkins into the death of Ms Sonia Sofianopoulos. On behalf of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) I offer my sincerest condolences to Ms Sofianopoulos' family and commend Coroner Hawkins for her efforts during this inquest.

Coroner Hawkins has addressed Recommendation five to me:

I recommend that Sue Eddy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Building Authority, consult with relevant industry stakeholders and review its requirements for the provision of Certificates of Compliance to the extent that they relate to the servicing, testing and maintenance of OFG heaters.

I confirm the VBA's support for this recommendation. In collaboration with the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, the VBA has commenced reviewing the requirements for the provision of compliance certificates. The outcomes of this review will be reported in 2019. The requirements for compliance certificates are set out in the *Building Act 1993* and any recommended changes to the requirements may require legislative amendment.


The VBA has taken an important initial step to minimise public risk associated with open flue gas heaters by enhancing industry capability and focussing proactive inspections of open flue gas heaters to identify key safety risks. In August 2018, the VBA, in partnership with Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), delivered negative pressure and carbon monoxide (CO) spillage testing training to over 2,500 plumbers and gasfitters.

The VBA also launched an online instructional training video on negative pressure and carbon monoxide (CO) spillage testing training. Furthermore, the VBA has launched an online training module and exam that must be completed by all registered and licensed Gasfitters and Type A Gas Appliance Servicing plumbers in order to be eligible to renew a plumbing or gas fitting registration or license at their next renewal date.

The VBA is actively participating in the Whole of Government approach to ensure all recommendations are delivered and that the safety in Victorian households is enhanced.

If you require further information, please contact Mark Rossiter, Executive Director, Operations on 03 9618 9310 or at mark.rossiter@vba.vic.gov.au.

Regards



Sue Eddy
Chief Executive Officer