

8 August 2013

Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11
222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000



Dear Sir/Madam

Coroners Court Investigation into the death of Hayden Curtis

Further to our letter dated 9 July 2013, please find attached a copy of correspondence sent to Chief Executive Officers of Victorian councils.

The correspondence advises that Municipal Building Surveyors should be aware of renovation risks associated with demolitions, alterations and extensions of old buildings and chimneys.

We also noted that all relevant Building Surveyors, when determining and issuing building permits for such buildings, should:

- Require a demolition plan to be submitted
- Ensure any building plans reference existing chimneys and the elements and members essential for maintaining stability of the structure and their condition
- Ensure compliance with AS 2601-1991 Demolition of Structures that requires that demolition not commence until precautionary measures have been inspected and approved by the Relevant Building Surveyor; and
- Require acceptable arrangements to be in place to maintain the structural stability of any existing chimneys or any other unsupported masonry, particularly where any chimney intersects with roofing material.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further please contact Gareth Hatley, Senior Planning Adviser ghatley@mav.asn.au or 9667 5596.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Spence".

Rob Spence
Chief Executive Officer

Copy to: Mr Dennis Hogan
Director, Regulatory Development
Victorian Building Authority



1 August 2013

TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sent to CEO PAs

Dear Colleague

Hayden Curtis inquest

The Coroner recently reported on the death of Hayden Curtis who was killed when renovating a property in 2003. In this instance Hayden Curtis fell through a ceiling and an unsupported chimney collapsed on top of him.

The Coroner made a series of recommendations and identified the MAV in two of the recommendations as the appropriate entity responsible.

The Coroner asked that we advise all Municipal Building Surveyors to be aware of renovation risks associated with demolition, alterations and extensions of old buildings and chimneys. In particular, the Coroner's findings suggest that all Relevant Building Surveyors, when determining and issuing building permits for such buildings, should:

- Require a demolition plan to be submitted
- Ensure any building plans reference existing chimneys and the elements and members essential for maintaining stability of the structure and their condition
- Ensure compliance with AS 2601-1991 *Demolition of Structures* that requires that demolition not commence until precautionary measures have been inspected and approved by the Relevant Building Surveyor; and
- Require acceptable arrangements to be in place to maintain the structural stability of any existing chimneys or any other unsupported masonry, particularly where any chimney intersects with roofing material.

It is also noted that builders (principal contractors) are also required to maintain a safe working environment under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

The MAV has written to the Coroner advising that currently 92% of building permits are now issued by Private Building Surveyors and suggested the Victorian Building Authority, as the entity responsible for providing oversight of the building system, also develop a communique for all building surveyors and applicants informing of the hidden risks associated with renovating older buildings.

Could you please ensure this information is provided to your Building Department.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further please contact Gareth Hatley, Senior Planning Adviser ghately@mav.asn.au or 9667 5596.

Yours sincerely

Rob Spence | Chief Executive Officer | Municipal Association of Victoria
Level 12, 60 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000