

TRADE NEWSLETTER

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August 2025



UBS Highlight

UBS continues to operate as an ISO-accredited builder, maintaining the highest standards for Environmental, Quality, and Safety procedures.



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At UBS, we know that success is built not only on what we deliver but how we deliver it. Professionalism, courtesy, and safe work practices define every UBS project.

July brought reminders of the importance of these values as regulators took action on safety and compliance across our industry. In this August edition, we share lessons and updates to help ensure we all continue to meet the highest standards.

Reach out to tradepartners@uniquebuilding.com.au with any questions or suggestions.



**"We shape our buildings;
thereafter they shape us."
Winston Churchill**

⚠️ Serious Falls Prompt Fresh Safety Warnings

July saw a worrying increase in severe injuries from falls at Victorian construction sites, highlighting ongoing failures in height safety controls:

- An apprentice electrician in Coburg fell while installing solar panels, sustaining multiple fractures, including a broken ankle, wrist, and facial bones.
- A plumber in Frankston was seriously injured after falling more than 2 metres, suffering significant head and spinal trauma.
- A worker in Broadmeadows required hospitalisation after falling approximately 4 metres from a ladder, resulting in a severe head injury.

While Queensland reported no publicly disclosed fall incidents in July, the state continues targeted inspections, responding aggressively to common risks including missing scaffolds, improper ladder use, and absent fall protection systems. Earlier incidents this year, such as a worker severely injured after falling 6 metres from a roof, highlight the critical nature of proper controls.

🧠 Why Regulators are Acting Decisively

In Victoria alone, regulators have noted over 1,400 serious fall-related injuries in the past year, alongside 36 fatalities over five years. This alarming trend has triggered intensive enforcement:

- WorkSafe Victoria continues to carry out unannounced inspections and site blitzes, having already issued 21 formal warnings and referred 18 serious cases for prosecution this year.

✓ Mandatory Fall Controls for UBS Sites

To avoid injuries and regulatory actions, UBS sites must strictly adhere to these controls:

- Install edge protection (scaffolding, guardrails or safety mesh) before beginning any elevated work.
- Use harness systems secured to approved anchor points whenever edge protection isn't practicable.
- Prepare a written rescue plan.
- Conduct daily supervisor inspections.
- Ensure Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are completed.

Electrical Disconnects: Safety and Compliance Reminder

Proper management of disconnected electrical circuits is essential to keeping UBS sites safe, compliant, and free from preventable incidents.

What's Required?

Whenever electrical circuits or fittings are disconnected on site, it is critical to ensure the exposed terminations are safely managed to prevent electric shock, short-circuiting, or fires.

The standard at UBS sites is clear:

- Use Junction Boxes (J-boxes) to safely enclose disconnected wiring wherever practicable.
- If a J-box is not feasible due to practical limitations, then double insulation of wiring must be applied as an absolute minimum.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

Supervisors must ensure:

- J-boxes are correctly installed and securely closed wherever possible.
- Where J-boxes can't be used, double insulation (proper insulated connectors/caps with additional insulating tape) is strictly applied.
- All work adheres fully to AS/NZS 3000 wiring regulations and relevant Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.
- Regular inspections and audits are carried out to confirm compliance.

Why This Matters:

Poor electrical disconnect management isn't just non-compliant, it can have severe safety consequences, including electric shock or property damage. Regulators actively monitor compliance with electrical standards and will issue penalties for breaches. Let's ensure that we always choose compliance over convenience. If you are unsure, always escalate questions to your UBS supervisor.

Safety isn't optional.

Victoria – New Building Regulator Acts Quickly

July marked the launch of Victoria's new Building & Plumbing Commission (BPC), replacing previous regulatory bodies with broader powers. Immediately, the BPC demonstrated its enforcement strength, executing search warrants at multiple sites linked to the unregistered building firm **Homespace Builds Pty Ltd**. Public warnings were issued as investigations commenced into allegations of illegal building activities and licence misuse.

This swift response from the BPC makes clear their intent: any unlicensed practice, fraudulent licence use, or dishonest representations will result in immediate and decisive regulatory action.

Queensland – Trust Account Compliance Under Scrutiny

Queensland's QBCC remained focused on the enforcement of **Project Trust Account (PTA)** obligations throughout July, following the landmark \$150,000 penalty issued earlier this year to a major developer. Although no new fines were reported in July, audits and compliance checks continue to target contractors working on high-value construction projects.

The PTA regulations, despite a pause in expansion to smaller projects, remain fully active for eligible projects valued over \$10 million. The clear message from QBCC: maintain compliant trust accounts and accurate financial records, as enforcement remains vigilant.

Implications for UBS Trade Partners

- Heightened enforcement from the new Victorian regulator underscores a zero-tolerance stance on licensing and professional integrity.
- Ongoing scrutiny of financial practices in Queensland highlights that PTA compliance is essential—even if enforcement appears quieter in a given month.

Your Compliance Checklist

Action Required	Importance to Your Business
Verify your current licence and registration status	Protects against investigations and penalties
Confirm trust account compliance for applicable projects	Avoids financial penalties and reputational damage
Keep clear and complete project documentation	Demonstrates transparency and regulatory compliance
Stay alert to public warnings issued by regulators	Signals increased risk of enforcement action

This extensive residential restoration project involved comprehensive refurbishments throughout multiple rooms, including bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry, and living spaces. Key works included removing and replacing cabinetry, installing new plasterboard and villa boards, floor and wall tiling, upgrading waterproofing membranes, and full repainting to match existing finishes. Critical infrastructure such as air conditioning units, plumbing fixtures, and electrical installations were replaced or fully serviced to ensure compliance and optimal performance. The scope also addressed external elements like servicing electronic gates and cleaning weatherboards.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to all trades involved, from carpenters, painters, plasterers, and cabinet makers to electricians, plumbers, tilers, and air-conditioning technicians. Your professionalism, flexibility, and dedication have delivered outstanding results, reflecting the high standards that UBS and our partners consistently uphold.



Thanks for reading this edition of the Trade Newsletter. Send us an email at tradepartners@uniquebuilding.com.au with any questions! 😊