

Media Release

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REIA URGES GOVERNMENT ACTION ON LITHIUM BATTERY SAFETY LEGISLATION

In light of recent tragedies linked to lithium battery malfunctions, the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) is calling on the government to enact legislation addressing the safety of lithium-ion batteries.

The escalation in incidents, including fatal fires, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive regulation to safeguard lives and property.

REIA President, Leanne Pilkington said recent data provided the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued 23 recalls related to lithium-ion batteries over the past five years, affecting approximately 89,000 products on the market.

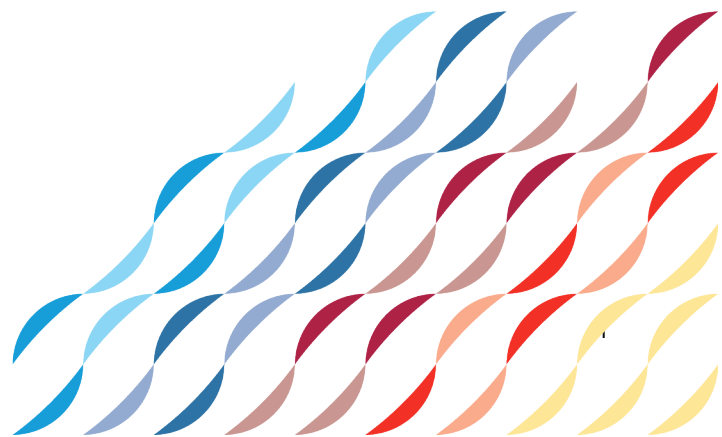
“By 2026, it's projected that the average household will possess around 33 items powered by lithium-ion batteries. Shockingly, a survey of over 4000 Australians revealed that 54% of respondents use aftermarket chargers, and 39% are uncertain about proper lithium-ion battery disposal methods, often leaving devices unattended while charging.

“There is currently no uniform government regulation in place to address this critical issue.

“What is urgently needed is a standardised guideline across all jurisdictions, as well as support from insurers. This is essential not only for individual homeowners to prevent costly damages and tragic loss of life but also for real estate agents, particularly property managers and strata managers, to provide essential guidance to tenants.

“The ACCC has issued crucial warnings regarding lithium-ion battery safety, emphasizing the risks of explosion, fire, and serious injuries including burns, chemical exposure, and smoke inhalation. Despite these warnings, the absence of comprehensive regulations leaves consumers and property occupants vulnerable.

“To address these pressing concerns, the ACCC has recommended that Australian state and territory governments establish a harmonised electrical regulatory framework, ensuring consistent requirements for testing, labeling, transportation, and storage of lithium-ion batteries. However, it remains uncertain when such a framework might be implemented and whether it will adequately protect strata occupants.





“A NSW Parliamentary Committee enquiry launched in September 2023 is currently considering submissions related to battery fire risks and management. The outcome of this inquiry is eagerly awaited by stakeholders across the country.

“The REIA urges swift government action to prioritise the safety of lithium-ion batteries, emphasising the need for comprehensive legislation to protect lives, property, and the interests of all stakeholders.”

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Established in 1924, REIA is a federated body of State & Territory Real Estate Institutes representing 85% of Australian real estate agencies. We are a national advocate for the Australian real estate industry which is made up of 46,793 Australian businesses that employs 133,360 Australians.

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