

Hot Design Tips

Balustrade Requirements in Victorian Schools

Following an incident at a Victorian school, the Victorian School Building Authority found it necessary to undertake a Safety in Design review of balustrades in new school buildings.

The National Construction Code (NCC) requires a minimum barrier height of 865mm on a stairway or ramp and 1000mm in all other locations, with special provisions applying in front of fixed seating on a mezzanine or balcony within an auditorium in a Class 9b building.

As a result of the Safety in Design review conducted by the Authority, the following measures were set in place:

1. All balustrades must have a minimum height of 1500mm on all landings, including on stairs & ramps.
2. All balustrades are to be non-climbable with the exception of required handrails on stairs.
3. No fixed furniture or joinery is to be placed in close proximity to the balustrades.
4. Careful consideration is to be given to loose furniture layouts to minimise the opportunity to place the furniture next to the balustrade, as this could facilitate climbing.

The Building Quality Standards Handbook was revised to include this amendment, with the latest version being May 2018. The addition is located under 5.3.11, page 57 of the Handbook & can be accessed through the Department of Education and Training Victoria website.

The below drawings show an example of a project using our Conectabal CB50 & CB55 balustrades & handrail on an access ramp & stair, with the balustrade set at 1500mm overall.

