



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

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The Hon Meaghan Scanlon MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs

Via email gaven@parliament.qld.gov.au

Monday, 27 March 2023

Dear Minister

On behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter, I would like to seek a meeting with you to discuss improving building policy in the Australian building and construction sector to help Australia meet its target of net zero carbon emissions and a reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions by 43% from 2005 levels by 2050. The construction, operation, and maintenance of buildings accounts for almost a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. I would like to discuss ways in which actions to address climate change are embedded in regulations and codes, specifically, the National Construction Code.

A more ambitious national construction code policy is needed to provide incremental steps to these goals. The current plan to address carbon emission targets in our homes and businesses includes the concept of carbon offsets, while a genuine cultural change in the way we design and construct our urban and built-form environment is of greater value. A reduction in carbon emissions is a critical component of these efforts, but a new national strategy to transition the construction industry to net zero needs to address not only energy supply and demand, but embodied carbon reduction as well.

The Institute is therefore asking Energy Ministers, Building Ministers, and Planning Ministers to urgently agree to a set of key principles informing a new national policy for the Built Environment that supersedes or expands on the Trajectory for Low Carbon Buildings, expanding the scope of the 2025 National Construction Code and committing to:

- All new buildings and major renovations having net zero operational carbon emissions by 2030.
- All existing buildings having net zero operational carbon emissions by 2040.
- Nationally consistent methodology for mandatory embodied emissions measurement and reporting in state and territory legislation by 2025.
- All new buildings have a 40% reduction in embodied carbon by 2030.
- All new buildings and major renovations have net zero embodied carbon by 2040.

As professionals working within a design and building industry that is currently not without its challenges, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these points further with the aim of formulating practical and effective pathways to meet the targets proposed.

Some of those pathways might include the following:

- Achieve carbon emission reduction through simple messaging and workshops with State Government and other construction industry bodies focussed on addressing the 4 Rs: Reduce/Repair/Reuse/Recycle.
- Challenge the construction industry to show how they are addressing the 4 Rs.
- Address how existing buildings are to achieve a 40% reduction by 2030 and be made carbon neutral by 2040, both through regulation as well as mindset change.
- Run forums for industry to achieve carbon emission neutrality, knowing that because of our unique climate, it should be easier and faster to achieve than other areas of Australia, allowing Queensland to be known as a leader in this space.
- Seek ways to bring the public on board by both informing and involving them, starting with a simple understanding of the basics between what makes a good building vs. a bad building (e.g., orientation/ ventilation/ insulation/ the use of the 4 Rs), and ultimately demonstrating how good urban and building design is a fundamental part of any climate change solution.

The above discussions will be particularly helpful as the contribution of buildings to carbon emissions and climate change is raised more and more in media and policy discussions in the immediate and near future.

Our office will be in contact to determine a time of your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Amy Degenhart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ms Amy Degenhart
Queensland Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects

Note: A similar letter has been sent to:

- The Hon Mick de Brenni MP, *Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement*

- The Hon Steven Miles MP, *Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure*