



Australian
Institute of
Architects

QLD

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

Level 1, 41 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne, Victoria 3000

P: (03) 8620 3877

national@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

27 July 2023

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

Via email epw@ministerial.qld.gov.au and springwood@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: **No more delays on National Construction Code**

Dear Minister,

As the President of the Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter (the Institute), I would like to reinforce our policy position on the energy efficiency improvements to the National Construction Code (NCC) that were agreed last year. The timely and coordinated rollout of NCC measures to reduce energy use and improve accessibility in buildings is important and inevitable. With electricity prices set to spike another 28 per cent this year, the urgency for implementation has become critical.

Australians have demonstrated through the ballot box and in surveys that they want action on climate change, and practical, achievable steps like the NCC changes are how we will actually achieve it. With buildings responsible for about 39 per cent of global emissions, according to the World Green Building Council, their transformation to low carbon is essential to achieve net zero and minimise the worst impacts of climate change.

Although not directly involved in your recent industry consultations, the Institute noted the reported changes that the Queensland Government recently announced in the local press regarding some practical exemptions to the implementation of a few accessibility features of the NCC for small lots and Queensland [high-set] builds. Master Builders Queensland called for a consistent approach, according to articles in The Courier Mail newspaper, while other stakeholders want delays to the implementation.

There is no more time to delay or change the goalposts, and I believe there is broad agreement to get this done.

Last October, a coalition of the Queensland Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Council of Social Service, Climate Council of Australia, Property Council of Australia, Energy Consumers Australia, Green Building Council of Australia, Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council, Energy Efficiency Council, Climateworks Centre and Renew all gave public support for the implementation of the sustainability provisions.

The NCC provisions for accessibility and sustainability are in the best interests of homeowners and asset holders, and can be implemented with reasonable cost effectiveness with well-considered design.



Australian
Institute of
Architects

QLD

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

Level 1, 41 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne, Victoria 3000

P: (03) 8620 3877

national@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

Most new homes in Queensland are already being constructed to 6.5 star NatHERS rating level, according to the CSIRO's Australian Housing Data, due to the quintessential external room with a ceiling fan, and are therefore able to access NatHERS bonus provisions through the Queensland Development Code.

The application of other simple design considerations such as outdoor living, shading, natural cross ventilation, ceiling fans, lighter coloured roofs, appropriate solar orientation, adequate insulation and – in some circumstances – energy efficient single skin glazing, the 7-star goal is achievable without significant extra cost. Queensland Architects, particularly those that commit to membership of the Institute of Architects and adopt its contract with the wider community, are well versed in the skills and solutions required, and have been doing so long before the changes have been introduced.

The NCC requirements will deliver significant benefits to homeowners, asset owners and renters, as they will serve to lower household energy bills, reduce emissions, and provide healthier and more comfortable homes. They will also make our homes more resilient to extreme weather and may assist to right-size our houses to a more sustainable level.

We also wish to point out that by lifting NCC energy standards in apartments in particular, renters will be better off on energy costs, as they will not have to pay higher ongoing costs for an inefficient initial build.

Further, the enhanced NCC accessibility standards are reasonable expectations that again allow for greater equity in housing and ensure that it is enduring, helping to reduce the waste of redundancy and replacement, while helping to maintain our social infrastructure and community capital.

Architects and built environment professionals are ready and waiting to support the transition for the construction sector.

No more delays, let's get this done now.

Amy Degenhart LFRAIA

Queensland Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects