

THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE SERIES

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THE PLUMBING CODE
OF AUSTRALIA - VOLUME THREE



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AUSTRALIAN BUILDING CODES BOARD

Annual Business Plan 2011-12

The release of the inaugural National Construction Code (NCC) Series heralded the successful implementation of a major COAG building regulatory reform. The NCC series comprises the Building Code of Australia (BCA) as Volumes One and Two, and for the first time, the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) which forms Volume Three. The NCC took effect from 1 May 2011 and marks the first step in COAG's broader plan to incorporate all onsite regulatory building requirements. The next steps in this important reform are elaborated on further in this year's Business Plan, including priorities for future consolidation, and details on the WaterMark Product Certification Scheme that will transition from Standards Australia to the ABCB in 2011.

The long awaited alignment of the BCA with the Disability Standards for Access to Premises signalled another historic accomplishment. The provisions will significantly improve levels of access to buildings for people with a disability. In addition to the awareness Seminars conducted Australia-wide in late 2010, educational resources are being developed to assist industry with the implementation of the new access provisions.

Life safety matters remain a priority and the 2011-12 Business Plan provides detail on the work that the ABCB is undertaking to further improve the resilience of buildings to natural disasters including bushfires, cyclones, earthquakes and flood. The ABCB also continues to respond to Ministerial direction relating to improving energy efficiency in buildings.

ABOUT THE ABCB

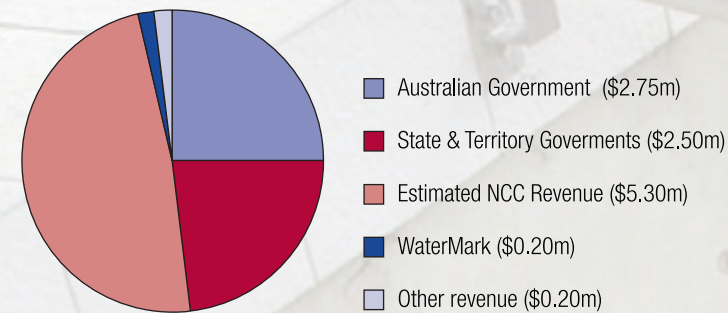
The ABCB is a joint initiative of all levels of government in Australia, together with the building industry. Its mission is to oversee issues relating to health, safety, amenity and sustainability in building.

The ABCB promotes efficiency in the design, construction and performance of buildings through the National Construction Code (NCC), and the development of effective regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

The Board aims to establish effective and proportional codes, standards and regulatory systems that are consistent between States and Territories.

A new Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for the ABCB, outlining the broadened responsibilities of the building regulatory reform agenda, is expected to be finalised in early 2011-12.

ABCB 2011-12 Sources of Revenue



FOCUS OF BUSINESS PLAN

Life safety remains a core business priority in the 2011-12 *Business Plan* (the Plan). The Plan also places a strong emphasis on the ABCB's core function – maintaining and updating the NCC by exercising a gatekeeper role in response to calls for regulation. A relevant and contemporary building code, achieved through rigorous assessment of emerging issues and ongoing review of existing provisions, is a critical contributor to an efficient building and construction industry, a safer built environment and a strong national economy.

The National Construction Code

The Board over-sighted the implementation of this important initiative to incorporate plumbing and building within the one code as a first step in COAG's broader plan to consolidate all on-site regulatory building requirements. Stage two of this consolidation will involve scoping work for the inclusion of gas fitting in the NCC. Further consolidation and harmonisation of the BCA/PCA provisions will also be undertaken.

National Strategy for Energy Efficiency

In July 2009, COAG agreed to the National Strategy on Energy Efficiency (NSEE), which is designed to substantially improve the levels of energy efficiency across the Australian economy. A major section of the NSEE is devoted to improving the energy efficiency of Australia's building stock. Measure 3.1.1 of the NSEE sets out the key elements of the outcomes-based national building energy standard-setting, assessment and rating framework (the Framework) that jurisdictions have committed to developing.

The Framework has three key components:

1. providing a pathway, implemented primarily through the Building Code of Australia (BCA), for increasing the stringency of the minimum performance requirements for new buildings and renovations;
2. providing consistent, accurate and understandable methodologies for assessing and for publicly communicating the energy efficiency (and other sustainability elements over time) of new and existing buildings; and
3. enhancing governance arrangements for building energy assessments, ratings and standard setting.

If directed by Governments, the ABCB will commence scoping work to address possible incremental stringency increases once agreed under the NSEE.

Building Resilience to Natural Disasters

In the year ahead, the Board will continue work aimed at further improving the regulatory regime affecting buildings, particularly in relation to resilience to natural disasters. This includes work to better address life safety risks in bushfire prone areas, a review of cyclone construction standards (informed by a review of Cyclone Yasi) and what role building standards may play in flood-prone areas, also informed by the Queensland flood inquiry.

WaterMark Product Certification Scheme

Consistent with the Plumbing Code of Australia transferring to the ABCB, State and Territory Ministers have been asked by the Commonwealth to agree to the ABCB assuming responsibility for the management of the WaterMark Scheme. Given that the current administrator, Standards Australia, is divesting itself of the Scheme agreement is also being sought for the ABCB Office to take over its administration. A final decision is expected early in 2011-12.

Awareness and Training Initiatives

In 2011-12, the ABCB will release its fifth and sixth Awareness Resource Kits, to assist practitioners with the implementation of the plumbing and new disability access provisions for publicly accessible buildings. Along with other Resource Kits and Handbooks that the ABCB has developed, Modules Five and Six will be made available free of charge to educational institutions and industry.

Additional training will be delivered during the ABCB Biennial Conference, which will take place in September 2011. Plenary sessions will address energy efficiency, access and further improvement of the regulatory regime affecting buildings, particularly in relation to resilience to natural disasters.

Review of Premises Standards

Preparation for the scheduled first review of the Premises Standards will be undertaken, including identification of data needs and methods of collection, to enable the review to be completed within 5 years of the commencement of the Premises Standards.

Early Childhood Centres

Under the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care, all governments (through COAG) agreed to a new National Quality Standard that sets out nationally consistent requirements across seven areas; one of which is the Physical Environment. This quality area sets out requirements for the physical environment in Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and preschools. The ABCB is developing provisions with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for changes in respect to early childhood centres for NCC 2012.

DELIVERY OF BOARD CORE CODE WRITING BUSINESS

A primary role of the ABCB is to maintain and update the NCC to ensure effective regulatory systems. Within this framework the ABCB must carefully manage the complex demands of issues that impact on life safety, health, amenity, disability access and sustainability.

All potential changes to the NCC must be considered in accordance with COAG best practice regulatory principles and be subject to impact assessment.

The initial presumption for the ABCB is not to introduce new or increased regulation and instead, investigate alternative means of achieving the desired result. If intervention is necessary, the NCC sets minimum acceptable regulatory requirements that are proportional to the issue being addressed.

2010-11 ACHIEVEMENTS	2011-12 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received Ministerial endorsement of the 2010-11 ABCB Business Plan Delivered education seminars on the Premises Standards in conjunction with the Australian Human Rights Commission Delivered NCC 2011 by May 2011 on budget and in line with COAG Principles Aligned the BCA with the new Premises Standards NCC 2011 Information Seminars held in capital cities with nearly 3000 delegates attending both BCA and Plumbing sessions Reduced State and Territory code variations in NCC 2011 Assisted with the review of damage post Cyclone Yasi. Responded to Ministerial direction on the National Framework for Energy Efficiency RIS completed for 'Slips, Trips and Falls' Released non-mandatory Handbooks on <i>Condensation and Using On-site Renewable and Reclaimed Energy Sources</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive Ministerial endorsement of ABCB Business Plan, by August 2011 Develop a five year strategic plan for the ABCB, post finalisation of new IGA by end December 2011 Deliver NCC 2012 on budget and in line with COAG principles, by May 2012 Review the cyclone construction standards, as part of the improvement of the regulatory reform regime for buildings Examine the feasibility of Performance Requirements and a national performance standard for community bushfire refuges Develop a construction standard on building in flood-prone areas and a non-mandatory Handbook to assist practitioners Respond to Government direction on the National Strategy for Energy Efficiency Further consolidate and harmonise NCC building and plumbing provisions, including scoping for gas fitting Deliver further awareness and training materials on the Disability Access provisions and the Plumbing Code, via new Resource Kits and webcasts of relevant issues Successful transition of WaterMark Product Certification Scheme from Standards Australia Successful delivery of ABCB's 2011 National Conference

National Construction Code Implementation & Future Work Plan

Ongoing consolidation and harmonisation of all onsite building regulation

BUILDING

Ongoing maintenance and development

PLUMBING – Stage 1

WaterMark
Transition from Standards Aust to ABCB

Further consolidation and harmonisation

PLUMBING – Stage 2 (GAS FITTING)

To be scoped pending advice from Ministers

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

ELECTRICAL

Initial scoping period

2011

2012

2013

	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT OUTPUT
NCC (CODE) DEVELOPMENT	Maintain and Update the NCC	2012 edition of the National Construction Code (NCC) finalised for publication by January 2012; Draft of NCC 2013 released for public comment by June 2012
	Standards Coordination and Committees	Documents, including Australian Standards, which are suitable for regulatory use and referencing in the NCC
	Emergency Egress for All Occupants	Necessary changes made to the BCA on the development of provisions for emergency egress for all occupants including people with disabilities
	Sustainability - Adaptation (including natural disasters)	Assessment of the adequacy of the current earthquake provisions; Consideration of the adequacy of the current cyclonic wind provisions, taking into account the Cyclone Yasi investigation; Monitor natural disasters to determine whether current NCC provisions are appropriate
	Sustainability - National Strategy for Energy Efficiency	Ongoing NCC maintenance of the energy efficiency provisions; Participation as an observer to the development of the National Strategy for Energy Efficiency (NSEE) "National Building Energy Standard-Setting, Assessment and Rating Framework" (Framework); Undertake regulatory development and impact analysis, as appropriate, in accordance with COAG 'Principles' and the IGA
	Buildings in Flood Prone Areas (incl. Flood Commission input)	In accordance with directions from July 2010 BMF meeting, develop a flood standard and handbook for consideration by the Board. Undertake regulatory impact analysis, as appropriate, in accordance with COAG Principles and the IGA
	Heated water deadwater draw-off research	Investigative report, solution options and Regulatory Impact Analysis; Draft changes for consideration by the Board for NCC 2014
	AS/NZS 3500 Standards Review	Detailed proposal to Standards Australia to revise AS/NZS 3500.1, 2, 4 & 5
	Review of current waterless male sanitary systems	Investigative report, solution options and Regulatory Impact Analysis; Draft changes for consideration by the Board for NCC 2013
	Solar-heated hot water review	Proposed changes to Section 6 of AS/NZS 3500.4 for inclusion in Project 13 proposal; Consideration of need for regulatory impact analysis as appropriate
	Smoke Alarms in Residential Buildings - RIS	Advice to decision-makers on the impacts of regulatory proposals, following approval by the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR)
	External Noise in Buildings	Development of a proposal for the regulatory attenuation of externally generated 'nuisance' noise within residences and other noise sensitive buildings; To the extent appropriate, develop BCA provisions
	Access for People with a Disability	Respond to Government policy direction on disability access to buildings as it applies to the NCC
	Early Childhood Centres - National Quality Framework	Amendment to the BCA to reflect the new National Quality Framework
	Bushfires (inc. shelters and further research)	Recommendations to the Board regarding BCA requirements for certain non-residential buildings, such as aged care facilities, schools and hospitals, to be located in designated bushfire prone areas; Researched data to support Standards Australia review of methods of testing the performance of building materials and assemblies exposed to bushfire; Collaboration with the Victorian Building Commission on development of Performance Requirements and ancillary standards for community bushfire shelters; Recommendations to the Board regarding the content of AS3959 'Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas'; AS3959 and certain ancillary documents becoming available free on-line; and regarding acceptance criteria for tenability in a private bushfire shelter
	Class 2 and 3 Building Classification and Use	Report to Board on stakeholder view regarding the Class 2/3 building classification issue
Consolidation of Lift Requirements	Changes to the BCA to incorporate building related provisions currently in lift standards AS 1735.1 and AS 1735.2	
Quantification of Performance Requirements	Measurable BCA Performance Requirements and/or additional Verification Methods	
REGULATORY EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS	RIS Process on Regulatory Change Proposals	Advice to decision-makers on the impacts of regulatory proposals, following approval by the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR); Effective regulation impact assessment processes in consultation with the OBPR and in accordance with COAG regulatory principles
	Plumbing - Consolidation / Harmonisation (BCA / PCA overlap)	Clarification of areas of regulatory responsibility with regard to building/plumbing issues contained within both the BCA and PCA and consolidation of plumbing related issues into the NCC
	Scoping Work for NCC inclusion of gas-fitting	Scoping study to determine implementation options; Regulation Impact Statement for Board consideration
	Variation Management	A reduction in State/Territory BCA variations in NCC 2012 and report to Ministers
	Facilitation of National Consistency in Technical & Administrative Systems	Interaction with existing national forums and administrations to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to building regulations
CODE DELIVERY AND SUPPORT	WaterMark Certification Scheme	Facilitate the transfer of the administration of the Scheme from Standards Australia to the new administrator; Maintain policy oversight and undertake a preliminary review of the Scheme
	CodeMark Certification Scheme	Management and facilitation of Australian/New Zealand third party product certification scheme
	NCC Advisory Service	NCC clarification/advice to subscribers
	NCC Awareness and Training	National information seminars and training materials to enhance awareness and understanding of the NCC among practitioners, the tertiary sector and community
	NCC Marketing and Promotion	Raised awareness of the NCC and other ABCB activities
	Non Regulatory Handbooks	Develop and publish non-mandatory handbooks on matters not suitable for regulation
	National Conference	Delivery of an ABCB Conference supported by industry
ORGANISATIONAL ADMINISTRATION	ABCB Cadetship	Program offering ABCB employment experience for building professional students
	Research Scholarship	Research to inform decisions on future NCC and non-regulatory measures through relevant research bodies such as Universities, technical colleges, and the Australian Research Council