



ABCB



AUSTRALIAN BUILDING CODES BOARD

Annual Business Plan 2016-17

THE ABCB

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) is a joint initiative of all levels of government in Australia, together with the building and plumbing industries. 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 and plumbing systems through the National Construction Code (NCC), and the development of effective regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. The ABCB aims to establish minimum performance based and proportional codes, standards and regulatory systems that are consistent, as far as practicable, between States and Territories.

FOCUS OF BUSINESS PLAN

With life safety and health being the primary focus of the ABCB, concerns surrounding fire safety in high rise buildings and the use of non-compliant building products are key features of the 2016-17 ABCB Business Plan (the Plan). Sustainability and amenity are also key objectives of the Board and under and COAG's National Energy Productivity Plan (NEPP), the ABCB has been requested to consider potential changes to energy efficiency provisions for NCC 2019, with a particular emphasis on non-residential buildings.

Productivity benefits associated with the increased use and quantification of the performance based NCC are being pursued, as are the educational needs of the growing number of NCC users that has been brought about by making the code freely available. The ABCB is developing and refining significant amounts of guidance and educational material to complement this highly successful initiative by governments and is working towards having a well understood and utilised code by 2021. This significant body of work will also assist code compliance, through the implementation of a simpler and clearer NCC that is supported by improved digital technologies.

ADDRESSING FIRE SAFETY IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

At the Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) in February 2016, Ministers agreed to work cooperatively to undertake a range of measures to address safety issues associated with high risk building products, including a number to be undertaken by the ABCB.

Ministers agreed that the ABCB consider the risk specifically associated with cladding used in high rise buildings and report back on the proposed actions to help address the wider issue of non-compliant use of building products.

In respect to risks associated with cladding on high rise buildings, Ministers requested that the ABCB: consider options for mandatory accredited third party certification of cladding materials.

Currently the NCC provides a number of options which can be used to demonstrate a product's suitability for use in a building, subject to approval by the authority having jurisdiction.

Ministers agreed that the ABCB undertake a review of the evidence of suitability provisions in Clause A2.2 of NCC Volume One, which requires that a product must be fit for the purpose of its intended use, with a view to considering options that include mandatory accredited third party certification of cladding materials. This review will consider potential options for raising the required threshold for

the product assurance of cladding products whereby the assessment of the product's suitability for use in a building would need to be undertaken by a third party with appropriate accreditation. This may lead to a change to the clause and would likely require a regulatory impact assessment.

In addition to this initiative, Ministers supported:

- That the Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions of the NCC continue to limit the use of combustible materials on external walls to buildings with a maximum of two storeys;
- The ABCB review of the relevant NCC provisions relating to fire safety of external walls and if necessary, the provisions being reworded to ensure they are more easily understood;
- The ABCB developing and distributing a National Advisory Note on the appropriate selection and use of external wall cladding and complementary education material;
- Once the scope of any change has been determined, the ABCB developing a Product Assurance Handbook so the requirements of the evidence of suitability provisions of the NCC are more readily understood;
- As part of a package of improvements to the voluntary building product certification scheme, CodeMark Certificates of Conformity being made clearer as to what particular products can be used for;
- The ABCB considering the feasibility of improved product compliance documentation, including possible development of a template for manufacturers and suppliers to prepare, that summarises the need-to-know product and Code compliance information; and
- The ABCB working with the States and Territories to consider measures to enhance national regulatory harmonisation.

HOLISTIC REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

To complement the high rise fire safety measures, a root and branch review of NCC fire safety provisions will be undertaken. Current provisions have continued to be developed over the last 20 years in response to fire incidents and fire safety issues. The recent fire incidents at Docklands and Bankstown provided impetus for a holistic review of the NCC's fire safety provisions in relation to Class 2 and 3 buildings to ensure they provide appropriate levels of health and safety having regard to contemporary technology and construction practices.

Coupled with this is work that has already been initiated that includes reviewing the need for fire hose reels in Class 5 buildings, fire brigade availability in remote areas, required battery enclosures and possible concessions for sprinkler protected low- and mid-rise Class 2 and 3 buildings. Subject to the outcomes from the above work, changes will be made to the fire safety provisions in NCC 2019.

The Board has sought to identify issues that sit behind the setting of higher prescriptive requirements for some buildings by fire authorities. It has been agreed with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) to develop a collaborative partnership, with key objectives of establishing enhanced system assurance, qualified vetting of solutions, quantification of safety levels and capacity building. This may ultimately require States and Territories to consider amending legislation and/or regulations.

INCREASED USE AND QUANTIFICATION OF PERFORMANCE

The NCC has been a performance based code for almost 20 years. As highlighted in an independent report in 2013, 70% of the identified \$1.1 billion per annum productivity gains delivered by past ABCB reforms are derived from having the current performance based code. The report also identified that future gains are possible if there is an increased use of performance based approaches. The overarching objective for this project in 2016-17 is to continue to develop quantified measures for the NCC's 2019 Performance Requirements, capacity building and engendering a performance mindset within the building sector.

NCC AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND USE

With the change from 12,000 paying NCC subscribers in 2014 to the current 100,000 registered users under a free code environment, the goal of increased awareness, understanding and use of the NCC for this wider audience will involve several key measures. These include the development and application of new digital technologies to further improve access; improving code structure, format and readability; and working with industry, education and training providers to improve the range of resource materials.

Further details on ABCB measures to improve awareness, use and understanding of the code can be found in the centre pages of this Plan.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY – NATIONAL ENERGY PRODUCTIVITY PLAN (NEPP)

Under COAG's NEPP, the ABCB has been requested to consider potential stringency changes to the energy efficiency provisions in NCC 2019 with a particular focus on commercial buildings. With respect to residential buildings, the ABCB has been asked to

participate in further research to consider a case for future changes most likely in NCC 2022, as well as making improvements to support greater compliance.

In response to this request, the ABCB will investigate and, where appropriate, implement for both commercial and residential buildings in NCC 2019:

- quantified Performance Requirements;
- a suite of Verification Methods; and
- improved Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions.

For commercial buildings, this will also include considering an economically feasible stringency increase and other improvements to facilitate greater compliance. For residential buildings, the stringency will remain the same. However, consideration will be given to compliance options being increased and made clearer. This will facilitate greater compliance with current requirements and establish the foundation for reviewing stringency in the residential building provisions in NCC 2022.

The suite of Verification Methods to be investigated for commercial buildings will include: a stated value Verification Method; a reference building Verification Method; use of National Australian Built Environment Rating System for Energy (NABERS Energy) commitment agreements; and use of Green Star ratings.

PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

The ABCB continues to administer building (CodeMark) and plumbing (WaterMark) product certification schemes and has completed reviews of both schemes. Outcomes from the CodeMark review are being implemented so that an improved scheme will be available in early 2017. Building Ministers agreed to an improved WaterMark Scheme in July 2015, which will be progressively implemented from 1 July 2016.

2015-16 ACHIEVEMENTS	2016-17 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
NCC 2016 delivered free online and on budget	Received Ministerial endorsement of 2016-17 Business Plan
Commenced a three year NCC amendment cycle	Provided recommendations to Ministers on fire safety in high rise buildings initiatives
Ministerial endorsement of 2015-16 Business Plan received	Advanced review of Volume Two Acceptable Construction Practices (ACPs) and commenced development of Volume Three ACPs for NCC 2019 consideration
Obtained Board agreement to the program for and scope of redundant and unnecessary regulation to be considered for removal from the NCC	Progressed implementation of improved NCC readability program for NCC 2019
Improved CodeMark Scheme progressed and WaterMark Scheme improvements agreed for progressive implementation from 2016-17	Advanced quantification of Performance Requirements for NCC 2019 consideration
Further Quantification of NCC Performance Requirements and ACP review improvements progressed	Identified and commenced implementation of NCC digitisation program for 2018
Scoping study considering inclusion of hail and heatwaves in the NCC considered by the Board	Completed holistic review of Class 2 and 3 fire safety requirements for NCC 2019 consideration
Successful delivery of the ABCB 2015 BAF Conference	Advanced energy efficiency measures for NCC 2019 consideration
NCC expansion for telecommunications considered by governments	Achieved 100,000 registered NCC users
Expedited key initiatives endorsed in response to issues arising out of the Lacrosse fire with progress monitored by the Board	

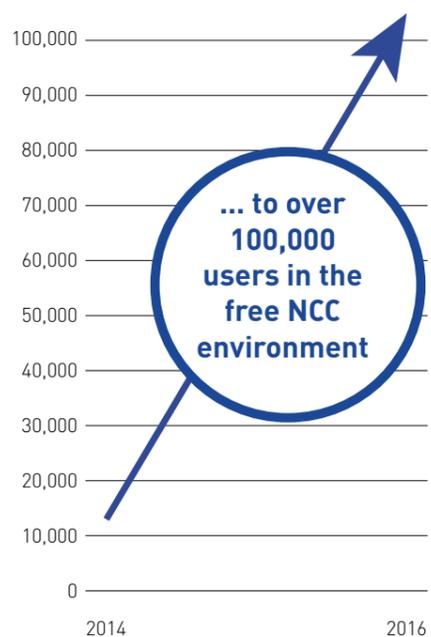


NCC USEABILITY, AWARENESS AND DIGITISATION DELIVERABLES

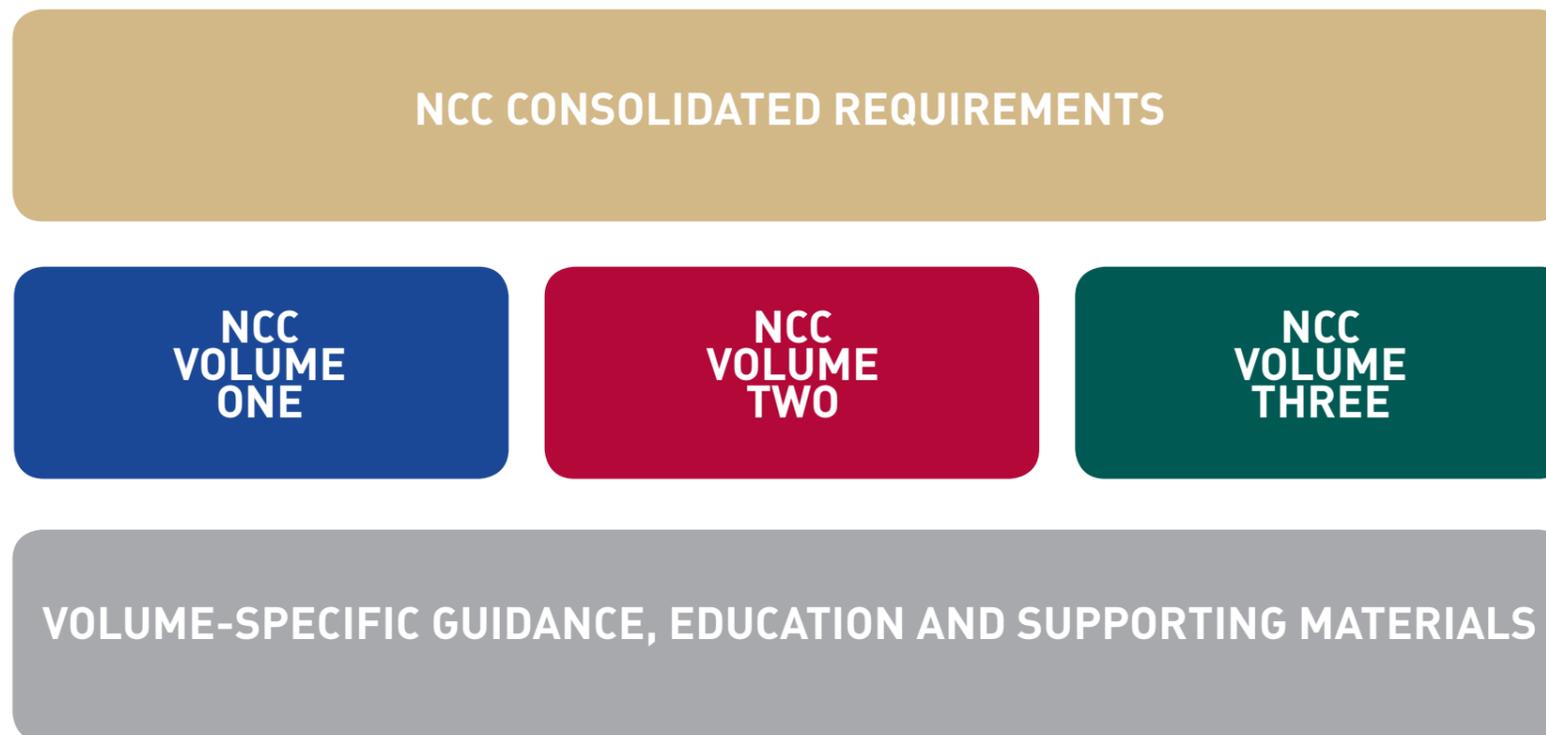


- 2016**
 - 100,000 registered users requiring a user-friendly NCC
- 2017**
 - NCC useability content changes developed and consultation
- 2018**
 - Digital NCC commenced
 - Consult on draft guide format
- 2019**
 - NCC 2019 delivered with available structural changes
 - New & updated Guides progressively introduced
 - Other improved products delivered
- BEYOND**
 - Major NCC structural and other changes delivered
 - Remaining guides delivered

From 12,000 paying subscribers in 2014...



FUTURE NCC ENHANCEMENTS



ABCB WORK PROGRAM 2016-17

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT OUTPUT
NCC Development	
NCC Amendment Process	National Construction Code (NCC) changes developed and considered for implementation under agreed timeframes for release of new NCC editions/amendments
Standards Coordination and Committees	Documents, including Australian Standards, which are suitable for regulatory use and referencing in the NCC
Impact Assessment Process on Regulatory Change Proposals	Regulatory advice to decision-makers on proposals to amend the NCC; Effective regulation impact analysis processes undertaken in consultation with the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) and in accordance with COAG regulatory principles
Access for People with a Disability - Premises Standards Review	Respond to Government policy direction on disability access to buildings as it applies to the NCC
Extreme Weather Events - Building Resilience	Consideration of changes to the NCC in light of the ABCB's framework on adaptation to extreme weather events, consistent with the IGA and OBPR guidelines; Assessment of the adequacy of the current NCC earthquake provisions; Natural disasters monitored to determine whether current NCC provisions are appropriate
Energy Efficiency - National Energy Productivity Plan - Measure 31	Establishment of a Board Steering Committee; Development of energy efficiency provisions for potential inclusion in NCC 2019, which will include the following: - for commercial buildings (Class 3 and 5 to 9 buildings), consideration of an economically feasible stringency increase and other improvements to facilitate greater compliance; - for residential buildings (Class 1, 2 and 4 buildings), improvements to facilitate greater compliance with current requirements in preparation for reviewing stringency (possibly in NCC 2022)
Energy Efficiency - NatHERS MoU obligations and related work	Monitor the Memorandum of Understanding with the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) Administrator; Ensure changes made to NatHERS accredited software is carried out in accordance with the ABCB's requirements for NCC referenced material, including the necessary impact analysis; Monitor the work of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science with respect to national energy efficiency initiatives which may impact upon the NCC or its application.
Residential Care Facilities	Investigation into whether fire safety options such as the installation of sprinkler protection is required for buildings that accommodate occupants requiring assistance to evacuate
Plumbing Code Development Research	Draft changes to the PCA for consideration for NCC 2019; Guidance material on backflow prevention; rainwater capture and use; and warm water systems; Progress preliminary recommendations on the current fixture unit rating methodology and its suitability for contemporary plumbing practice
Condensation in Buildings	Subject to Board endorsement, implement recommendations from the 2015-16 condensation project, to address any issues identified that are contributing to an increase in condensation issues in new residential buildings
Domestic Smoke Alarms - Suitability of Ionisation Technology	Monitor independent peer-review research and undertake targeted testing if necessary
Review Requirements for Non-Combustible External Wall Assemblies	Suitable NCC requirements and test methods for non-combustible external wall assemblies
Addressing Fire Safety in High-Rise Buildings	Implement measures to address safety issues associated with high risk building products as directed by building Ministers
Review of NCC provisions for Acceptance of Design and Construction	Revised and improved provisions for acceptance of design and construction for inclusion in NCC Volumes One, Two and Three (evidence of suitability)
NCC Volume 2 ACP Review	Revised and contemporary Acceptable Construction Practice provisions for inclusion in NCC Volume Two
NCC Volume 3 ACP Development	An alternative set of Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions for inclusion in NCC Volume Three (PCA)
Bushfire Provisions for non-residential buildings	Expansion of existing provisions for bushfire protection to include Class 5 to 9 buildings
Increased Use and Quantification of Performance	
Quantification (including Verification Methods)	Measurable NCC Performance through quantified Performance Requirements or Verification Methods; Increased opportunity for industry to utilise Performance Solutions
Engendering a Performance Mindset	Communicating to core stakeholders what a performance based NCC means which leads to a well understood and utilised code; Empowering stakeholders to communicate this message more broadly through strategic and influential leadership; Increased acceptance of performance based design, leading to increased productivity and better building outcomes
Capacity Building	Improved practitioners' skills to develop and deliver performance solutions and better understand the code; Increased awareness of the benefits of performance based design practice; Targeted capacity building based on key influential audiences
Role of Fire Authorities in the Application of the NCC	Independent review on the current role; Strategy for the future role of fire authorities in the application of the NCC
NCC Awareness, Understanding and Use	
NCC Useability	To facilitate a well understood and utilised code, implement NCC language, structure and format changes following consideration by the Board/BCC/PCC as appropriate
Digitisation - Re-development of NCC Online and prioritisation of new technologies	Re-development of NCC Online to integrate with ABCB website and provide a stable, more navigable, easier to use site with the potential to provide additional functionality overtime; Scope potential new tools and technologies to deliver the NCC on a wider range of devices and for a wider range of use to a broader audience
Education Strategy	Identification of all institutions teaching relevant subjects; Improved understanding of the education sectors need; New training and education products scoped; Partnership opportunities scoped to deliver existing or new training and education products with stakeholders
Education Material Development	New, enhanced materials and activities based on need, stakeholder feedback and the education strategy to facilitate a well understood code
Product Development	Identification and creation of new products to assist in a well understood and utilised Code throughout industry
National Seminars (new model)	Development and undertaking of a 2017 National Seminar Series in support of a well understood and utilised Code
NCC Consolidation, Harmonisation and Regulatory Review	
Variation Management	A reduction in existing State/Territory variations to the NCC, and scrutiny of proposals for new variations in accordance with IGA principles; Variation management progress report to BMF
BCA/PCA Harmonisation	Inclusion of cross volume links between the BCA and PCA for matters applicable to both building and plumbing sectors; Harmonisation of technical matters currently regulated by both the BCA and PCA
PCA Consolidation of S&T NCC-related Requirements	Relocation of technical plumbing requirements from State and Territory regulations and other instruments to the PCA
Holistic review of NCC fire safety	A holistic review of the NCC fire safety provisions for Class 2 and 3 residential buildings; Fire safety-related sub-projects (including for Class 2 and 3 buildings) already initiated under the Regulation Reduction Review will continue as part of this holistic review; Subject to the above, draft changes will be considered for inclusion in NCC 2019
Better practice building administration	Establish agreement on targeted actions by the States and Territories to enhance building administration
Product Certification	
WaterMark - Administration	Materials and products complying fully with the applicable requirements of the WaterMark Certification Scheme are certified by a WaterMark Conformity Assessment Body (WMCAB) and listed on the WaterMark Product Database
CodeMark - Administration	Management and facilitation of Australian/New Zealand third party building product certification scheme
WaterMark - Implementation of Improved Scheme	Establish and transition to an improved mandatory WaterMark Certification Scheme
CodeMark - Implementation of Improved Scheme	Establish an improved voluntary CodeMark Scheme
Review of Watermark Standards	Appropriate technical specifications for the evaluation of products within the scope of the improved WaterMark Certification Scheme

Note: there are other projects that assist in the facilitation of the Board's Reform Agenda and the daily management of the ABCB Office. Full details of these projects have been provided to Commonwealth, State and Territory officials

ABCB Education Materials



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