

BUILDING ENERGY STANDARDS: LET'S GET WHAT WE PAID FOR!

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It is an open secret that Australians are being ripped off by poor enforcement of the National Construction Code. The Code, which governs minimum standards for buildings, is meant to ensure minimum safety, health, comfort and energy costs in new buildings and renovations. But poor enforcement means consumers are not getting the safe, functional buildings they have paid for.

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) is calling on State and Territory governments to protect consumers by making urgent changes to the way building compliance is enforced.

“Australian families building or renovating homes need to get what the regulations say they are entitled to: a safe home with minimum standards for energy performance. Failure to ensure compliance with these standards risks leaving them with homes that lack the comfort and health that the Code’s energy performance standards help to deliver, as well as higher bills.” said ASBEC’s Executive Director, Ms Suzanne Toumbourou.

“At the same time, commercial clients also risk incurring huge energy expenses if the Code is not enforced, affecting the bottom line at a time when many businesses are under threat.” said Ms Toumbourou.

Building Confidence, a 2018 report by Professor Peter Shergold and Ms Bronwyn Weir, commissioned by Australia’s Building Ministers Forum, found major issues with the enforcement of the Code and created 22 recommendations to address the issues.

“It’s up to our State and Territory governments to make sure the rules are followed and buildings are compliant with the Code.” said Mr Nicholas Burt, Chair of ASBEC’s Compliance Working Group and CEO of the Facility Management Association of Australia. “ASBEC supports the recommendations in *Building Confidence*. We have worked collaboratively with industry leaders to compile 25 crucial policy responses to ensure Australians get the buildings they pay for in terms of health, comfort and energy efficiency.”

ASBEC’s policy responses seek to deliver the following:

- Key competencies and accreditation for building professionals who undertake energy efficiency assessments.
- A nationally consistent system of regulatory oversight to ensure that energy efficiency standards are met.
- Building documentation and permits should ensure that energy and sustainability provisions in the Code are properly addressed.
- A Building Log Book (or Electronic Building Passport) that can be audited and passed on to subsequent owners to ensure buildings are compliant throughout their lifecycle.

“Enforcing our National Construction Code is a huge opportunity to improve the buildings where Australians live, work and shop. It can keep future energy costs down for families and businesses, at a time when the financial future is uncertain.” said Ms Toumbourou. “But these gains will only be possible if States and Territories step up and do their part to enforce the Code.”

Available for comment

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Further Information

[*Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council Building Confidence Recommendations Policy Response*](#)

About ASBEC

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) is a collective of leading industry organisations committed to a sustainable built environment in Australia. ASBEC's membership consists of a range of key industry government and academic organisations who are involved in the planning, design, delivery and operation of our built environment and who are concerned with the economic, social and environmental performance of the sector.