

# Bannermans Lawyers

## The NCC – It's Now Free!

The new National Construction Code (NCC), incorporating the Building Code of Australia (BCA), was adopted on 1 May 2015. It is now accessible online for free, upon registration with the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB).

### **NCC**

The NCC comprises of the BCA, Volume One and Two; and the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA), as Volume Three.

*For the first time, the NCC is now free to download and you can register to access the code on the ABCB website: <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/>.*

The NCC is a performance-based code where the performance requirements set the minimum level that buildings, building elements and plumbing and drainage systems must meet. The NCC includes Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions which are deemed to satisfy the Performance Requirements. Where Deemed-To-Satisfy Provisions are not used, Alternative Solutions that comply with the Performance Requirements must be used.

### **Action Points**

1. Register with ABCB for the free NCC and other free materials.
2. Implement business processes to ensure compliance with the new Australian Standards for Termite Management Systems which is to be phased-in over a two-year period.

### **Changes to the BCA**

1. New Australian Standard for Termite Management Systems – the NCC will adopt a two-year phase-in period for the new standards so that the industry can adapt to the new edition of AS 3660.1. For example, all chemicals are to be included on the appropriate authority's pesticides register and a new Acceptable Construction Practice for the installation of sheet metal as a termite management system has been included along with an option for chemical systems to be assessed under AS 3660.3.
2. Continuing the increased use of performance. The NCC has substituted qualitative terms in the BCA performance requirements with quantified terms, which can be objectively measured. The NCC has introduced two new verification methods for structural reliability and weatherproofing:
  - a. Structural reliability standards – where Alternative Solutions are used, engineers may use a new verification method to demonstrate that the building or structure meets the performance requirements for structural reliability. The verification method provides

minimum resistance targets for structural components and connections through a quantified reliability index, in order to demonstrate the building or structure meets the performance requirements for structural reliability. Given the complexity of the calculation methodology, a handbook has been developed to assist those who will use it.

- b. Weatherproofing – the new verification method can verify whether a proposed external wall will meet the performance requirements, where an external wall must meet a score achieved through a risk assessment methodology. There are two test methods within the verification method and the application of the test methods vary depending on whether the external wall is classified as a direct fix cladding wall, a cavity wall or a unique wall system.
3. Mandatory sprinkler protection provisions – to include all Class 3 and Class 9a residential aged care buildings, in response to community expectations of higher protection levels for those vulnerable occupants and assist in preventing occurrences of fires.
  4. The NCC includes the restructure, simplification and enhancement of the following two commonly used parts of the NCC:
    - a. Part J5 (Air conditioning and ventilation systems) has incorporated some technical changes including clarification of the exemptions allowed in the defined term ‘air-conditioning’ and the increase of the fan motor power allowances for car park ventilation systems.
    - b. Barriers to prevent falls have been simplified, restructured and improved to resolve outstanding technical issues. In both volumes, all references to ‘balustrades and other barriers’ have been simplified to the general term ‘barriers’. Changes to Volume One also include the relocation of all openable window barrier provisions to D2.24 - Protection of openable windows.

The ABCB is also increasing harmonisation between volumes of the NCC with the inclusion of explanatory information boxes for cross-code considerations within all three volumes to direct users to relevant sections of the Volumes for consideration, making the NCC more user-friendly.

**Prepared by Bannermans Lawyers**  
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