

BETTER BUILDING PERFORMANCE CRITICAL TO PRODUCTIVITY AND JOBS

Thursday 23 April 2020

The decision by the WA Government to significantly delay implementation of the latest updates to the National Construction Code (NCC) is deeply concerning at a time when energy efficiency is critical for supporting economic stimulus, according to the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC).

ASBEC President, Professor Ken Maher AO said that stalling the introduction of better standards for new buildings and fitouts will only delay the benefits to businesses, households and the wider economy.

“This is a disappointing outcome. The changes in the 2019 Code were developed through extensive engagement with industry and using evidence based research. COVID-19 restrictions have impacted on construction productivity and appropriate concessions can be made to accommodate last-minute delays.

“Yet, without broader consultation, the WA Government has deferred the implementation of the changes by an entire year, which means delaying the economic benefit to energy consumers and businesses. Such a decision makes absolutely no sense in the current environment, where every economic lever is critical.” said Prof Maher.

ASBEC Executive Director Suzanne Toumbourou said that failure to act decisively on carrying forward the changes presents a missed opportunity.

“The evidence is in. Better performing buildings deliver a myriad of benefits such as lowered energy bills for household and business consumers, reduced stress on the electricity network and supports a least cost pathway to decarbonisation.”

Research by ASBEC and ClimateWorks in 2018 showed that strong energy standards for new buildings in Western Australia could, between now and 2050, reduce energy costs by up to \$4 billion, deliver at least 10 million tonnes of cumulative emissions savings and save households up to \$1,000 per year in energy bills. Nationally, stronger energy standards could reduce energy bills by \$27 billion and cut energy network costs by up to \$12.6 billion.

The latest update to the NCC represented the first major overhaul of the commercial provisions since 2010 and delivered a package of measures focused on reducing commercial energy consumption by a potential 35 per cent, promising to usher in a major step-change around the country.

“In the weeks and months ahead, we need leadership that delivers for every part of the economy, including our buildings. Ramping up building quality and efficiency should be a key part of every government’s arsenal to drive more economic benefits particularly at this critical time.” said Ms Toumbourou.

“The National Construction Code sets minimum standards for all new buildings and fitouts, so adopting the latest changes to the Code should be one of the first places that governments look to deliver improved building energy performance.”

Available for comment: Suzanne Toumbourou, ASBEC Executive Director 0423 407 467

Further Information: ASBEC [*Built to Perform: An Industry Led Pathway to a Zero Carbon Ready Building Code*](#)



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.

ASBEC's activities, including research and policy development on built environment issues, are an example of a collaborative, co-ordinated approach undertaken across all segments of the built environment. ASBEC works actively to develop and promote leading practice in the design, planning and operation of our cities, at a building, precinct and citywide scale.