Revision of the Building Code

Neil Savery
General Manager

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The Board is a joint initiative of all governments and exists by way of an Inter-governmental Agreement. The Board’s Mission under the IGA is to address issues of safety and health, amenity and sustainability in the design, construction and performance of buildings. It is also a regulatory reform vehicle for COAG. The BCA and PCA are national codes which are developed and maintained by the ABCB. Both codes contain the minimum necessary Performance Requirements for building construction and plumbing in Australia.
State/Territory Act

State/Territory Regulations

National Construction Code (BCA and PCA)

Referenced documents (incl. Australian Standards)

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Level 1 -> Objectives

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4a -> Performance Requirements

- Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions
- Alternative Solutions

Building Solutions

- Assessment Methods
  - Documentary evidence described in A2.2
  - Verification Methods
  - Expert Judgements
  - Comparison to Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions

Guidance Levels

Compliance Levels

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Regulatory Context

• The ABCB develops model regulation. It is not a statutory body and has no powers of compliance

• The States and Territories are responsible for regulating building and plumbing in their jurisdictions

• Commonwealth Government’s and COAG’s de-regulation agenda

• ABCB’s reform program
Perspective

• The building and construction sector represents approximately 13.5% of GDP

• The building sector directly employs approximately 250,000 people, with a further 200,000 sub-contractors and has the second largest number of small to medium enterprises in the economy

• The sector faces significant disruptive change that it and the regulatory environment needs to be capable of adapting to

• A 1% growth in building and construction sector labour productivity will increase GDP by $1.25b pa, but it fell by -1% in 2013/14
Proposal for Change

• Forest and Wood Products Australia submitted the PFC to allow for fire-protected timber construction of Class 2, 3 and 5 buildings up to an effective height of 25 metres with automatic sprinklers.

• This change will be reflected in the Deemed to Satisfy provisions and meet all relevant Performance Requirements.

• Impact analysis suggested net benefits of approximately $103m over 10 years.

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Analysis

- International comparisons
- Built in redundancy in excess of current NCC DtS
- Productivity
- Labour costs and mobility
- Product, design, construction innovation and diversity
- Reduced carbon emissions
- Attractive option for medium density development

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Key Issues - Assessment

- Testing of assemblies for use in timber mid-rise construction could be accommodated. Advice on the application of the standard fire test to be developed.
- Massive timber section limited to solid timber panels for the purposes of A1.1.
- Need for further education and training materials as complementary measures including FWPA technical guide.
- Question of sprinklers during construction?
- Use of fire-protected timber in fire-isolated stairs with sprinklers
Process and Program

• BCC considered PFC on the 14 October
• Matters for further resolution to be considered
• Board to consider NCC 2016 content on 3 December
• If supported, included in NCC 2016 published for February and adopted by States and Territories (subject to any variations) on 1 May 2016

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