

Building Regulation Reform – Consultation with the ABCB

Illuminations Article

Following several high-profile building failures, in 2019 each jurisdiction in Australia made an agreement to implement widespread recommendations relating to building regulation reform made in the *Shergold Weir – Building Confidence Report (BCR)*.

The BCR, published in April 2018, made 24 recommendations to Building Ministers to address systemic issues in the Australian building industry. Building Ministers established the BCR Implementation Team within the Australian Building Codes Board to work with states and territories to respond to the recommendations.

Based on consultation and feedback from their membership network Lighting Council Australia have identified the following building compliance issues that apply to lighting industry:

- Energy efficiency, emergency lighting and general lighting requirements are rarely investigated by building surveyors for compliance.
- Products specified in lighting designs are being substituted for cheaper, often non-compliant alternatives.
- Qualitative Performance Solutions have been used as a cost saving measure and means of flouting quantitative deemed-to-satisfy requirements prescribed in the National Construction Code

Through several recent submissions to the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), Lighting Council Australia (LCA) has made recommendations that aim to improve building compliance, reduce the use of non-conforming lighting products, and improve accountability within the building sector. A summary of key recommendations made to the ABCB include:

- Building design documentation

LCA suggest that lighting and emergency lighting design plan documentation is required as part of the building approval process. These designs will formally document compliance to relevant sections of the National Construction Code.

- Mandatory Inspections

Building surveyors are generalists who may not possess specialised expertise required to assess all products, designs or building areas during inspection. Lighting Council Australia suggest that designers who participate in building design are used to verify that the original design documentation has been

fulfilled. This will ensure accountability across specialty design areas of the National Construction Code.

- Performance Solution Documentation

Additional documentation detailing where Performance Solutions have been used to demonstrate compliance is required. The expert judgement pathway presents a significant risk and should be considered the least desirable method to demonstrate compliance to the National Construction Code. When it has been used, justification as to why other assessment methods were not suitable should be provided.

Lachlan Greve

Corporate Affairs Manager

