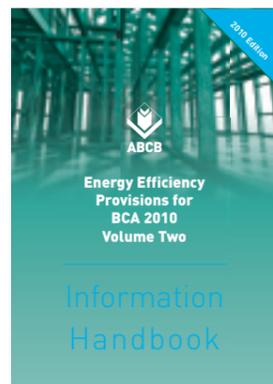
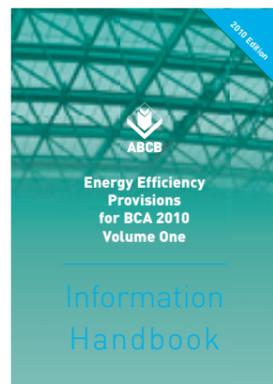


THE BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA (BCA)



NON-REGULATORY HANDBOOKS



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ABCB

AUSTRALIAN BUILDING CODES BOARD

Annual Business Plan 2010–11

Supporting COAG's reform agenda and addressing the objectives of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) remain the focus of the ABCB Business Plan. Life safety and a continued gatekeeper role to minimise regulatory overlap where possible are particularly emphasised.

Improvements to the regulatory framework can be expected as a result of the implementation of the National Construction Code Strategy. A COAG priority under the *National Seamless Economy* initiative, the amalgamation of the BCA and the Plumbing Code of Australia is a key component of this year's Business Plan and is intended to provide consistencies for onsite technical requirements, and deliver cost savings to industry and the community.

Continuing to provide Australia with a national building regulation reform vehicle, the ABCB is working to deliver BCA 2011 in alignment with the Disability Standards for Access to Premises. To complement the release of these key documents, the ABCB and the Australian Human Rights Commission will collaborate on awareness raising activities to assist practitioners Australia-wide.



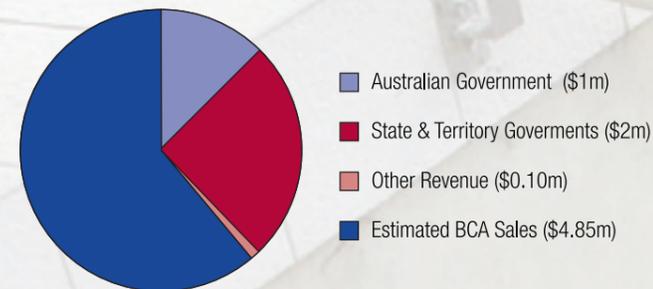
ABOUT THE ABCB

The ABCB is a joint initiative of all levels of government in Australia, together with the building industry. Its mission is to oversee issues relating to health, safety, amenity and sustainability in building.

The ABCB promotes efficiency in the design, construction and performance of buildings through the national Building Code of Australia (BCA), and the development of effective regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

The Board aims to establish effective and proportional codes, standards and regulatory systems that are consistent between States and Territories.

ABCB Budget 2010-11 (\$7.95m)



FOCUS OF BUSINESS PLAN

The *2010-11 Business Plan* places a strong emphasis on the ABCB's core function – maintaining and updating the BCA by exercising a gatekeeper role in response to calls for regulation. A relevant, contemporary building code, achieved through rigorous assessment of emerging issues and ongoing review of existing provisions, is a critical contributor to an efficient building and construction industry, a safer built environment and a strong national economy.

Life safety is a core business priority in the *Business Plan*. The ABCB adopted bushfire standard AS 3959-2009 for residential buildings in BCA 2010 and will work towards including provisions relating to the design and construction of private bushfire shelters in BCA 2011.

RESPOND TO DIRECTION SETTING ESTABLISHED BY MINISTERS

National Construction Code Reform

The National Construction Code (NCC) reform, COAG's initiative to establish 'a nationally consistent approach to building and plumbing regulation', is a major focus of the *2010-11 Business Plan*. The performance-based NCC will see the BCA and the Plumbing Code of Australia brought together, leading to opportunities to remove regulatory overlap between these areas, while providing significant cost savings for the building industry and consumers. There is also scope for the NCC reform initiative to include electrical and telecommunications standards, once plumbing and building have been integrated.

The NCC will be supported by a new Intergovernmental Agreement, which is being developed by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories, during 2010-11.

Aligning the BCA with the new Premises Standard

On 15 March 2010, the Australian Government launched the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards (the Premises Standards) which will clarify accessibility requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and ensure consistency between building law and the DDA.

The harmonised documents will ensure improved access to buildings for people with a disability and provide certainty to the building industry on construction requirements. The ABCB, in conjunction with the Australian Human Rights Commission, will deliver education and awareness raising activities to support the simultaneous enactment of the Premises Standards and adoption of BCA 2011, on 1 May 2011, once the Premises Standards pass through the Commonwealth Parliament.

DELIVERY OF THE REFORM AGENDA TO MINIMISE THE BUILDING REGULATORY BURDEN

Reform of the building regulatory regime remains a priority for the ABCB. Good regulatory practice helps ensure that building regulations do not impact negatively on economic activity, employment or housing affordability. Through its strong gatekeeper role, the ABCB strives to minimise the regulatory burden and keep compliance costs associated with building and construction down.

The Board will also continue to advise relevant policy owners of the national benefits of limiting local government interventions into building regulations, to reduce regulatory overlap.

Response to the Victorian Royal Commission on Bushfires / Bushfire Shelters

BCA 2010 adopted a new and more effective Australian Standard for the design and construction of houses. In addition, in April 2010, the ABCB released a Performance Standard for the design and construction of private bushfire shelters. The shelters are aimed at providing a tenable environment for occupants during the passage of untenable conditions in a bushfire. They help lower the risk of serious injury or fatality, such as that seen during the 2009 Victorian bushfire disaster. The Standard is based on available technical data, the input and judgement of a multi-disciplined expert reference group and in consultation with a range of stakeholders.

However, the Standard and private bushfire shelters are not stand alone solutions to protect people in bushfires. As the Board has made clear in the past, building standards need to be part of a wider set of measures to deal with the mitigation of bushfire risk, including effective coordination of efforts by authorities and communities, prediction of fire spread, better education of home owners, clarity in community notification procedures and sound planning and fuel management strategies.

Performance Requirements will be included in the public comment draft of the next edition of the BCA to be released in June 2010 and published in early 2011, subject to the Board's normal regulatory review processes.

In the meantime, State and Territory building regulators have been alerted to the release of the Shelter Standard and may now consider using it as a basis for regulating private bushfire shelters prior to the commencement of BCA 2011.

DELIVERY OF BOARD CORE CODE WRITING BUSINESS

A primary role of the ABCB is to maintain and update the national BCA. The ABCB must carefully manage the complex demands of issues that impact on life safety, health, amenity, disability access and sustainability.

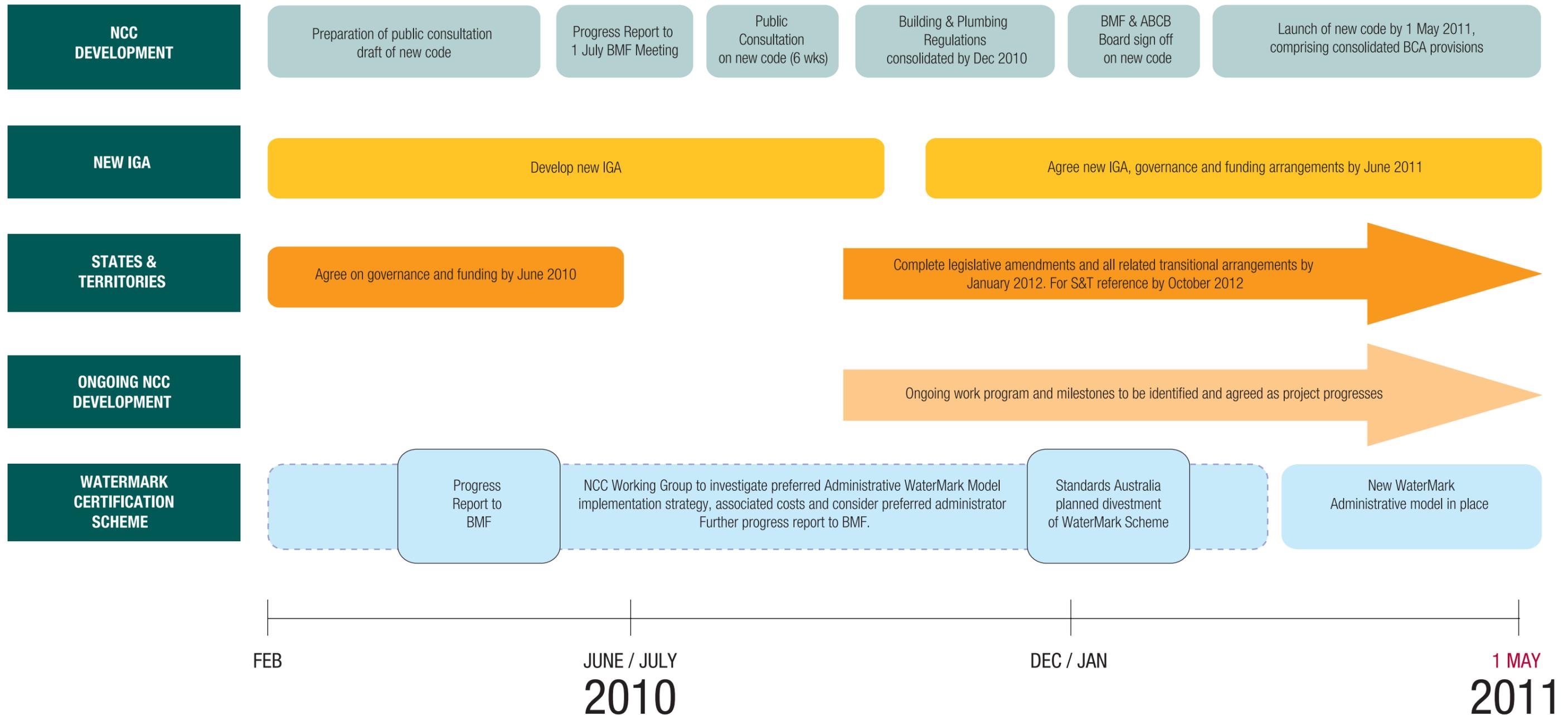
Potential changes to the BCA must be considered in accordance with COAG best practice regulatory principles and be subject to impact assessment.

The initial presumption for the ABCB is not to introduce new or increased regulation and instead, investigate alternative means of achieving the desired result. If intervention is necessary, the BCA sets minimum acceptable regulatory requirements that are proportional to the issue being addressed.

2009-10 ACHIEVEMENTS	2010-11 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received Ministerial endorsement of ABCB Business Plan Delivered the ABCB 2009 National Conference to the satisfaction of industry and other stakeholders BCA 2010 Information Seminars held in capital cities with over 2,100 delegates attending Delivered BCA 2010 by May 2010 on budget and in line with COAG Principles Responded to relevant parts of the National Strategy for Energy Efficiency, as requested by COAG New bushfire standards for residential buildings adopted into the BCA Responded to Government direction on disability access in buildings requests Completed RISs for increasing the energy efficiency requirements for all classes of buildings. Completed Consultation RISs for - slips, trips and falls provisions, effects of salinity in saline prone areas and on cyclone prone areas. Assisted the Victorian Royal Commission on Bushfires as required Released the first national Standard for the design and construction of Personal Bushfire Shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received Ministerial endorsement of ABCB Business Plan, by August 2010 Developed and implemented the NCC Strategy, by May 2011 Aligned the BCA with the new Premises Standards, by May 2011 Delivered education seminars on the Premises Standards in conjunction with the Australian Human Rights Commission, by October 2010 Delivered BCA 2011 on budget and in line with COAG principles Responded to Bushfire Royal Commission and any consequent policy directions by Ministers Responded to Ministerial direction on the National Framework for Energy Efficiency Provided operational advice during the development of a new Inter-government Agreement (IGA) for the broadened responsibilities of the building regulatory reform agenda, the Building Ministers' Forum and the ABCB.

National Construction Code Implementation Strategy

Milestones and Timeframes



Prior to 2010 -

- A RIS and Implementation Plan were developed which informed the COAG consideration of the NCC.
- COAG and the BMF agreed to the consolidation of building, plumbing, electrical and telecommunications into one code, through the NCC (with plumbing and building consolidated first).
- The ABCB and the NPRF were tasked with implementing COAG's plan for the NCC.

ABCB WORK PROGRAM 2010-11

2011 OUTCOMES					
Nationally Consistent & Cost Effective Regulatory Framework	A More Sustainable Built Environment	Safer and More Socially Inclusive Built Environment	Informed and Responsive Building Industry	Increased Practitioner Skills & Competencies	
BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITY	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT OUTPUT			
RESPOND TO MINISTERS' DIRECTION SETTING	Access for People with a Disability	Respond to Government policy direction on disability access to buildings as it applies to the BCA			
	National Construction Code	A first edition of the National Construction Code which incorporates a consolidated building and plumbing code ready for national release by 1 May 2011; Recommendations to the Building Ministers' Forum on a revised WaterMark Certification Scheme including advice on transitional arrangements			
	Sustainability - Adaptation	Develop a RIS for consideration by the Board in mid 2010, which analyses proposals to improve the design and construction of buildings in areas subject to cyclones as a result of climate change			
	Sustainability - National Strategy for Energy Efficiency	Maintenance of BCA2010 and participation as an observer to the development of the National Strategy for Energy Efficiency (NSEE) "National Building Energy Standard-Setting, Assessment and Rating Framework" (Buildings Framework). Undertake regulatory impact analysis, as appropriate, in accordance with COAG 'Principles' and the IGA			
	Protection from Threats and Natural Disasters	Assessment of BCA implications arising from protection of critical infrastructure			
	Bushfire Royal Commission Contingency	Responses to final recommendations of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission			
	Buildings in Flood Prone Areas	In accordance with directions from BMF meeting in July 2010, develop documentation for consideration by the Board. Undertake regulatory impact analysis, as appropriate, in accordance with COAG 'Principles' and the IGA			
	Local Government Intervention - Building / Planning Overlap	Draw policy owners' attention to the 'Gateway' model for building / planning overlap and respond to Ministerial direction			
DELIVER REGULATORY REFORM	Early Childhood Centres - National Quality Framework	TBA pending finalisation of scope (by DEEWR) and identification of funding			
	Variation Reduction Strategy	A reduction in State/Territory BCA variations in BCA 2011 and report to Ministers			
	Facilitation of National Consistency in Technical & Administrative Systems	Interaction with existing national forums and administrations to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to building regulations			
	Product Certification - Codemark	Management and facilitation of Australian/New Zealand third party product certification scheme			
	RIS Process on all Regulatory Change Proposals	Advice to decision-makers on the impacts of regulatory proposals, approved by the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR); Effective regulation impact assessment processes in consultation with the OBPR and in accordance with COAG regulatory principles			
	Quantification of Performance Requirements	Measurable BCA Performance Requirements and/or additional Verification Methods			
	Non Regulatory Handbooks	Manage the development of non-mandatory handbooks on matters not suitable for regulation			
DELIVER BOARD CORE CODE WRITING BUSINESS	Maintain and Update the BCA	Improved and updated BCA core technical requirements			
	Standards Coordination and Committees	Documents, including Australian Standards, which are suitable for regulatory use and referencing in the BCA			
	Emergency Egress for All Occupants	Consider research and advise Board on the development of provisions for emergency egress for all occupants including people with disabilities.			
	Salinity	A RIS on potential BCA provisions to mitigate the effects of salt attack for consideration by the Board			
	Private Bushfire Shelters (including further research)	Advice to the Board on the costs/benefits of proposed amendments to the BCA as well as commissioning research to inform future development of the ABCB Performance Standard for Private Bushfire Shelters (PBS)			
	Slips, Trips and Falls	A RIS for consideration by the Board in late 2010, which analyses proposals to improve the design and construction of buildings to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls by building occupants			
	External Noise in Residential Apartment Buildings	Develop BCA provisions for attenuation of external noise within residential apartment buildings			
	Class 1b and 3 Building Classification and Use	Further work to be undertaken by interested Administrations/industry members. Provide agreed wording changes to Class 1b and 3 building definitions within a reasonable period. Develop PFC for BCC consideration			
	ABCB Cadetship, Scholarship and Strategic Research Program	Program offering ABCB employment experience for building professional students; Research to inform decisions on future BCA and non-regulatory measures through relevant research bodies such as the Australian Research Council and the National Adaptation Research Plan (Settlements and Infrastructure)			
	BCA Advisory Service	BCA clarification advice to subscribers			
	BCA Awareness and Training	National information seminars and training materials to enhance awareness and understanding of the BCA among practitioners, the tertiary sector and community			
	BCA Marketing and Promotion	Raised awareness of the BCA and other ABCB activities			
	National Conference	Delivery of an ABCB Conference supported by industry			
IGA PRINCIPLES					
Direction Setting to Align with Strategic Priorities as Established by Ministers	Minimum necessary Performance-Based Codes to Achieve Health, Safety, Amenity and Sustainability of Buildings	Reduced Reliance on Regulation including increased Practitioner Skills and Non-Mandatory Guidelines	Greater National Consistency including Variation Reduction Strategy	Strengthen Reforms to Building Regulation (through International Collaboration)	Transparency, Accountability and Consultation including increased Impact Assessment