

Joint Statement: Australian Councils call for stronger energy performance standards for new homes to cut cost of living and improve health and well-being

Australian local governments are calling on Building Ministers around the country to approve the first increase in energy efficiency standards for new homes in over 12 years, when they come together for the next Building Ministers Forum.

The updated energy provisions proposed for the 2022 edition of the National Construction Code follow a collaborative 3-year process led by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), consistent with the *Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings* agreed by all Commonwealth, state and territory energy Ministers in 2019.

The ABCB's proposals for new homes include raising the minimum thermal performance standard from 6 to 7 stars (NatHERS equivalent) and the introduction of a 'whole-of-home' energy budget for fixed appliances (heating and cooling, hot water, lighting, and pool and spa pumps).

Better performing homes mean lower energy bills, healthy, resilient and safe homes for Australians and an easy and low-cost way to meet Australia's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The increase to 7-Stars is achievable, cost-effective and financially beneficial to residents.

Reduce Costs of Living

The introduction of the new energy provisions will protect households from current and future electricity price rises. Households can save on energy bills with the reduction of energy use. A 7-Star, all-electric house in any capital city in Australia saves money for residents from day one. We can future-proof and provide certainty for Australian households against increasing energy costs.

Safe and Healthy Communities

As the level of government closest to communities, Councils play an important role in creating safe and vibrant communities. Communities across Australia want energy efficient homes that keep warm in winter and cool in summer. By making our homes more comfortable and less reliant on electricity reduces the strain on the electricity grid during times of high demand benefiting the whole community.

We also have a responsibility to protect our diverse communities from current and worsening impacts of climate change. People on a low income spend a disproportionate amount of energy to heat and cool their homes. We need to ensure social equity and protect our residents from poor performing buildings and extreme weather events.

Meet Australia's Carbon Emissions Target

Australia's, 10 million residential buildings are responsible for around 24% of overall electricity use and 12% of total carbon emissions nationally. Increasing the energy performance of new homes is a quick and easy way to achieve our net-zero targets.

No time to delay

It has been 12 years since the minimum standard was increased. In that time industry and technologies have greatly improved to build homes that are healthier, more energy efficient and resilient.

Councils are already working with industry to achieve higher performance outcomes than the mandatory construction code minimum standards. We have been successfully working with industry to support the market transition.

Councils are ready and look forward to working with government and industry to improve our future homes for the benefit of all Australians.

Supporting Councils and Local Government Organisations

