

5.9 CLIMATE EMERGENCY AUSTRALIA JOINT STATEMENT: AUSTRALIAN COUNCILS CALL FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT AND CLIMATE RESILIENT HOMES VIA THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE

Attachments: 1. Climate Emergency Australia Joint Statement on Energy Efficient Homes

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council **ENDORSES** the Climate Emergency Australia 'Joint Statement: Australian Councils call for energy-efficient and climate resilient homes via the National Construction Code' at Attachment 1.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

For Council to consider signing on to the 'Joint Statement: Australian Councils call for energy-efficient and climate resilient homes via the National Construction Code' (Joint Statement) at **Attachment 1**.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Vincent is a permit authority for administering the requirements of the National Construction Code (NCC) in accordance with the *Building Act 2011*. The assessment process for a building application includes verification that the energy efficiency requirements of the NCC are met. The current 2019 edition of the NCC requires a 6 star NatHERS (Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme) for buildings.

The NCC is currently being reviewed, with a proposal for the new NCC 2022 to require buildings to meet 7 star NatHERS rating. This would include additional criteria for heating, cooling, hot water, lighting density, appliances, renewable energy and electric vehicle charging. Submissions for the NCC 2022 closed on 17 October 2021 and are currently being considered by the Australian Building Codes Board.

DETAILS:

Climate Emergency Australia wrote to the City on 9 November 2021 requesting Council's support for their Joint Statement. They have advised the next stage in the process for the NCC 2022 would be for State and Territory Building Ministers to decide whether the proposed changes will be adopted.

The Joint Statement would be sent to State, Territory and Federal Energy, Climate Change and Building ministers. It would be a document to demonstrate local government support for the NCC 2022 changes. These changes are to be discussed at the Building Ministers Forum in late November.

Administration supports the changes proposed in the NCC 2022. These changes align closely with the City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024. The City is an active participant in the Western Australian Local Government Association's (WALGA) Environmentally Sustainable Design Forum. This Forum is advocating directly to the State Government to urge adoption of the proposed NCC standards. The Forum is also developing an overarching policy position for adoption by the WALGA State Council. It is anticipated a campaign to promote environmentally sustainable design would be released in early 2022, including some short videos and a filmed workshop, which would be promoted on the City's website and social media.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Nil.

LEGAL/POLICY:

- *Building Act 2011*; and
- National Construction Code.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Low: It is low risk for Council to endorse the Joint Statement.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Sensitive Design

Our planning framework supports quality design, sustainable urban built form and is responsive to our community and local context.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the following key sustainability outcomes of the *City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024* (SES).

Sustainable Energy Use/Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction

The SES also contains Energy Strategy No. 11 which is to *'Advocate to both State and Federal Government for higher building design standards for new builds and retrofits (all building types).'*

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the following priority health outcomes of the City's *Public Health Plan 2020-2025*:

*Reduced exposure to environmental health risks***FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil.

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Joint Statement: Australian Councils call for energy-efficient and climate resilient homes via the National Construction Code

Australian local governments are calling for the strongest possible building standards to be enshrined in the 2022 National Construction Code (NCC).

We ask that the minimum standard in the National Construction Code be lifted to at least a 7-Stars NatHERS energy rating.

As buildings account for 25 percent of national carbon emissions, a strong NCC is vital for achieving our net-zero targets.

Better performing homes mean lower energy bills, improved health outcomes for residents, and homes resilient to extreme weather.

As the level of government closest to communities, Councils play an important role in creating safe and vibrant communities. We have a responsibility to protect our diverse communities from current and worsening impacts of climate change.

No time to delay

We support the proposed changes to the NCC 2022 to increase the minimum standard to 7-Stars NatHERS energy rating and introduce energy budgets for new homes. This is a good first step.

However, 7-Star is the minimum increase that is needed to cut our emissions in the next decade. Australian homes have fallen behind international standards and we need to lift their energy performance.

Our communities demand safe and healthy homes

Communities across Australia want energy efficient homes that keep warm in winter and cool in summer. Councils have responded by including objectives related to environmentally sustainable building design in their community strategic plans and/or local planning strategies.

Thirty-one Victorian councils and the Municipal Association of Victoria, representing the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, are working together to revise and elevate Environmentally Sustainable Development targets for new developments, including targets for zero carbon development in local and state planning schemes.

Councils already working with industry and government for better homes

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Councils are already working with developers 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 in Western Australia are introducing policies that encourage industry to adopt sustainable design principles above the construction code's minimum standards. In many instances, industry has adopted these design principles to meet changing market demands and community aspirations.

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

Future-proofing our homes in a changing climate

With temperatures projected to rise by 2.5°C in the next century, residential buildings and homes need to become more resilient to withstand hotter temperatures, drier climates and more extreme weather events. The findings of the *Future Proofing Residential Development to Climate Change* research project by Randwick, Woollahra and Waverley councils, showed as the climate warms in 2030 and 2070, energy demand for homes in Sydney's eastern suburbs will increase dramatically, and will fail the current NSW requirements for cooling in 2030 and 2070.¹

Lifting standards across the country

The National Construction Code is an efficient instrument to achieve a consistent national approach and achieve widespread benefits across our communities. People on a low income spend a disproportionate amount of energy to heat and cool their homes.² We need to ensure social equity and protect our residents from poor performing buildings and the increasing impacts of climate change.

We ask that the minimum standard be increased in the National Construction Code 2022 and Councils are ready to work with government and industry to improve the future Australian homes.

Climate Emergency Australia (CEA) is a network of 104 Australian councils that have declared a climate emergency. Together, we represent more than 9.9 million Australians calling for a rapid shift to a more resilient, zero-carbon society.

Supporting Councils

COUNCIL LOGOS TO GO HERE

¹

https://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/181788/Future_Proofing_Residential_Development_to_Climate_Change_Final_Report_January_2021.pdf

² ACOSS/Brotherhood of St Laurence (2018): [Energy Stressed in Australia](#)

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