

Communique for the Building Ministers' Forum

The Building Ministers' Forum met in Sydney today to play an important role in progressing the Council of Australian Governments' deregulation agenda.

The Building Ministers' Forum endorsed a number of significant building regulation reforms that have the potential to unlock an additional \$1.1 billion in economic benefits per year to business and consumers.

The National Construction Code provides model regulation for buildings and plumbing, and is given effect through state and territory legislation. It sets the minimum necessary requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings throughout Australia.

Today, the Forum has agreed in principle to eliminate all costs associated with purchasing the 2015 edition of the National Construction Code and future editions, by making it available free and on-line. This will see greater usage of the National Construction Code, especially by small businesses, with it being accessed by up to 200,000 practitioners in the building and plumbing industry, rather than those who until now have purchased it for almost \$400 – some 12,000 practitioners. This commitment by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments will be finalised by December 2014 and have a significant effect on reducing red tape for the industry, improving the useability and penetration of the National Construction Code, and ensuring that Australia continues to maintain high standards in the building and construction industry.

The Forum agreed to move from a one year to a three year amendment cycle of the National Construction Code, commencing in 2016. This will deliver more certainty and stability about regulatory change to the Australian building and construction sector.

The Forum also agreed upon a range of activities to limit variations to the National Construction Code; further investigate the possible inclusion of regulations concerning telecommunication spaces and pathways in the National Construction Code; and considered how to address renovations to existing buildings in the National Construction Code.

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