



Fact Sheet – Background to the development of the Building Works Manual

Introduction

The Defence Building Works Manual (BWM) has been developed to better align with best practice recommendations being made in relation construction industry in Australia.

The manual describes policies and procedures that are mandatory for all new Defence building work, in particular the requirement for compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC) series. The BWM also contains requirements for Defence building certification of building work.

The BWM and associated guides and templates can be found at the [Building Works Section](#) page of the Defence Estate Quality Management System (DEQMS) website.

Aim

The aim of this fact sheet is to describe the background to the development of the BWM.

References

Reference is necessary to the following documents:

- a. Building Works Manual – Edition 1 (BWM);
- b. National Construction Code (NCC) including Building Code of Australia (BCA) – Volumes One and Two, and Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) Volume Three; and
- c. Manual of Fire Protection Engineering (MFPE).

Background

The removal of the certification requirements from the MFPE and the creation of a BWM was done to better align with best practice recommendations being made in relation construction industry.

In mid-2017, the Building Ministers' Forum (BMF) requested Professor Peter Shergold and Ms Bronwyn Weir to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia.



In April 2018, Professor Shergold and Ms Weir delivered the [Building Confidence](#) report to the BMF. The report serves as an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia. It outlined a suite of recommendations, several of which affect architects during the design, construction and ongoing maintenance of buildings. Key issues identified include the registration of building practitioners; insufficient supervision, auditing and expertise in the industry; and a need for better documentation.

An important recommendation from the report was that the BMF prioritises the preparation of an implementation plan to enable all recommendations to be implemented within three years. It stipulated that a full list of agreed actions should be prepared, with jurisdictional performance against each one to be reported annually, allowing the BMF to monitor achievement.

A collective response called the [Building Confidence Report: implementation plan](#) was released by the Building Ministers Forum in March 2019. Implementing the [Building Confidence](#) report recommendations provides an opportunity for greater consistency across Australia.

At the BMF meeting in July 2019, State, Territory and Commonwealth ministers announced a unanimous decision to establish a national approach to implementation of recommendations made by the landmark [Building Confidence](#) report.

Bronwyn Weir – co-author of the [Building Confidence](#) report – assisted with the drafting of the BWM. Part of Bronwyn’s work was to compare the proposed policy against the applicable [Building Confidence](#) report recommendations.

Following updates to the draft, it was found that the proposed BWM met 13 of the 14 applicable recommendations. There is 1 recommendation that is partially met and there are no recommendations that are not met.

As such, the proposed BWM has been endorsed by Defence and is now applicable to certification of building works for Defence occupied buildings.

A copy of the final report from Bronwyn Weir which included the outcomes of her assessment is embedded below.



Final Report No 2 -
Defence Building W