

Building newsflash number 387

Housing energy efficiency—peer review process

Purpose

To advise that experts are available to peer review the energy efficiency of housing designs.

Background

New class 1 and enclosed attached class 10a buildings must meet the energy efficiency provisions of the Building Code of Australia 2009 (BCA). The following assessment methods may be used to determine compliance with the energy efficiency requirements:

- i. Deemed-to-satisfy—Part 3.12, Energy efficiency in BCA Volume Two
- ii. Software (verification)—using 2nd generation software (i.e. BERS Pro, AccuRate or FirstRates) by a house energy assessor
- iii. Verification—using a reference building in accordance with V2.6.2.2
- iv. Expert judgement—expert evaluation of house designs that may not readily comply with the above methods.

Note: The Queensland Development Code (QDC), Mandatory Part (MP) 4.1—Sustainable buildings, allows a credit of up to one star for suitably designed outdoor living areas.

Issues

The peer review process, using expert judgement, can be used as an alternative method for evaluating whether house designs (including renovations) comply with the energy efficiency performance requirements.

Applicants may submit house designs that may not readily comply with the deemed-to-satisfy or verification method (software) to an expert who will evaluate the merits of the design. The expert will provide applicants with a report either ‘supporting’ or ‘not supporting’ the house’s design for energy efficiency, with detailed justification of their decision. The expert’s report would form part of the relevant building approval if it is issued by the building certifier.

A peer review guideline (see [Newsflash 322](#)) outlines the procedures and requirements involved with the peer review process, such as how to engage an expert. The guideline and application form are available on the department’s [website](#). The list of experts is now also available on the department’s [website](#).

Legislation

Building Act 1975 (BA)—Section 258, Guidelines for matters within the scope of the BA.

Contact for further information

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