

MEDIA RELEASE

ARCHITEAM CALLS FOR SMARTER, CLEARER REGULATION IN NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE MODERNISATION

ArchiTeam has lodged a detailed submission to the Australian Government Treasury in response to the proposed project to modernise the National Construction Code (NCC), calling for reform that delivers clarity, consistency and practicality while maintaining safety, amenity and public confidence.

The submission was spearheaded by newly elected ArchiTeam Director Paul Cooksey, working closely with ArchiTeam member Darragh O'Brien, and informed by contributions from ArchiTeam members Helen Matthews, Eileen Hannaford and Alexander Hill.

In late January, ArchiTeam convened a member meeting to develop a collective response to the proposed NCC modernisation. This forum enabled practitioners, working directly with the Code, to share on-the-ground experience of its application and to identify practical, implementable reforms that would improve regulatory outcomes while maintaining safety and performance.

For more than 30 years, ArchiTeam has represented architects who operate within highly constrained regulatory, budgetary and risk environments. Its members work across housing, community infrastructure, education, health, workplace, adaptive reuse and urban infill projects, and experience first-hand the impacts of regulatory complexity, fragmented interpretation and jurisdictional inconsistency.

While supporting the intent of a performance-based NCC, ArchiTeam's submission highlights that the Code has become increasingly difficult to navigate and apply in practice. Layered provisions, extensive cross-referencing, reliance on costly Australian Standards, state-based variations and inconsistent interpretation have increased compliance cost and professional risk, particularly for small practice, without always delivering improved building outcomes.

ArchiTeam emphasises that NCC reform should not be framed as deregulation, but as smarter regulation: regulation that is clearer, nationally consistent, digitally enabled, insurable and proportionate to risk.

The submission outlines seven key reform areas, including:

- Reducing complexity and improving the usability of the NCC through clearer drafting and user-centred digital design
- Making Australian Standards freely accessible
- Strengthening and de-risking performance solution pathways to support innovation and adaptive reuse
- Clarifying the distinction between Deemed-to-Satisfy and performance solutions
- Enabling digital and AI-assisted compliance through machine-readable code structures
- Aligning NCC reform with Professional Indemnity insurance realities
- Removing unnecessary state-based variations to restore national consistency

ArchiTeam also recommends that proposed reforms be tested through a multidisciplinary industry panel, bringing together architects, builders, certifiers, engineers, insurers, regulators and digital platform providers, before implementation.

“The modernisation of the NCC is a critical opportunity to deliver regulation that better supports safe, affordable, sustainable and high-quality buildings,” the submission states. “For architects and the communities they serve, this is not about lowering standards, but about enabling better outcomes through clearer, fairer and more workable regulation.”

ArchiTeam welcomes ongoing engagement with Treasury and industry stakeholders as the NCC modernisation process progresses.