



**Productivity Commission  
Study into the Reform  
of Building Regulation  
in Australia**

**ABCB work plan for 2004-05**

**June 2004**

## **Introduction**

This submission is provided by the Office of the ABCB to bring the Commission up to date on the Board's performance during 2003-04 and outline its proposed work for the coming year. The submission is provided as a working document. It is not intended for public release now. The Board will launch its draft work plan at its National Technical Summit in July 2004.

Looking ahead, the early release of the draft Productivity Commission research study and the scope and extent of the draft work plan may have implications for the way we work to meet the expectations of stakeholders and State and Territory Administrations.

The Board has therefore agreed to the draft work plan for the time being. It will revisit it at its 26 August meeting in light of recommendations in the draft Productivity Commission report due in mid-August, feedback from Building Codes Committee and National Technical Summit meetings in July and a review of workload.

## **Overview of 2003-04 performance**

The Board's Strategic Plan aims for the following Outcomes by 2005:

- One Building Code widely adopted
- A consistent regulatory framework to underpin the Code
- More energy efficient and accessible buildings
- Positive cost benefits for industry and the community
- Funding for the ABCB to be performance based
- Board to be seen as a Board of decision makers; and
- a respected high-profile global leader.

The Board's Strategic Plan identifies eight strategic pathways by which it could move forward on the regulatory reform agenda to achieve its 2005 outcomes. These are:

- Consistency in applying regulatory principles
- Being proactive on key issues
- Taking a lead international role
- Enhancing and promoting its identity
- Drawing on a web-based interactive Building Code
- Developing alternative funding sources
- Targeting research; and
- Developing an education and training program.

Advances have been made across all these pathways. During 2003-4, good progress has been made towards the 2005 outcomes and for the Board to be seen as a highly respected global leader and a Board of decision makers. Nevertheless, there are a number of lessons to reflect on from this year's activities and relationships with its stakeholders.

## ***Performance information***

There are four Key Performance Indicators for 2003-04:

- industry and government stakeholder satisfaction with regulatory reform and ABCB services;
- Performance Code and contestable certification valued and supported by the community, industry and governments;
- industry recognition that ABCB initiatives assist international market access; and
- Code amendments on time and budget.

Stakeholder feedback has been tested. While feedback was generally positive, a number of points of criticism were identified. Recent advice to the Productivity Commission from one peak industry body also has a number of points of criticism about the ABCB and the pace of reform.

The National Technical Summit in 2003 provided industry and government feedback via a Communiqué that strongly supported the ABCB's key reform agenda and its value to industry and the community.

Market access efforts by the ABCB in respect to Japan have been widely recognised by industry.

Code amendments were delivered on time and within budget, but the needs of stakeholders, particularly State and Territory administration stakeholders, for more time to address specific issues, most notably energy efficiency matters, did shorten the time available for planned pre-BCA adoption lead times.

## ***Work plan deliverables***

The Board requested that three broad priorities be progressed: building sustainability, development and promotion of the BCA and regulatory harmonisation. Two have advanced significantly. In brief, the situation is as follows:

- building sustainability has progressed well. All outputs proposed for the energy efficiency and disability access projects have been delivered and a policy developed on sustainability for consideration by Ministers.
- development and promotion of the BCA has also been successful. The new BCA format has been welcomed by industry, sales are up and the BCA is now available to all subscribers over the Internet.
- the regulatory harmonisation strategy has some runs on the board. But the work linked to the development of a model national legislative and administrative building regulatory framework has not progressed.

The status of the key outputs is as follows:

An annual BCA amendment cycle was adopted and implemented.

Reform on plumbing, planning and other areas where differences persist has progressed. The ABCB supported creation of a draft Plumbing Code of Australia. Moreover, a proposal on handling the building/plumbing regulatory interface has been made to the Commission separately by the Chairman. Also, engagement with wider reform on planning approvals processes has also been constructive.

Emerging challenges to the Code have been addressed. We have addressed policy and process issues related to the Campbell inquiry, disaster and threat response, safe design, the planning/building regulation interface, sustainability and others.

Considerable effort has gone into lifting Code awareness and uptake by industry. A new format has been launched, the Office has taken a more hands on approach to BCA user needs and market penetration by the BCA is trending up with 17,000 subscribers now in place. More effective on-line services are now in place.

The research agenda has been advanced. ABCB now supports two CRCs, the Japanese will host one of our officers in June to explore their research data on access issues, NZ is keen to collaborate with us on joint research topics and we are hopeful that senior US and Canadian experts will join the ABCB on some research projects in-house in the near future.

Regulatory change proposals have been effectively dealt with. ORR has confirmed that the ABCB RISs prepared during the year have satisfied COAG requirements.

The projects to deliver more accessible and energy efficient buildings have progressed well. Board Committees are driving the agenda on both projects in close consultation with industry, State and Territory administrations, other stakeholders and the community.

Cost effective energy efficiency measures for houses were introduced into the Building Code from 1 January 2003 but adoption has not been universal. Commercial building measures are also in-train.

BCA amendments on disability access have been drafted and have been subject to a regulatory impact assessment and wide public consultation. There is, however, a wide gap between stakeholders about the proposal. Industry has cost impact concerns. Some disability groups do not think we have gone far enough.

ABCB has become a Japanese Evaluation body and we are currently bedding down processes to consolidate on the initiative.

ABCB's global contribution is effective. It has two-way benefits and opens access to information, international code developments and mutual benefits for code writers here and overseas. Notable has been the advances we have made in closer collaboration with NZ and the cooperative spirit between Australia, Canada, US and NZ on the development of international guidelines for fire engineering. The relationship with Japan is particularly close and fruitful.

User funding continues to increase in absolute and relative terms. The Board's agreed policy of 50% 2005 target for user contributions has been exceeded for the third year running.

The Office supported the Chairman in his submission to the Productivity Commission research study.

There were some elements of the harmonisation strategy, such as the proposed new national product certification scheme and the interface with planning that have advanced well. However, work on the National Legislative and Administrative Framework is significant and complex. It requires significant resources.

Slower progress in this area in part reflects demand on the resources of State and Territory administrations of other major reform work, eg disability access and energy efficiency. Given that the Productivity Commission draft report is imminent and will signal overall direction for future reform priorities, the Board agreed to defer work on the National Legislative and Administrative Framework for the time being, but continue work on discrete elements that contributed to regulatory harmonisation.

Finally, the Board agreed to a strategy to progress the framework and methodology for a new Code.

## **2004-2005 Work Plan**

The 2004/05 Work Plan is at **Attachment A**. It is the Board's perspective on what needs to be addressed in the coming year, consistent with the Board's strategic goals. Task descriptions and project specific outputs proposed to be delivered are at **Attachment B**.

The primary focus is proposed to be on:

- the core business of code writing;
- externally commissioned research and analysis linked, in part, to energy efficiency and disability access, but also to a broader research program to support more cost-effective regulation generally; and
- the delivery of a more user friendly BCA.

Key features of the plan are:

- on-going alignment of key tasks with the Board's Strategic Pathways, that are focussed on 15 headline outputs to be delivered by June 2005;
- priority resource focus on the consistent application of regulatory principles, other wide-ranging efforts to advance the Board's One Code target for 2005, building sustainability and dissemination of the Code, notably in progressing our education and training agenda; and
- increased resources being brought to bear on priority regulatory reform, including a major commitment to the strategic review of the BCA and impact assessment.

ATTACHMENT A 2004-2005 ABCB WORK PLAN – Subject to outcome of current review of the ABCB and allocation of any resources needed to address post-review changes in priorities and governance at the August Board meeting

2005 OUTCOMES	KPIs	OUTPUTS TO JUNE 2005	STRATEGIC PATHWAYS	KEY TASKS
One Code widely adopted	Industry and government stakeholder satisfaction with regulatory reform and ABCB services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCA processes reviewed and enhanced</li> <li>• Emerging challenges to Code addressed and alternatives to regulation identified and assessed</li> <li>• Reform progressed on plumbing, planning and other areas where differences persist</li> <li>• Market awareness of BCA and industry adoption lifted</li> <li>• Research agenda advanced</li> <li>• Code amendments on time and budget.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consistent application of regulatory principles</b></p> <p><b>Marketing and communications strategy</b></p> <p><b>Education and training strategy</b></p> <p><b>Research targeting strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCA and Guide development</li> <li>• Australian Standards Committee work and Standards/BCA realignment</li> <li>• Review of BCA development processes</li> <li>• Water for Fire fighting</li> <li>• BCA feedback mechanism review</li> <li>• ABCB National Conference planning</li> <li>• ABCB and other seminars, workshops for industry</li> <li>• National Technical Summit</li> <li>• International Fire Engineering Guidelines</li> <li>• Non-regulatory Guidelines – hillside construction, personal safety, digital communications</li> <li>• Support for S/T administrations, secondment to office and industry secondment</li> <li>• JAS-ANZ Accreditation for ABCB Office</li> <li>• 1 Stop shop – maintenance and evaluation</li> <li>• “Working with Performance” course content development</li> <li>• BCA Advisory Service</li> <li>• Students Industry Based Learning program</li> <li>• Refinement of Education Strategy</li> <li>• CRC on Construction Innovation</li> <li>• Bushfire CRC</li> <li>• Student research program</li> <li>• Contracted research</li> </ul>

<b>Positive cost benefit</b>	<p>Performance Code and contestable certification valued and supported by the community, industry and governments</p> <p>Industry recognition that ABCB initiatives assist international market access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply cost effective criteria with rigor to all regulatory change proposals</li> </ul>	<b>Regulatory Impact Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RIS processes on all regulatory change proposals</li> <li>• Major RIS on access and energy matters</li> </ul>
<b>Consistent regulatory framework</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress harmonisation strategy</li> </ul>	<b>Harmonisation Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product certification –CodeMark</li> <li>• Phase out of earlier product certification scheme</li> <li>• Contribution to Development Assessment Forum reform agenda.</li> <li>• Support for electronic building assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable and accessible buildings</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance energy efficiency measures</li> <li>• BCA access change proposal finalised and put to Board</li> </ul>	<b>Building Sustainability Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Efficiency in non-residential commercial buildings</li> <li>• Energy efficiency in multi-residential buildings</li> <li>• Energy efficiency in houses (5-star)</li> <li>• Accessibility – DDA Standard</li> <li>• Accessible housing</li> <li>• Salinity</li> <li>• Protection of the built environment from threats and natural disasters</li> <li>• ASBEC Secretariat</li> </ul>
<b>Respected high-profile domestic and international leader</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International opportunities for industry realised</li> </ul>	<b>Lead International Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan/Australia Regulatory Cooperation</li> <li>• Japanese Evaluation Body</li> <li>• Trans Tasman Regulatory Reform Council</li> <li>• Preparation to host 2005 IRCC Global Policy Summit</li> <li>• International market access</li> <li>• International Code and research collaboration, with CIB and individual countries</li> <li>• Hong Kong Fire Code</li> </ul>
<b>Performance based funding</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift non-Government funding share</li> </ul>	<b>Alternative Funding Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABCB Publishing program</li> <li>• ABCB Web based program</li> <li>• Awareness and Promotion of BCA</li> <li>• Promotion and management BCA subscriber arrangements</li> </ul>
<b>Board of decision makers</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABCB well placed to advance regulatory reform agenda</li> <li>• BCA review outcomes realised</li> <li>• Board decision on sustainability implemented</li> </ul>	<b>Directions Setting Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-2005 Research study by Productivity Commission and handling of outcomes</li> <li>• Strategic Review of the BCA</li> <li>• Sustainability – Direction setting</li> </ul>





## ATTACHMENT B - PROJECT OUTPUTS FOR 2004/05

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### CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF REGULATORY PRINCIPLES

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#### BCA & GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

##### Output

- Deliver a 1 May update for both volumes of the BCA and the Guide with a 6 month lead-in period.

##### *Volumes One and Two of the BCA*

The BCA, as the national technical code, must be maintained to ensure it keeps pace with new technology, incorporates results of research, is cost effective, and reflects best practice where possible. The aims are to:

- Produce annual updates (including updating of referenced Standards) to both volumes of the BCA and Guide, incorporating new technology and research results.
- Improve BCA wording to reduce anomalies and differences in interpretation.
- Reduce State and Territory variations in the BCA.
- Ensure cost effective technical regulation.
- Continual review of both volumes to reflect user needs.

##### *Guide to the BCA*

The Guide to the BCA has been developed to assist industry by explaining the intent and background to Volume One of the BCA. Volume Two was developed with considerable commentary integral to the text and, as such, a separate guide was unnecessary. The Guide was released in 1998 and is being maintained to mirror the development of the BCA. The maintenance process includes:

- changes to reflect BCA updates; and
- inclusion of additional content to explain issues that the Guide does not currently address.

#### AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK AND STANDARDS/BCA ALIGNMENT

##### Output

- Ensure new and revised BCA referenced documents are suitable for regulatory use.
- Manage and coordinate comment and voting on BCA referenced documents.
- Progressively incorporate public policy matters contained in referenced documents into the BCA
- Manage the Standards Australia/ABCB relationship.

The BCA references Australian Standards and other documents in its deemed-to-satisfy provisions. The ABCB participates on Standards Australia technical and coordination committees to ensure that documents produced are compatible with the BCA and comply with the principles of good regulatory practice, including justification and cost effectiveness. This is achieved by application of the ABCB's protocol for the preparation of BCA referenced documents.

It has been determined that the appropriate location for public policy matters is in the BCA rather than in technical standards. This project involves identification of public policy in existing standards and facilitating their review and transfer to the BCA.

The ABCB and Standards Australia have signed an MOU to formalise the organisation's working relationship. Under the MOU, regular meetings are held between ABCB and Standards Australia management and staff, and the CEO and Chairman of Standards Australia are provided with the opportunity to address the Board each year.

#### REVIEW OF BCA DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

##### Output

- Review 2003/04 Technical Validation Panel (TVP) Trial and make recommendations to the Board.
- Review the BCA development processes and make recommendations to the Board.

The TVP has been trialled on BCA2004 and BCA2005 to compliment the work of the BCC and the ABCB Office. Upon completion of BCA technical change proposals by the ABCB Office, project specific working groups from the TVP have reviewed the technical content. The purpose of the TVP

review is to free up BCC resources from the increasingly time consuming review of detailed technical matters and to allow the State and Territory Administrations to concentrate on priority regulatory and administrative issues, both at a national and local level.

TVP members, comprising Building Certifiers, Engineers, Architects, Builders, and Access, Acoustic and Energy Consultants were nominated for their experience and expertise. The Office coordinated the TVP and associated working groups.

These new arrangements are to be evaluated in 2005 to determine if they benefit the Community and Industry by providing further certainty in the amendment cycle, BCA amendments that are relevant and timely, and confidence that technical changes have been subject to quality assurance checks that are consistent with industry and international practice. On completion of the evaluation, recommendations will be developed and forwarded to the Board for consideration.

The diversity and extent of the ABCB work plan has considerable implications for State and Territory Administrations and Building Codes Committee industry members in responding to, and consulting on, ABCB initiatives. This impact needs to be effectively managed if outcomes from the work plan are to be fully realised.

It is proposed to hold discussions with Building Code Committee members. The purpose of these discussions will be to reach agreement on priority and timing of technical development work supporting the Board's work plan, and on the respective roles of the ABCB Office, the Building Codes Committee and the Technical Validation Panel. From these discussions, recommendations will be developed and forwarded to the Board for consideration.

## **WATER FOR FIRE FIGHTING**

### **Output**

- A 'state of play' report on water agency policies on providing a consistent and reliable supply of water to buildings that is suitable for fire fighting purposes.

The BCA relies on the provision of a consistent and reliable supply of water that is adequate for fire fighting purposes in buildings. In the past, it has been an accepted community service obligation that water agencies would provide water from water agency mains to fight building fires.

Due to a shift in the operational structure of water agencies, it has been questioned whether this practice still occurs. The responsibility for delivering water reticulation has passed from government agencies to government businesses or companies. With this change has come an apparent change in priorities, with issues such as health and quality of drinking water, economic delivery of water reticulation systems, and water conservation taking on a greater emphasis. This repositioning of priorities has the potential to undermine the current basis on which life safety and protection of adjoining property from fire is provided.

In light of this level of doubt and the potential effect to BCA requirements, it is necessary to investigate whether the practice of providing water for fire fighting in buildings is currently being addressed by the water authorities.

## **BCA FEEDBACK MECHANISM REVIEW**

### **Output**

- Process for receiving feedback and monitoring code compliance issues.

Recent experience in New Zealand with housing watertightness problems has highlighted the need for a robust national system of receiving feedback on code compliance issues. The Board requested the Office to design and implement a system that formalised feedback and monitoring of code issues to enable a proactive approach to be adopted on emerging issues. This will require linkages with state and territory based agencies that have responsibility for dealing with code compliance issues.

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## **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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### **ABCB NATIONAL CONFERENCE PLANNING**

#### **Output**

- Preparation and organisation to host a successful National Conference in September 2005 in which delegates will hear presentations by industry experts and be part of thought-provoking interactive workshops

The ABCB's fourth National Conference will be held from 11-15 September 2005 in Queensland. The level of involvement in the lead up to this event is extensive and includes gaining sponsorship, contract management, formalising presentations/speakers/papers/program, ensuring high level IT/AV capabilities, printing and publishing in both electronic and hard copy formats, processing Expressions of Interest/Registrations, coordinating social programs in conjunction with transport, sufficient accommodation options, financial accountability and an intense marketing and promotions campaign.

### **ABCB AND OTHER SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS FOR INDUSTRY**

#### **Output**

- Involvement in sponsoring industry conferences and trade expos as appropriate
- Delivery of seminars/workshops on changes to the Building Code of Australia.

The ABCB participates in a variety of industry conferences, seminars and information forums. Its participation ranges from hosting/facilitating events, speaking opportunities, to chairing workshops on changes to the BCA.

### **NATIONAL TECHNICAL SUMMIT**

#### **Output**

- Facilitate a National Technical Summit that will maximise the involvement of industry in the ABCB's emerging and contemporary regulatory reform issues and actively seek support and direct input into the Work Plan projects.

Annual National Technical Summits are a proven way of obtaining wide input into the ABCB work plan and in promoting the work undertaken by the ABCB. The 2004 Summit will be held in July and attendance will be open to all BCC members as well as nominated members from industry.

### **INTERNATIONAL FIRE ENGINEERING GUIDELINES**

#### **Output**

- Publish International Fire Engineering Guidelines

In November 2001, the ABCB published the Fire Safety Engineering Guidelines. This guideline was primarily developed for use in Australia. The ABCB, together with the Canadian Codes Centre of the National Research Council of Canada, the New Zealand Building Industry Authority and the United States International Codes Council, have collaborated to revise the ABCB Fire Safety Engineering Guidelines into an International Guideline for use within Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America.

The objective of the project is the establishment of a set of Fire Engineering Guidelines that reflect current knowledge in this area and meet the joint needs of the participating countries. The intellectual property of the document will be retained by the ABCB.

## **NON-REGULATORY GUIDELINES**

### **Output**

- ABCB Guideline publications on sound insulation, telecommunications access and construction on sloping sites construction in a non-mandatory format

This project aims to provide best practice advice and guidance on topics that, for a variety of reasons, have been deemed inappropriate for regulation.

The guideline document on Hillside Construction has been developed by IEAust and the first draft will soon be distributed for stakeholder comment. Publication is expected in September 2004.

The guideline document on sound insulation has been developed in association with the amendments to the regulatory requirements. A second draft is being distributed for comment and publication is expected in July 2004

A national guideline on access for digital communications will provide valuable advice to industry on physical access and spatial requirements for the efficient distribution of telecommunications to and within multi-tenanted buildings. The guideline will be based upon the successful digital river© guidelines from Victoria. It is expected that the draft will be developed during the latter half of 2004 with publication expected in mid 2005

Guideline documents on personal safety and waste management are currently on hold pending reallocation of resources to the projects.

## **SUPPORT FOR S/T ADMINISTRATIONS, SECONDMENT TO OFFICE AND INDUSTRY**

### **Output**

- Provide short-term resources to State and Territory Administrations, and promote officer exchanges.

State and Territory Administrations have, from time to time, identified the need for short-term assistance in responding to building regulatory reform issues due to limited resources. In the past, the ABCB Office has provided staff on short term secondment to the ACT, Tasmanian, New South Wales, Northern Territory and Queensland Administrations. The provision of ABCB Office staff on short-term secondment assists to progress the national reform agenda. Opportunities for exchanges with industry and overseas experts will also be sought.

## **JAS-ANZ ACCREDITATION FOR ABCB OFFICE**

### **Output**

- The development of a business management system against which the office is to be audited on a regular basis.

This project will involve the review, revision and audit of existing office management systems. The benefits of an audited management process to the ABCB include credibility of the ABCB, both nationally and internationally enhanced; more efficient and effective office procedures; and the Board, States and Territory Administrations and other stakeholders being better assured of the integrity of ABCB processes and objectives.

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## **EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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## **ONE STOP SHOP**

### **Output**

- Increased accessibility on education and training opportunities for industry.

This is a web based service of which the centre piece is a searchable data base of extended and short courses across a broad range of building related occupations. The service provides a consolidated list of

current accredited course information that can be refined to respond to individual searches using geographic and occupational criteria. The service aims to support only those extended courses that are recognised by industry. Direct links are available to the TAFEs and universities, as well as other related information including key industry organisations, minimum education requirements and registration/licensing contact points.

## **WORKING WITH PERFORMANCE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Output**

- An updated and refreshed Working with Performance Course.

The course is delivered via distance education and is designed to raise awareness levels and increase confidence in dealing with performance provisions within the building regulatory framework. Throughout the course, a methodology is outlined for applying and assessing building solutions in a performance based regulatory environment. The course also provides an understanding of the relevant processes in working with performance provisions and highlights the various systems which are available for use. Externally assessable case studies are contained in the course as well as self help questions to ensure that students are able to assess their own progress and understanding.

Further enhancement of intellectual property in the Working with Performance Kit is to be undertaken with the intent of having a range of products that can be adopted into existing education programs and enhanced for delivery by key players in the industry.

## **BCA ADVISORY SERVICE**

### **Output**

- Advice to assist in consistent application of the BCA
- To assist in increasing awareness of the application of the BCA.

The service is housed by the ABCB Office and enables the general public to make enquiries regarding the application of the BCA. It also provides a means of raising the profile of the ABCB through having a more 'public' persona.

This is a complementary service to provide support to the BCA. It provides a means for practitioners as a first line of contact for answering general enquiries and also provides the office with direct feedback on pressures industry is facing within the building industry. Research and reviews received from industry and government stakeholders illustrated a need for ongoing advice to be available to industry.

## **STUDENT INDUSTRY-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM**

### **Output**

- A learning program recruiting one or more students per annum to raise awareness of the ABCB, the use of the BCA and the regulatory environment.

The IBL Program seeks applications from students in construction related courses where an industry-based learning placement is required. Placements are for 12 months in the Office. The student has a structured work program in technical, administration, marketing and education areas. Opportunities for future placement in the ABCB, industry or the administrations may also be possible.

## **REFINEMENT OF EDUCATION STRATEGY**

### **Output**

- A refined education strategy that delivers increased uptake and awareness of the BCA.

Over recent years the ABCB have had a range of products and activities to assist in its uptake of sales and creating greater awareness of the Building Code of Australia. Stakeholder feedback has indicated that although there has been reasonable success, the ABCB could deliver greater benefits by focusing on the areas of ABCB's core capabilities – that is the marketing and promotion of the BCA through dissemination and awareness activities.

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## RESEARCH TARGETING STRATEGY

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### CRC ON CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION

#### Output

- Collaboration on research initiatives
- Significant progress on the project 'Sensory Accessibility'

An aim of the CRC is to ensure the industry better uses its resources and raises efficiency and effectiveness, making the Australian Industry as a whole more competitive both nationally and internationally. The CRC's vision is to increase national prosperity through more effective and innovative construction and management of sustainable built assets for the whole life - from business need, design and construction through to ownership, asset management and reuse.

The CRC is a collaborative venture between 20 industry, government and research partners from across Australia with cash and in-kind commitments to the value of \$ 64.5 million over 7 years. The ABCB is a core participant and is contributing \$ 50,000 in cash and \$12,500 in-kind per annum. The CRC is made up of 3 programs. The Research Program (Program 1) comprises of 3 sub-programs. The sub-program Sustainable Built Assets is the most relevant program to the ABCB.

The need for research on way finding for the blind or vision impaired was identified through the ABCB's development of a DDA Premises Standard/revised BCA. This research need is being progressed through the CRC process and will draw on way finding initiatives planned for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

### BUSHFIRE CRC

#### Output

- Collaboration on research initiatives
- Research to inform changes to construction requirements for buildings in bushfire prone areas

The formation of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and the provision of \$25 million Commonwealth funding was announced by the Minister for Science in December 2002. The Bushfire CRC began work in July 2003. The mission of the Bushfire CRC is to manage bushfire risk in an economically and ecologically sustainable way.

The CRC is a large, ambitious venture supported by 34 industry, government, education and research partners from across Australia with cash and in-kind commitments to the value of \$ 113 million over 7 years. The ABCB is a core participant and is contributing \$ 100,000 in cash and \$16,000 in-kind per annum.

The CRC is made up of 5 programs. Program 4 – Protection of People and Property is the most relevant program to the ABCB.

### STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

#### Output

- Market program and procure submissions
- Provide funding and assistance for proposals which provide value for money and could assist with building regulatory reform.

The purpose of the program is to support student research which will assist in the reform agenda of the ABCB. The selection of student research projects is a competitive process. To date 4 proposals have been funded.

## **CONTRACTED RESEARCH**

### **Output**

- Significant progress on research in the area of evacuation for people with a disability.
- Conversion of research into regulatory outcomes.
- Further development of the fire risk model
- Report on the contribution of buildings to the risk of slips, trips and falls
- Research to support the ABCB work program

This work involves managing a research program that supports the further development of the BCA and covers areas that offer prospects of substantial cost benefits to industry. This project enables the ABCB to take the lead role in project management of its research requirements, to ensure that research outcomes are suitable for regulatory use and delivered on time and within budget.

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## **REGULATORY IMPACT STRATEGY**

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### **Output**

- RISs on access Premises Standard, Access Protocol and Energy Efficiency provisions in Class 2-4 buildings to be finalised
- New RIS on Energy Efficiency provisions in Class 5-9 buildings, revised Energy Efficiency provisions in Class 1 and 10 buildings, and on AS3959 Bushfire Standard
- Regulatory impact analysis on emerging issues, such as sustainability, salt attack and flooding
- Regulatory impact assessments on each and every BCA amendment

The aim of this activity is the production of technically sound and economically cost-effective amendments to both Volumes of the BCA.

Under the COAG Agreement on national standard setting, the ABCB is required to prepare a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) and invite public comment on the impact assessment. In order to meet its obligations under the Agreement, the ABCB has developed a model that has been endorsed by the Industry Commission, for performing the impact assessment. The model identifies which proposals need to undergo detailed financial and socio-economic analysis, hence avoiding unnecessary assessment.

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## **HARMONISATION STRATEGY**

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## **PRODUCT CERTIFICATION - CODEMARK**

### **Output**

- Seek agreement from BIA & State/Territory Administrations to the final documentation.
- Finalise and implement marketing strategy.
- Implement CodeMark Scheme.
- Audit and accredit CodeMark Certification Bodies (undertaken by JAS-ANZ with ABCB technical support).

The ABCB/BIA Scheme for the certification of building products has been developed to provide New Zealand and State/Territory governments, local government, building professionals, designers, product manufacturers and builders with a system of product certification that:

- Is responsive to Government and Industry needs for a reliable, timely and cost effective source of recognition of compliance of products /systems with the provisions of the BCA.
- Provides Governments with the necessary degree of confidence to endorse the proposal for industry organisations to deliver this service to the broader industry.
- Is commercially viable for participating industry organisations.

This project is the establishment of a third party Product Certification Scheme. It currently involves finalisation of the draft documentation following discussions with stakeholders. Key tasks are: final modifications to documentation, finalisation of the marketing strategy, establishment of agreements with prospective Certification bodies and implementation of the new scheme.

## **PHASE OUT OF EARLIER PRODUCT CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

### **Output**

- Expedite the five outstanding applications under the existing scheme in preparation for transition to the new scheme

The Australian Building Products and Systems Certification Scheme was established to overcome difficulties in gaining acceptance of new and innovative products and systems in the building industry. The scheme certifies building products and systems as being in compliance with specific provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) Volumes One and Two. The scheme is administered by the ABCB with assessment of all applications being carried out by the Australian Certification Committee (ACC). The Committee has representation from all State and Territory governments and the ABCB.

The ABCB is working with the members of the ACC to expedite the assessment of the five outstanding applications.

## **DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT FORUM**

The ABCB Office will actively contribute to the national Development Assessment Forum (DAF) with the following outputs:

### **Outputs**

- A model development assessment process;
- Documented leading practice;
- Final recommendations to Ministers
- Protocol for electronic development assessments

DAF was created to identify leading edge approaches to development assessment in Australia. This includes building approval, assessment and approval.

The Forum has now devised a framework for best practice based on leading practice principles, includes nine leading practices and leading practice logic for decision making. In 2004 DAF will commence stakeholder consultation on the framework.

Of particular interest to the ABCB, there will soon be a DAF Protocol for electronic development assessments. A cost-benefit analysis on this initiative shows very attractive net benefits for industry and consumers. ABCB may consider publishing and promoting this protocol if and when approached by DAF to do so.

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## **BUILDING SUTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

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### **ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN NON-RESIDENTIAL COMMERICAL BUILDINGS**

#### **Outputs**

- Regulation Document containing energy efficiency measures for Class 5-9 buildings.
- Regulation Impact Statement on energy efficiency proposal for Class 5-9 buildings.
- Draft Protocol for Energy Analysis Software.

This project has been instigated at the request of the Australian Government as part of its initiative to limit greenhouse gas reductions. Energy efficiency measures for Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings were developed and released for public comment during 2003/04, and are scheduled to be introduced into BCA 2005. Energy measures for other commercial buildings will be released for public comment during 2004, followed by a draft Regulation Impact Statement on the proposals.

A Protocol for Energy Analysis Software will also be developed. The Protocol will aim to define the essential requirements of software used to meet the BCA energy provisions for commercial buildings.



## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN MULTI-RESIDENTIAL**

### **Output**

- Energy efficiency measures for Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings implemented in BCA 2005.
- A new section in the Guide to the BCA on energy efficiency for Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings.
- Draft Protocol for Energy Analysis Software.

This project has been instigated at the request of the Australian Government as part of its initiative to limit greenhouse gas reductions. Energy efficiency measures for Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings were developed and released for public comment during 2003/04, and are scheduled to be introduced into BCA 2005. Energy measures for other commercial buildings will be released for public comment during 2004, followed by a draft Regulation Impact Statement on the proposals.

A Protocol for Energy Analysis Software will also be developed. The Protocol will aim to define the essential requirements of software used to meet the BCA energy provisions for commercial buildings.

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HOUSES (5-STAR)**

### **Output**

- Regulation Document containing revised BCA housing energy efficiency provisions.
- Regulation Impact Statement on energy efficiency proposals for houses.

Energy efficiency measures for houses were introduced into the BCA on 1 January 2003. The Board decided late in 2003 that the measures should be reviewed and the stringency increased, possibly to 5 stars. Proposals to reflect an increased stringency will be developed during 2004 and a Regulation Document released for public comment. A draft Regulation Impact Statement will also be prepared on the new proposals.

## **ACCESSIBILITY – DDA STANDARD**

### **Output**

- A final draft of the DDA's Disability Standard for Access to Premises and accompanying Guidelines
- A final version of A Process for Administering Building Access 'the Protocol' for consideration by the States and Territories

Maintain the ongoing consultation with the property industry, disability sector, HREOC, A-GD and Administrations to develop the final draft of the DDA's Disability Standards for Access to Premises and supporting documentation.

## **ACCESSIBLE HOUSING**

### **Output**

- An authoritative report on accessible housing in Australia
- Analysis of public comments of a draft report

The report will examine the current and future supply and demand for accessible housing, the costs and benefits associated with different levels of accessibility, review local and overseas policy, and consider a range of strategies to improve accessible housing.

## **SALINITY**

### **Output**

- Public consultation on Discussion Paper
- Develop Regulation Document/Regulatory Impact Statement for proposed BCA amendment

Damage caused to buildings by salt attack and acid sulfate soils is a growing problem affecting Australia's building stock. It is primarily caused by the construction of buildings in saline areas and areas containing acid sulfate soils. The ABCB have prepared a Discussion Paper for consultation which is due to be released in June 2004. The outcomes from the Discussion Paper will assist in the development of a

regulatory proposal. Once the regulatory proposal is finalised, a Regulation Document/Regulatory Impact Statement will be produced for public consultation.

## **PROTECTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT FROM THREATS AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

### **Output**

- A progress report as required on the possible role of the building code and building legislation in protection of critical infrastructure and iconic structures.
- Reference a revised earthquake standard in the BCA
- Reference a revised standard for building in bushfire-prone areas in the BCA
- Participate in Bushfire CRC
- Release of a discussion paper on construction in flood-prone areas, for public comment
- Release of a guideline document on hillside construction

The ABCB Office is participating in workshops to improve the protection from criminal and terrorist actions against critical infrastructure and iconic structures. It should be noted that leading experts in this field have already identified a key role for the national building code in this endeavour. The ABCB must contribute to the debate on the type and level of protection justified and its cost and other impacts.

This work is a response to a report to COAG that recognised the role of the BCA in natural hazard mitigation by prescribing construction requirements. The report to COAG made recommendations that priority be given to reviewing the code and standards in respect of mitigating the effects of natural hazards. This work is ongoing, in conjunction with several other organisations including Engineers Australia, Emergency Management Australia and Standards Australia.

## **AUSTRALIAN SUSTAINABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL SECRETARIAT**

### **Output**

- ASBEC established in its own right in order to provide a common voice for industry on sustainable built environment issues.

The hosting of the ASBEC secretariat by the ABCB Office including the incorporation of ASBEC provides ABCB and other government agencies with a ready made industry peak organisation with which sustainability issues can be progressed. This is a strong demonstration of industry leadership.

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## **LEAD INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY**

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### **JAPANESE EVALUATION BODY**

#### **Output**

- Finalise and implement marketing strategy.
- Finalise the development of supporting documentation for prospective applicants.
- Ensure system is fully operational

The Australian Government with the assistance of the ABCB Office has been recognised by the Japanese Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport as an Evaluation Body. This enables the ABCB Office to evaluate building products and systems for compliance with the Building Standard Law of Japan. We will be working closely with CSIRO and other agencies to trial particular products which will provide valuable export opportunities for the Australian building industry.

Key tasks include the finalisation and implementation of the marketing strategy and the evaluation of a trial applicant through the process.

## **OTHER**

### **Output**

- Create other opportunities to assist industry to access the Japanese market and gain a better understanding of the Japanese regulatory reform initiatives.
- Ensure ABCB is an integral member of the International Regulatory Community.

- Develop building codes and regulatory systems, in the Asian region, to facilitate trade and services opportunities.

The ABCB is continuing to strengthen and align the Trans Tasman market. The Trans-Tasman Building Regulatory Reform Council was formed and met in March 2004 for the purpose of fostering a common understanding of the building regulatory environment and to promote information exchange. Ultimately this should lead towards a more consistent building regulatory environment between Australia and New Zealand. The next meeting is scheduled for June 2004.

ABCB will retain its presence on the Inter-jurisdictional Regulatory Collaboration Committee (IRCC) and International Council for Construction research and Innovation (CIB) to work with its international partners in focusing on leading edge regulatory reform issues through collaboration in research and development. The office will host and facilitate the 2<sup>nd</sup> IRCC Global Policy Summit in September 2005.

ABCB also continues to work with countries to try and improve regulatory reform and move towards improved international market access on performance based regulatory systems to industry. This includes:

- ABCB's involvement in the development of a performance-based fire code for Hong Kong; a first draft is envisaged to be available in 2004;
- the involvement of the ABCB, at the request of the Japanese, on the World Federation of Technical Assessment Organisations Committee (WFTAO). The Committee is a collection of 18 countries looking at product certification issues of mutual interest. These meetings will be held annually; and
- the ABCB, working in conjunction with City University of Hong Kong, for the purpose of developing a report for the Hong Kong Government on what type of standards environment would be best suited for Hong Kong. Expectations are that discussions will assist in the establishment of a standards environment for Hong Kong.

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## **ALTERNATIVE FUNDING STRATEGY**

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### **ABCB PUBLISHING PROGRAM**

#### **Output**

- BCA 2004 product pricing strategy reviewed and assessed
- Uptake of BCA subscriptions reviewed and assessed
- Meetings held with a minimum of 4 industry associations regarding bulk sales/distribution opportunities
- BCA 2005 product pricing strategy established
- Subscription renewal dates reviewed and assessed with regard to establishing a May and November subscription status strategy
- Development and launch of the International Fire Safety Engineering Guidelines (as an electronic and print based service)

The 2004/05 Publishing program will see an evaluation of the BCA 2004 product release, product uptake and pricing strategy. Opportunities to increase BCA access, usage and sales will be investigated through meetings with industry associations. The benefits of introducing a May and November renewal date system will also be investigated. Development of the Fire Engineering Guidelines is due for 2004/05.

### **ABCB WEB BASED PROGRAM**

#### **Output**

- Increase functionality and search capabilities of the BCA on CD Rom to meet market demands
- Promotion of MiniCode Generator to the education and training market segment
- New product development protocols established
- Overall success of ABCB Web based program reviewed and assessed
- Future ABCB Web based program strategy developed

During 2004/05 the ABCB web based program will ensure all current and future product developments can be assessed and proceeded with through a clearly defined production and development strategy.

## **AWARENESS AND PROMOTION OF BCA**

### **Output**

- New Principal Publisher and Third Party Publisher service standards established and agreed to
- Formal September quarterly meetings held with each Publisher as a first step in maintaining relationships, improving reporting processes and identifying product marketing opportunities
- Formal arrangements established for the sharing of BCA sales & cancellation statistics
- Formal review undertaken of Principal Publisher performance (production, management, sales & service standards)
- Audit requirements for all publishers reviewed and assessed for future action
- Revamped ABRB launch and distributed along with new corporate material coordinated with BCA 2005 livery
- Marketing and Communications Strategy implemented to enhance the ABCB's positioning in the marketplace and in the minds of stakeholders

A number of activities will be undertaken during 2004/05 to monitor Third Party Publisher sales and activities relating to the BCA. Independent auditing will be undertaken along with the scheduling of formal regular meetings. Finalised protocol amalgamated into the JASANZ Business Management system and implemented by staff enhancing professionalism and unity.

## **PROMOTION AND MANAGEMENT OF BCA SUBSCRIBER ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Output**

- Stage 2 of the Content Management System and Single Source publishing program RFT process completed
- Stage 2 development of the Content Management System & Single Source publishing program completed to provide for independent management of BCA subscriber information
- Individual subscriber access to contact and subscription details now available via the ABCB web site as a result of Stage 2 Content Management System development
- New Independent Subscription Management facility and single source publishing system in preparation for the next Principal Publisher contract period
- CanPrint subscriber upload processes improved through the development of strict uploading protocols

2004/05 will see the finalisation of the Content Management System & Single Source publishing project with the writing of an RFT and subsequent IT development to be undertaken. The finalisation of this project will see an independent system for the management of all BCA subscriptions and production processes.

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## **DIRECTIONS SETTING STRATEGY**

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### **Output**

- ABCB well placed to advance regulatory reform agenda
- BCA review outcomes realised
- Board decision on sustainability implemented

### **Description**

Future directions for the ABCB, regulatory reform generally and the BCA itself will all come under close scrutiny during the year.