



NCC READINESS SEPTEMBER 2023

NOTE: This survey was conducted prior to the government's announcement, following extensive advocacy from Master Builders, to delay the start of the energy efficiency changes until 1 May 2024. The livable housing changes will still commence 1 October 2023.

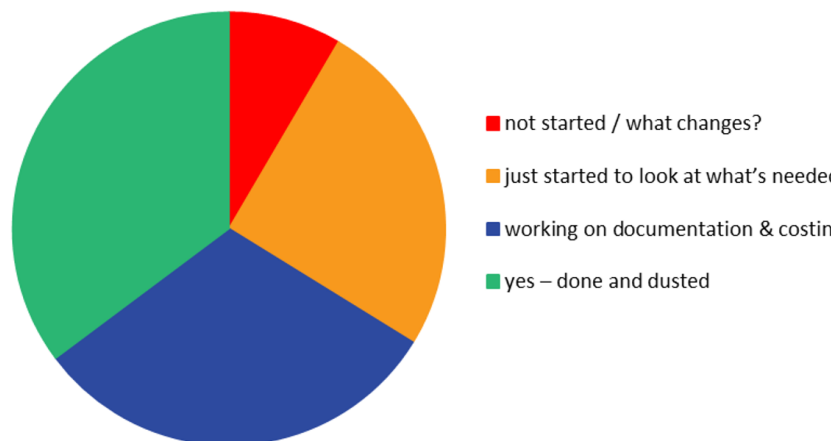
Master Builders surveyed members back at the start of the year asking if they were ready for the changes in NCC 2022.

Now with the first tranche of changes live (since 1 May) and the second round covering energy efficiency (since delayed until 1 May 2024) and accessible/livable housing nearly upon us (1 October) it was timely to check in again.

The latest survey results showed that, while there has been some progress, there is still much that needs to be done for the industry to be ready for the NCC changes.

Unsurprisingly there has been a significant shift in the proportion of respondents who have implemented the 1 May changes, with one-third having put in place the necessary changes.

incorporating 1 May changes
(main body of the NCC)



Worryingly, five months into implementation and 8 per cent have not even begun this work.

When it comes to the second tranche of changes (the addition of livable housing and an increase to energy efficiency stringency) there is much more that needs to be done. Only 14 per cent of respondents reported being ready to go, while a third are yet to even turn their mind to it.

incorporating livable housing
and energy efficiency changes



Many don't feel that they have the necessary information to be able to make the changes.

Not enough definitive information on the proposed changes to make informed decisions.

No one will give a straight answer as to how we can incorporate them.

We don't have enough information about how to achieve the 7 star rating. We can't get clear picture.

Can't get clear picture on how to achieve accessibility for granny flat in backyard.

Can't get clearly defined solutions to house on stumps... feels like it's not even considered.

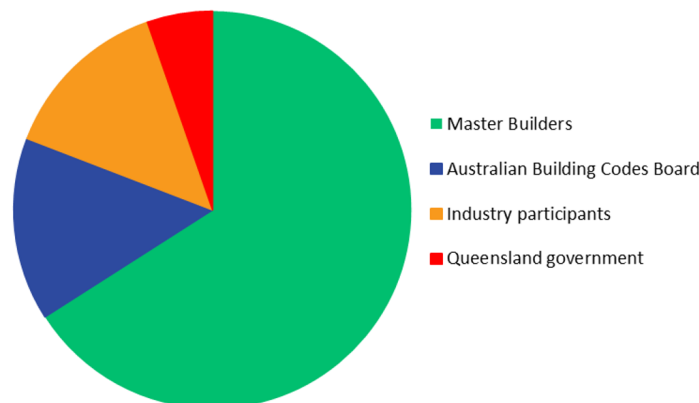
There is absolute confusion between certifiers' and architects' interpretations of the Code.

I can't see how it will work so I won't be building anything until I see some hard evidence it can be done.

Exacerbating the problem is more respondents are getting their information on the changes from others in the industry – certifiers, suppliers, designers, other builders and trades – than the Queensland government.

Word of mouth and rumours increase the chance of the wrong information being circulated. Fortunately, the majority of respondents are getting their information directly from Master Builders.

source of information on the changes



Technical Problems

As industry works through the changes, the technical problems are becoming more apparent.

This is particularly the case for small dwellings (e.g. granny flats), dwellings on smaller lots and raised houses (e.g. Queenslanders).

Most of my projects are on stumps. A lot of cost on entry to building and insulation.

Don't know if suspended homes will comply and can no longer use deemed to satisfy method.

Half of the proposed changes are almost impossible to implement on the small blocks that are provided in the new estates.

Extremely difficult to achieve 7 stars for granny flats due to existing infrastructure in backyards.

The new requirements for wet areas, covering waterproofing, falls to waste and livable housing, continue to prove most challenging.

Wet area changes don't fit in reality, falls and doors all need looking into.

The waterproofing requirements have become more complicated and harder to comply with.

The detail for the new waterproofing requirements and increased potential for failed, damaged waterproofing.

The falls in the bathroom won't work the way it is proposed.

Gaining appropriate fall in bathrooms whilst still allowing for a flat transit from hallway into bathrooms.

Just understanding it is a challenge.

At the moment everyone has a different idea of right or wrong. We need a set procedure to follow so everyone does it the same way.

There were concerns about the weatherproofing of the step-free threshold when it was the dwelling entrance.

We have concerns relating to weatherproofing with step-free thresholds.

Renovations are another area that is proving technically challenging.

To achieve fall additional bedding is needed. This results not only in cost and additional time for works but in step-in threshold at the doorway, creating a trip hazard and an accessibility issue.

In older highset houses, the floor and stumps are getting additional load, that it hasn't been designed for.

Some clients have decided to take work elsewhere to unlicensed workers in order to avoid the changes.

Challenges

Managing trades and ensuring that they are across the changes is a key challenge under the new requirements.

Biggest issue is subbies not being aware of the changes.

Ensuring my subcontractors are also aware of the required changes and passed down through their tradesman as well.

Trade sequencing exacerbated by skint availability.

Then there is the challenge getting their clients to accept the changes to designs and letting them know that their house is going to cost more.

Trying to get a workable balance between client's requests and what NCC standards dictate.

Passing on the additional cost to clients and explaining the requirements to them.

It's not what homeowners want; they don't want splits in all their bathroom floor tiles nor do they want a bathroom without a floor waste.

We are having issues with pricing as construction has already been hit with years of price increases and heartache, now we have to add all this to our pricing. Clients are not receiving it well.

Costs are high enough with current housing crisis and we are already getting pushbacks from clients for the cost of jobs without these added costs.

More that government needs to be doing

More training and information

More training and information were the main ask, starting with better technical detail to understand how to implement the changes.

More real-life examples would be helpful.

Government should be sending regular information updates (as Master builders do) to all registered builders of proposed changes and dates these changes are taking place.

Some short YouTube videos covering the changes would be handy.

Simplify and make available all information available as required to meet each change.

Information to builders and certifiers is not complete. Still waiting on clarification requirements on multiple technical issues.

Help provide solutions to the contradictions in the new regulations. Explain how to make a two-story home, a house on stumps comply.

The government should also inform the general public of the changes required and provide realistic cost advice.

Make it more available to the public (clients).

Inform the wider population!

The public need to know how these changes will inevitably affect the cost of their new build or renovation.

More liaising with builders as to what the actual increased costs are going to be. Home buyers don't believe that these are legitimate additional costs.

Are the architects and building designers aware of all the changes and will they / can they incorporate them into plans that are then put in front of us to actually build off?

Get the Code and tools right

And there are changes that are still needed to ensure that the new rules achieve their intended outcome.

Government should have ensured software for 7 stars was available months before 1 October, not weeks.

Give more exemptions around existing housing secondary dwellings/granny flats to help with housing crisis.

We need guidelines and solutions as well as case studies for existing buildings.

Government could ask the builders/workers for more input.

I think the Government needed to make the changes much clearer and reduce the number of evaluation pathways for falls and waterproofing. It's unnecessarily confusing.

Delay the changes

There was a call to delay the changes given we are in a housing crisis and we do not yet have all the information.

More time and wait till after the housing crisis.

Delay implementation until supply lines established.

Delay until we have all the answers.

Provide a much longer introduction period so that we all sing from the same page, especially architects and certifiers. Because of PI insurance, they all err on the side of very expensive caution and invariably adopt the worst-case scenario.

Bring them in slowly over the course of a number of years. Queensland is the only state doing all of it. Ludicrous.



In conclusion

We all just require sensible answers and solutions to the changes that the government are trying to force and give a reasonable explanation as to why they are making these (in my opinion) irrational changes, especially given what we have all just endured or still enduring.

The government is bringing changes into our industry that have not clearly been thought through. In my opinion, there is limited information on the changes, little or no schematics, sketches and detailed drawings of areas of concern. This missing information etc., will just lead to more confusion and create bigger issues than we already have within our industry. To roll out these changes with the limited or nil information that I have seen to date is unfair and unjust to not only the consumer but the entire chain within the building and construction industry.

This is a major impact for Queensland. We need to hit the pause button.