

The DMN Roundup

DESIGN MATTERS
NATIONAL
26 June 2025



ESSENTIAL UPDATES

Building on our Issue 16 coverage, this week brings critical developments in Victoria's building regulatory landscape, ongoing concerns about fire safety compliance, and continued pressure from cost crises affecting the construction sector. The Housing Industry Association announces new leadership as foreign capital continues its exodus from the Australian housing market. Meanwhile, Western Australia's population hits a major milestone, and the federal government's regulatory reform agenda gains momentum. A new building commission tops Victorian reform proposals, and Master Builders pushes for productivity reforms to address Australia's housing supply challenges.

Victorian building reforms continue

Following our Issue 16 coverage of Victoria's Building Legislation Amendment (Buyer Protections) Bill 2025 becoming law, Victoria continues its comprehensive reform agenda. A new building commission along with reforms to state building legislation are among proposals slated for Victoria. The Victorian Government has proposed a series of reforms to the Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995, a move welcomed by the industry.

Building surveyors bypass tougher Victorian licensing with WA loophole

Continuing the regulatory challenges we've been tracking, a massive share of the state's surveyors are no longer being registered in Victoria, prompting fears poorly qualified workers are being tasked to catch out unsafe buildings. This development underscores the importance of national consistency in building practitioner standards.

The Victorian Government is also reviewing the Professional Engineers Registration Act 2019, giving engineers, industry bodies and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide input.

For building designers preparing for these changes, our upcoming Building Practitioner Pre-Registration Course (17 September) remains essential preparation for VBA requirements.

Fire safety compliance crisis continues

Victorian apartment fire safety in crisis

Building on our ongoing coverage of fire safety issues, [fire risk in multi-residential buildings was front page news again recently](#), with findings that nearly 90 per cent of Victorian apartment buildings surveyed over a 12-month period did not meet fire safety compliance requirements.

Fatal fire inquest highlights critical licensing gaps

The [National Fire Industry Association's recent media release](#) about a devastating Victorian fire inquest provides sobering evidence about the importance of proper licensing frameworks. The Coroner's Finding on the unfortunate death of a three-year-old child in a fatal Victorian fire in 2020 revealed that fire protection systems had not been properly maintained. Investigations showed that fire hose reels were tangled, nozzles were malfunctioning, and service records demonstrated systems were not serviced correctly—despite being serviced just a month before the incident.

Alarmingly, the report cites that between 1 January 2010 and 30 September 2022, there were 13 fire-related deaths from 11 incidents in public housing, with only six of these properties having functioning fire alarms. Fire Rescue Victoria's recommendations included requiring licenses for technicians who perform inspections and testing of fire systems.



Housing crisis deepens across multiple states

Victoria's housing liveability compromised

Following our Issue 16 coverage of housing delivery challenges, apartments falling short of minimum space requirements have been green-lit and fast-tracked by the Victorian government, as the state faces intense pressure to meet ambitious housing targets.

Mental health crisis linked to housing stress

The human cost of the housing crisis continues to escalate. Every day more Australians are forced to spend a huge share of income on rent or mortgages, putting them under intense stress. In 2024, all major cities hit record rental unaffordability, with the National Shelter/SGS Rental Affordability Index reporting that rents have surged so much that householders on JobSeeker or basic pensions now find every market "critically unaffordable".

“In 2024, all major cities hit record rental unaffordability.”

Architect enters politics over housing concerns

A prominent Tasmanian architect, Jiri Lev, has decided to take a tilt at politics, with housing as his priority. Lev is urging no housing 'ghettoes' and advocating for improved building regulations.

National construction industry developments

Industry blueprint for standards improvement

Building on our Issue 16 coverage of industry initiatives, the National Construction Industry Forum (NCIF) has developed a blueprint to guide the sector towards long-term improvement. As part of NCIF, the Australian Constructors Association helped develop this plan to lift standards across construction.

Engineered stone ban compliance confidence

Following our previous coverage of silica regulations, designers and builders across Australia are confident in their ability to comply with new regulations surrounding silica-containing products, including a ban on products which contain engineered stone, according to a new survey.

HIA leadership change and foreign capital concerns

The Housing Industry Association announces new national leadership with Mr Ian Hazan as National President and Mr David Morris as National Vice President. Mr Hazan brings over 30 years' experience in residential building and has held volunteer positions with HIA for over 15 years.

However, HIA warns that foreign capital exodus is deepening the housing deficit. HIA Chief Economist Tim Reardon states:

"Australia cannot build 1.2 million new homes in five years while taxing the capital that is necessary to build those homes." The association argues that foreign institutional capital creates supply, not demand, and taxing this capital reduces housing supply while migration continues to surge.

Master Builders call for productivity reforms

Continuing the productivity theme from Issue 16, Australia's building and construction sector is facing a severe productivity slump, with Master Builders calling for urgent federal action to address compounding pressures and unlock housing delivery.

Sustainable building innovation

Circular built environment opportunities

As the climate crisis continues to challenge how we design, build, and inhabit our cities, the built environment finds itself at a turning point. The question of whether a circular built environment is possible, and if so, how, continues to drive innovation in sustainable design.

Local content laws strengthen

New local content laws for taxpayer-funded projects will strengthen requirements for Australian-made equipment to be used on construction sites, after the Allan government was criticised for using steel from China on Big Build sites.

Curved steel construction gaining momentum

Curved steel construction is transforming the way buildings feel and function, with architects increasingly embracing this approach for both aesthetic and functional benefits.



State-Specific Developments

Western Australia hits population milestone

The population of Western Australia has officially tipped over three million people, with the state having the fastest growth rate of anywhere in the country last year. This growth is driving significant housing demand pressures.

Perth's infill development challenges are highlighted in the opinion piece asking: Can Perth have infill without cars spilling onto our streets? Infill development is meant to cure Western Australia's dependency on cars, but implementation challenges remain.

New South Wales infrastructure priorities shift

NSW Treasurer announces that the last decade was about metros and motorways, but the next 10 years will be different. The government will spend \$120 billion on infrastructure over the next four years, but providing water and power services for new housing will be the priority.

Building costs are blowing out due to planning restrictions, with the Housing Industry Association calling for moves to simplify the planning system for building new homes.

Sydney's architectural transformation

Sydney's architecture ambitions are on show as the face of the city changes. The Macquarie-developed 39 Martin Place office tower and connecting Sydney Metro underground railway line exemplify how modern infrastructure is rewriting how people work and move around.

South Australia delivers major housing milestone

Two significant milestones have been reached for the rezoning of land north of Adelaide that will provide homes for tens of thousands of South Australians over the next few decades. The Minister for Planning has approved the draft outline for the Concordia Basic Infrastructure Scheme, ensuring essential infrastructure is planned and delivered in step with new residential developments.

Construction industry analysis

Modern Methods of Construction gaining traction

There's enormous movement in the Modern Methods of Construction industry—maybe it's even nearing mainstream. Modular, prefab and design for manufacture and assembly have remained somewhat on the margins in the Australian property industry, but over a decade of advocacy by organisations including PrefabAUS appears to be paying off.

Alternative housing models emerging

Australians are increasingly looking beyond the traditional detached home to meet their housing needs, as affordability pressures, changing lifestyles and sustainability goals drive innovation in the housing sector.

Former NSW Building Commissioner on construction future

David Chandler provides insights on the future of construction, questioning whether claims about faster, cheaper and better quality outcomes from modern methods of construction are actually evidenced.

ABS reveals construction industry statistics

The ABS has put the Construction industry under the microscope, giving the most detailed picture of the industry in over a decade. The Construction industry was responsible for 7.0% of Australia's GDP in 2023-24, employing around 1.3 million people.

Market insights and analysis

Residential construction trends

Explore how shifting trends in build form and construction activity are reshaping residential markets across states and metro-regional divides, according to new analysis on storey split forecasts for new homes in Australia.

Planning regulation debate

The debate over planning regulation continues with the provocative question: What has planning regulation ever done for us? Claims that Australia's housing woes are due to restrictive planning and building regulations draw parallels to classic Monty Python comedy while addressing serious policy questions.

Victorian development progress

The Allan Labor Government is another step closer to completing the iconic Fitzroy Gasworks precinct, with developers shortlisted to deliver the final parcel of housing on the site. Parcel A is expected to deliver around 350 new homes, including a minimum of 20 per cent affordable housing.

Special Feature: Contract Administration Workshop - Last Chance

Your clients are asking about contract administration—are you ready?

We hear it all the time from our members: "Clients are asking about contract admin, but I'm not sure I'm ready for that level of responsibility" or "I just don't know enough about it." Managing building means guiding clients through what can be an overwhelming process while protecting your own practice.

With **just 1 spot remaining** in our upcoming Contract Administration Workshop, this is a critical opportunity for members to develop expertise in this high-value service area. When clients need contract administration support, they're looking for trusted advisors who can navigate the complexities of standard form building contracts with confidence.

Led by industry veteran Geoff Hoare, who brings over two decades of experience including 1,200+ registration assessments and 11 years on the Building Practitioners Board, this workshop provides practical, no-nonsense guidance for real-world scenarios.

Many of our members discover that offering contract administration transforms their client relationships. Instead of handing over drawings and stepping back, they become trusted advisors throughout the entire build process. The additional revenue is valuable, but it's more about being genuinely helpful when clients need it most.

Contract Administration Workshop

 Friday 28 June, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM AEST

 Members: \$385 | Non-Members: \$550

 4 CPD Non-Technical points

Special Feature: Western Australia events this Friday

The power of 10-star living: Catalina sustainable house tour

Our WA members have an exclusive opportunity this Friday to witness world-class sustainable design in action. The Catalina Sustainable House Tour offers a guided exploration of a 10-Star NatHERS-rated, 105% net zero sustainable home—a rare chance to see cutting-edge sustainability principles applied in practice.



This isn't just a tour—it's a masterclass in sustainable design implementation. See firsthand how advanced energy efficiency, innovative materials selection, and integrated renewable systems create a home that produces more energy than it consumes.

Catalina Sustainable House Tour

 Friday 27 June, 3:00 PM


 [Clarkson WA](#)

Following the tour, join fellow members at the DMN Sundowner for networking and discussion about the sustainable design innovations you've just witnessed. It's the perfect opportunity to connect with like-minded professionals and explore how these principles can be applied to your own projects.



DMN Sundowner at Indian Ocean Brewery

 Friday 27 June, 4:30 PM

 Indian Ocean Brewery, 33 Ocean Falls Boulevard, Mindarie

Governance Reminder: DMN Constitution Available

As a member-driven organisation, Design Matters National operates under a comprehensive constitution that outlines our governance structure, member rights, and organisational procedures.

Access the DMN Constitution

Our constitution covers:

- Membership categories and rights
- Board structure and responsibilities
- Meeting procedures and voting rights
- Financial management and reporting
- Amendment processes

Understanding our governance framework helps members engage effectively with DMN and participate in our democratic processes. All members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these important documents.

Design
Matters
National



Building
Design
Awards
2025

ENTRIES
EXTENDED
TO 4 JULY

Designing Tomorrow.

maximising YOUR DMN MEMBERSHIP VALUE

Your membership delivers
more than you may know

Design Matters National provides
comprehensive support for building
design professionals across multiple
areas of practice and wellbeing.



Professional Resources & Support

NEW: Mental Health Resources

We have uploaded new mental health and wellbeing resources to provide essential support for managing the pressures of professional practice. These include:

[7 Days of Self Care](#)

[Work/Life Balance](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[Understanding Anxiety](#)

[Understanding Depression](#)

[Psychological Safety at Work](#)

[Managing Mental Health](#)

[Setting Meaningful Goals](#)

You can find these new resources under the [Resources tab](#) when you log in.

Community Connection

Private Members Facebook Group

Join over 1,000+ building design professionals in our exclusive member community. Share project opportunities, seek collaborations, get technical advice, and network with peers across Australia.

Join Our Private Facebook Group

Perfect for:

- Project referrals and collaborations
- Technical problem-solving
- Industry networking
- Job opportunities and announcements
- Professional development discussions



Technical Support & Training

TechLink for Energy Efficiency Assessors

Many EEAs don't know about this valuable and FREE resource especially for DMN accredited EEAs!

Access technical support, software guidance, troubleshooting assistance, and peer consultation for complex thermal performance assessments.

Submit your question to [DMN TechLink here](#), or email TPASupport@designmatters.org.au

Free Member Webinars & CPD Library

All DMN members enjoy complimentary access to select webinar content throughout the year. Regular technical updates, industry briefings, and professional development sessions at no additional cost. You can also access our extensive library of paid webinars, technical guides, practice notes and industry updates.

[Access all our webinars here.](#)

[Access all our member resources here.](#)

Career & Business Hub

Looking for work? Have projects to share?

Design Matters National provides multiple platforms to connect our professional community:

DMN Job Board - Post positions, search opportunities, and connect with employers

Private Members Facebook Group - Share project opportunities, seek collaborations, and network with peers

Whether you're seeking employment, have vacancies to fill, or need to refer projects to other members, our platforms ensure you're connected with the right professionals.

For Employers

Post detailed job descriptions, experience requirements, and contact information

For Job Seekers

Create comprehensive profiles showcasing your skills and experience

For Project Referrals

Connect with members who can take on work you can't accommodate

Join our thriving professional network and strengthen our industry connections.

ATO Masterclasses: Free Business Skills Training

The Australian Taxation Office has developed a comprehensive online learning platform designed specifically for small businesses: Essentials to strengthen your small business.

This platform provides free, professional courses to support small businesses in improving their tax, super, and business management knowledge—particularly valuable for building design practices.

Upcoming Masterclass Series:

- Claiming small business tax deductions - 17 July 2025
- Reporting payments made to contractors - 14 August 2025
- Hiring & paying workers - 18 September 2025
- Record keeping - 14 October 2025
- eInvoicing - 21 October 2025
- Fringe benefit tax - 18 November 2025

[Register for 'Claiming small business tax deductions' - 17 July, 12:00-1:00 PM AEST](#)

[View all upcoming sessions and register in advance](#)

The platform includes over 30 short, free courses covering record keeping, cash flow, deductions, GST, super, and more—essential knowledge for running a successful building design practice.

Strategic CPD Pathways: Addressing Current Industry Challenges

The regulatory changes and market pressures highlighted in this issue create clear professional development opportunities:

Post-Legislative Action Plan

With Victorian building reforms now law, prepare for mid-2026 implementation:

- [Building Practitioner Pre-Registration Course \(17 September\)](#) - Essential for VBA registration requirements
- [Contract Administration Workshop \(28 June\)](#) - Implement efficient systems under enhanced oversight
- ATO Tax Deductions Masterclass (17 July) - Optimise business finances during transition



Innovation and Affordability Focus

Address cost pressures through advanced techniques:

- [Hempcrete: Australian Construction \(2 July\)](#) - Alternative materials reducing costs
- [Protecting your bottom line: Debt recovery \(24 July\)](#) - Financial resilience during market volatility
- [Ask an Interior Designer: Early Planning \(21 August\)](#) - Advanced integration strategies

Business Resilience Shield

Protect your practice against the cost pressures and project delays highlighted throughout this issue:

Financial Security Series:

- [Protecting your bottom line: Debt recovery \(24 July\)](#) - Essential given construction cost pressures
- [Contract Administration Workshop \(28 June\)](#) - Efficient project management systems

Innovation Showcase Experiences

See solutions in action:

- [Catalina Sustainable Home Tour \(27 June, WA\)](#) - Witness 10-star construction efficiency
- [DMN Sundowner following the tour \(27 June\)](#) - Network with innovation leaders

Upcoming Events & CPD

JUNE

The Power of 10-Star Living: Tour Catalina sustainable home!

Date: 27 June

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: Clarkson WA

Exclusive guided tour of a 10-Star NatHERS-rated, 105% net zero sustainable home

DMN Sundowner at Indian Ocean Brewery.

Date: 27 June

Time: 4:30 PM

Location: Indian Ocean Brewery, 33 Ocean Falls Boulevard, Mindarie

Contract Administration Workshop

Date: Jun 28

Time: 8:30 AM

Location: Online (AEST)

Presenter: Geoff Hoare

JULY

Hempcrete: Major inroads in the Australian hemp construction industry.

Date: Jul 02

Time: 12:00PM AEST

Location: Online

Presenter: Klara Marosszky

DMN Members Boardroom Lunch

Date: 04 July

Time: 12:30PM-2:30PM

Location: MATTHEW FLINDERS HOTEL

667 Warrigal Rd, Chadstone

Pricing for Profit (WA Members only) - Presented by the SBDC

Date: 10 July

Time: 9:30AM (AWST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Small Business Development Corporation

Affordable and sustainable building design

Date: 16 July

Time: 1:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Tim Adams

James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2025

Date: 17 July

Time: 2:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Kikitas Smirnios, VIC Business Development Manager

Protecting your bottom line: Debt recover strategies for design professionals

Date: 24 July

Time: 4:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Drew Laing and Caitlyn Hoey

Design Futures: TZCC Winner Talk + Member Meetup

Date: 24 July

Time: 4:00PM-6:00PM (AEST)

Location: Lecture Theatre E1.06. in Building E, at The Gordon East Campus, Boundary Road, East Geelong.

Presenter: Uta Green (2024 TZCC Winner)

AUGUST

Inside Australia's New Embassy in Washington D.C. — Design, Diplomacy and Identity

Date: 06 AUG

Time: 1:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenter: Mark Healey, Interior Design Director | Bates Smart

How to affordably upgrade the sustainability of existing buildings

Date: 20 AUG

Time: 1:00PM (AEST)

Location: Online

Presenter: Tim Adams | F2 Design

Ask an Interior Designer: Designing from the inside out - The power of early interior planning

Date: 21 August

Time: 6:30PM

Location: ONLINE

DMN Member Dinner- Northside at Saigon Secret

Date: 28 August

Time: 6:30PM

Location: Saigon Secret

SEPTEMBER

Modern Methods of Construction Series. Building smarter: prefabrication and the future of construction

Date: 2 Sep

Time: 1:00PM

Location: ONLINE

Presenter: Damien Crough | Executive Chair | prefabAUS

DMN Member Dinner - Hobart

Date: 3 Sep

Time: 5:30PM

Location: 140 Cascade Rd, South Hobart

Tassie Member Breakfast - Hobart

Date: 4 Sep

Time: 8:00AM

Location: Brickworks Hobart Design Studio

Presenter: Wayne Gorman

DMN Member Dinner - Launceston

Date: Sep 4

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: 140 Cascade Rd, Hobart

Tassie Member Breakfast - Launceston

Date: 5 Sep

Time: 8:00 AM

Location: Design Centre 81

Brisbane St, Launceston

Presenter: Wayne Gorman

Building Practitioner Pre-Registration Course for VBA

Date: Sep 17

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Online (AEST)

Presenter: Geoff Hoare

Members of DMN Southside Catch Up

Date: 12 Sep

Time: 12:30PM

Location: St Martin's Cafe
116 Martin St, BrightonVIC

Contract Administration Workshop

Date: Sep 27

Time: 8:30 AM

Location: Online (AEST)

Presenter: Geoff Hoare

SOURCES REFERENCED IN THIS ISSUE

- [The Age](#)
- [Architecture & Design](#)
- [Architecture AU](#)
- [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- [Australian Financial Review](#)
- [Broker News](#)
- [Canberra Times](#)
- [Herald Sun](#)
- [HVAC&R News](#)
- [Inside Construction](#)
- [Oxford Economics](#)
- [Sourceable](#)
- [Sydney Morning Herald](#)
- [The Fifth Estate](#)
- [The Mercury](#)
- [The Urban Developer](#)

Stay connected with Design Matters National – visit our [Events Calendar](#) for all upcoming events, explore our [CPD Resources](#) for on-demand training, and check out the [Design Matters National website](#) for the latest news and member information.

Thank you for reading!
