

The DMN Roundup

DESIGN MATTERS
NATIONAL
10 July 2025



ESSENTIAL UPDATES

Following our Issue 17 coverage of Victoria's new Building and Plumbing Commission, this week brings major developments as the powerful new regulator officially begins operations from 1 July 2025. The BPC puts consumers first from day one with expanded powers and a single entry point to Victoria's building system. Australia faces an unprecedented construction waste crisis with \$64 billion in building materials at risk, while three-bedroom apartments emerge as a potential solution to the housing crisis. Victoria and Sydney announce major reforms to phase out gas, and one in six unit projects have stalled as 'ghost' towers. The GBCA seeks industry feedback on nature positive outcomes, while Western Australia moves to strengthen building watchdog powers. Adelaide identifies over 150 buildings for adaptive reuse potential as the industry grapples with evolving challenges and opportunities.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

True Zero Carbon Challenge Expressions of Interest Now Open

Design Matters National is pleased to announce that the True Zero Carbon Challenge is now accepting Expressions of Interest. This groundbreaking initiative will officially launch in two weeks, representing a significant opportunity for building designers to demonstrate leadership in sustainable design.

The True Zero Carbon Challenge will drive innovation in carbon-neutral building design, providing a platform for practitioners to showcase cutting-edge approaches to eliminating carbon emissions across the building lifecycle.

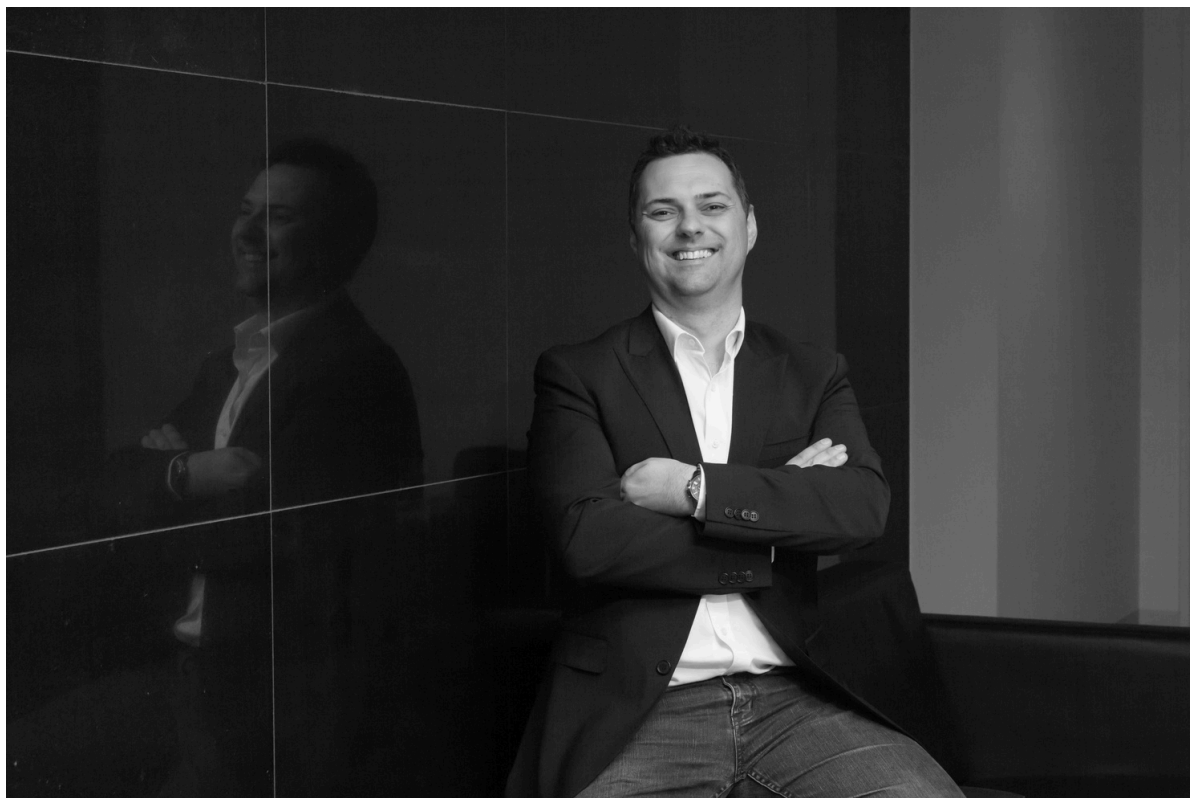
Expressions of Interest are open now with the official launch scheduled for late July 2025. This represents a unique opportunity to be part of a transformative industry initiative from its inception.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTD...

DMN's New BRAC representative

Design Matters National is pleased to announce that Board Director, Jason Holmes, has been appointed as our new Building Regulation Advisory Committee (BRAC) representative. This appointment strengthens DMN's voice in regulatory development and ensures our members' interests are represented at the highest levels of building regulation governance. Jason's extensive experience at both industry and board level positions him as a strong and credible ambassador for our association.



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTD...



Building Design Awards 2025 Record entries achieved

Entries for the Building Design Awards 2025 have officially closed, and we're thrilled to announce another record-breaking year. Both east and west coast competitions have surpassed last year's numbers, demonstrating the continued growth and excellence within our profession.

The unprecedented level of participation reflects the industry's commitment to design excellence and innovation, with entries showcasing the diverse talents and capabilities of building designers across Australia.

Early Bird tickets for two fabulous events across Perth and Melbourne go on sale soon. Watch this space!

A promotional banner for the Building Design Awards 2025. The banner is divided into three main sections. On the left, a yellow vertical bar contains the Building Design Awards 2025 logo, the text "SALE START NOW" with a right-pointing arrow, "SAVE UP TO \$50" in a white box, and "Until 31 Jul". The middle section features two images: the top one shows an outdoor dining area with a long table set with white linens and green chairs, and the bottom one shows an indoor event space with a bar and decorative lighting. The right section is a yellow vertical bar with the text "EARLY BIRD SALE TICKETS" at the top. Below this, it lists ticket prices for Perth and Melbourne. For Perth, the General Admission ticket is \$87 and the Restaurant ticket is \$137. For Melbourne, the General Admission ticket is \$97 and the Restaurant ticket is \$247. At the bottom right, it says "EAST COAST 25 OCT".

Location	Ticket Type	Price
PERTH	GENERAL ADMISSION	\$87
	RESTAURANT	\$137
MELBOURNE	GENERAL ADMISSION	\$97
	RESTAURANT	\$247

REGULATORY REFORM ACCELERATES

Victoria's new Building and Plumbing Commission begins operations

Building on our Issue 17 coverage of Victorian building reform momentum, the new Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) has officially commenced operations from 1 July 2025, marking a transformative milestone for Victoria's building sector.

The BPC creates a single entry point to Victoria's building system for both consumers and industry, consolidating the functions of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA), Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria (DBDRV), and the domestic building insurance arm of the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA).

Key new powers include:

- authority to act against builders after homeowners have moved in, when problems are most often discovered
- ability to order builders to fix non-compliances, saving consumers time, money and stress
- expanded Domestic Building Insurance allowing claims against all builders when non-compliant work is identified and the builder refuses to fix it
- developer bonds for buildings four storeys and above to ensure funds are available for post-occupancy rectification
- mandatory notification to the BPC before residential apartment buildings above three storeys are occupied

Anna Cronin, who has led the VBA's transformation since July 2023, leads the BPC as Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer. "The establishment of the BPC is just the beginning of a new chapter but it's a huge step forward," said Cronin. "Our new powers will be a game changer for consumers."

The BPC's Consumer & Practitioner Service Centre operates Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5:00pm on 1300 067 088. More information: www.bpc.vic.gov.au



For building designers preparing for enhanced oversight, our upcoming [Building Practitioner Pre-Registration Course \(17 September\)](#) provides essential preparation for regulatory requirements.

Gas phase-out reforms advance across jurisdictions

Victoria and Sydney have announced significant reforms to phase out gas infrastructure. Victoria's reforms primarily target gas hot water systems, while Sydney's City Council will require all new residential developments to install electric cooktops, ovens and space heating from 2026.

These electrification mandates represent a major shift in building design requirements, with implications for energy modelling, equipment selection, and compliance pathways that building designers must navigate.



HOUSING CRISIS DEEPENS

Construction waste crisis threatens \$64 billion

Australia faces an unprecedented waste crisis with \$64 billion in construction materials at risk of going to waste over the next five years unless urgent action is taken to improve how we design, build and recover resources across the property sector.

This staggering figure underscores the critical need for circular economy principles in building design and construction, presenting both environmental and economic imperatives for sustainable practice.

Large apartments emerge as housing solution

Three-bedroom apartments are becoming more sought after, yet remain the golden unicorn of Australia's housing market.

Experts say larger apartments could help solve the housing crisis and are urging governments and policymakers to incentivise their construction or risk facing consequences for years to come.

'Ghost towers' plague development pipeline

A concerning trend has emerged with one in six unit projects now stalled as 'ghost' towers. These phantom developments represent approved projects that have hit costly standstills, with far-reaching consequences for housing supply.



INDUSTRY INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Nature positive consultation opens

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) has released a nature positive consultation paper seeking industry feedback. The consultation paper outlines a draft pathway to support nature positive outcomes in new developments, with GBCA calling on built environment stakeholders to contribute ideas and insights. **Developed with guidance from GBCA's Nature Roadmap Advisory Panel alongside technical experts and industry stakeholders, the paper builds on years of collaboration through GBCA's Building with Nature work and Green Star rating tools.**



AI and modern construction methods advance

The industry continues embracing innovation. A panel discussion explores how AI can help build greener cities, while architects are urged to engage with the shift toward modern construction methods.

AHURI guidance on higher density housing

AHURI provides guidance on how to do higher density housing well, noting that Australia is at a critical turning point where the need for more apartment living must be met with commitment to delivering enduring homes that improve everyday life.



INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE AND OUTLOOK

Construction employment boom shows signs of slowing

Australia's construction jobs boom has slowed, with employment dropping by 61,500 from 1.379 million in February to 1.317 million in May on a seasonally adjusted basis. Both candidates and employers are urged to adopt proactive strategies for optimal outcomes in 2025/26.

Property industry confidence remains steady

Property industry confidence stayed steady in the June quarter at 124 points, just one point below the March result. This occurs amid mounting pressure on governments to address planning reform, tax changes and investment rules.

Financial pressures stabilise

Financial pressures on Australian firms and within the construction sector appear to have stabilised, according to CreditorWatch's latest Business Risk Index report.

STATE-SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTS



South Australia's construction momentum continues

Following our previous coverage of South Australia's outstanding construction sector performance, the state continues its construction boom with major infrastructure projects delivering benefits to the broader community.

Adelaide has identified more than 150 buildings for adaptive reuse potential through the Adaptive Reuse City Housing Initiative (ARCHI). This program, led by the City of Adelaide, seeks to encourage conversion of vacant buildings in both Adelaide and North Adelaide into housing, supported by incentive schemes.

Western Australia strengthens building oversight

Following the Nicheliving debacle, Western Australia is finally strengthening building watchdog powers. Commerce Minister Tony Buti announced new laws in budget estimates to enhance the state's building watchdogs' ability to probe and act on financially risky builders.

Meanwhile, Western Australia announces support for more than 5,500 new dwellings through programs to boost housing supply.

ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE AND RECOGNITION



Gender equity data released

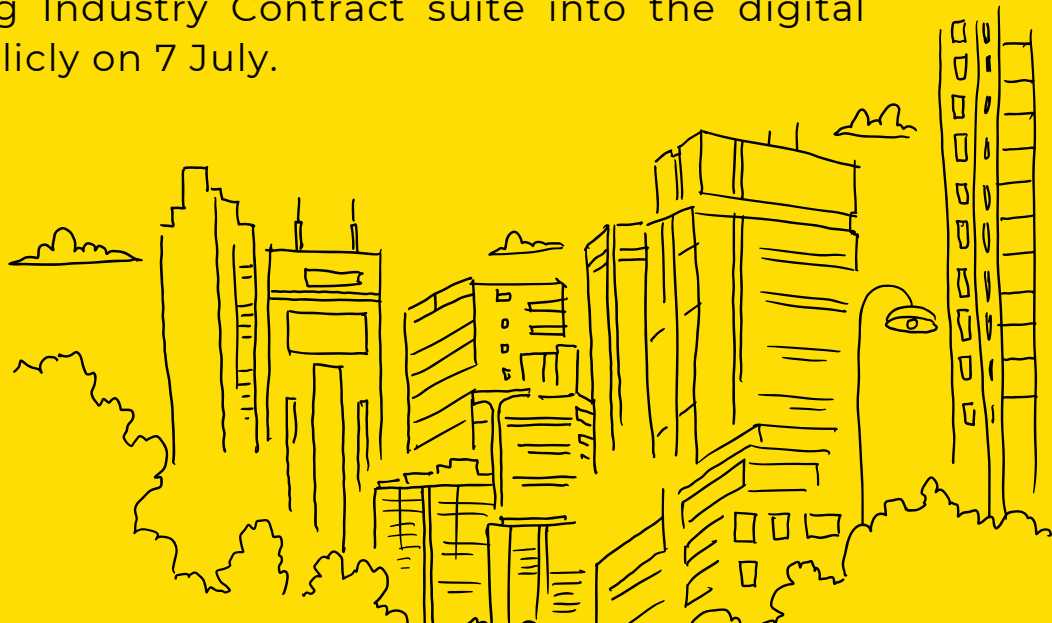
New data sheds light on gender equity in architecture, with Parlour publishing five articles summarising 2023-2024 gender pay gap data across key categories including pay gaps, workforce composition, flexible work arrangements, and workplace discrimination.

Scholarship opportunities announced

The Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter has opened applications for the 2026 Philip Y. Bisset Planning (Architecture) Scholarship, supporting final-year Master of Architecture students in Queensland to undertake research and travel related to planning, public architecture and civic life.

Digital contract platform launches

The Australian Institute of Architects, in partnership with Master Builders Australia and Paid Inc, has launched ABIC Digital Contracts. The new online platform brings the trusted Australian Building Industry Contract suite into the digital era, launching publicly on 7 July.



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

International BIM education developments

The BIM Education - Global 2025 Update Report from the International Construction Information Society (I.C.I.S.), prepared by NATSPEC, provides an overview of BIM education across 23 countries/regions. The report notes rising courses for AEC students in higher and vocational education, with growing industry-academia collaboration and focus on practical skills including AI, virtual reality, and sustainability.

However, challenges persist including uneven adoption, limited government support in some regions, and educator upskilling issues in countries including Australia and the UK.

ABAB strengthens digital focus

The Australasian BIM Advisory Board (ABAB) June 2025 Communique highlights the board's second meeting of 2025, focusing on strengthening the case for digital in constrained environments. Key discussions included BIM developments for Brisbane 2032 Olympics, NSW infrastructure reforms, and the draft paper Digitalisation for Decarbonisation.

The meeting emphasised extending BIM beyond construction into facilities and asset management to maximise lifecycle value, with the next in-person meeting scheduled for 2 September 2024.

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.

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.

Upcoming Events & CPD

JULY

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)

Open House Melbourne: Opening the Door to Melbourne's Homes of the Future

Date: 25 July

Time: 6:30PM-8:30PM (AEST).

Location: RMIT Auditorium 94.1.06, 23-27 Cardigan Street, Carlton

Presenter: Uta Green (2024 TZCC Winner)

AUGUST

Performance Solutions: How overlooked drainage details can lead to serious design failures

Date: 05 AUG

Time: 2:00PM-3:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenter: Brendan Yeung

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

Ask an Assessor: Understanding BASIX

Date: 07 AUG

Time: 1:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Ian Fry + Andrew Conn

True Zero Carbon Challenge 2026: What's it all about?

Date: 08 AUG

Time: 12:00PM (AEST)

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Jeremy Spencer

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

AUGUST

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

Date: 21 August

Time: 6:30PM

Location: ONLINE

our: 38 Albermarle Street — Build to Rent to Own, Reimagined

Date: 26 August

Time: 10:00-11:00AM

Location: 38 Albermarle St, Kensington

Presenter: Briony Massie | Associate Director, Fieldwork

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

OCTOBER

Melbourne Build Expo 2025

Date: OCT 22

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: 1 Convention
Centre Pl, South Wharf

Presenter: Jeremy Spencer

SOURCES REFERENCED IN THIS ISSUE

- [Green Building Council of Australia](#)
- [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#)
- [Architecture AU](#)
- [Daily Telegraph](#)
- [Adelaide Now](#)
- [WA Today](#)
- [Western Australian Government](#)
- [Architecture & Design](#)
- [Sourceable](#)
- [The Urban Developer](#)
- [Build Australia](#)
- [Infrastructure Magazine](#)
- [The Australian](#)

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!
