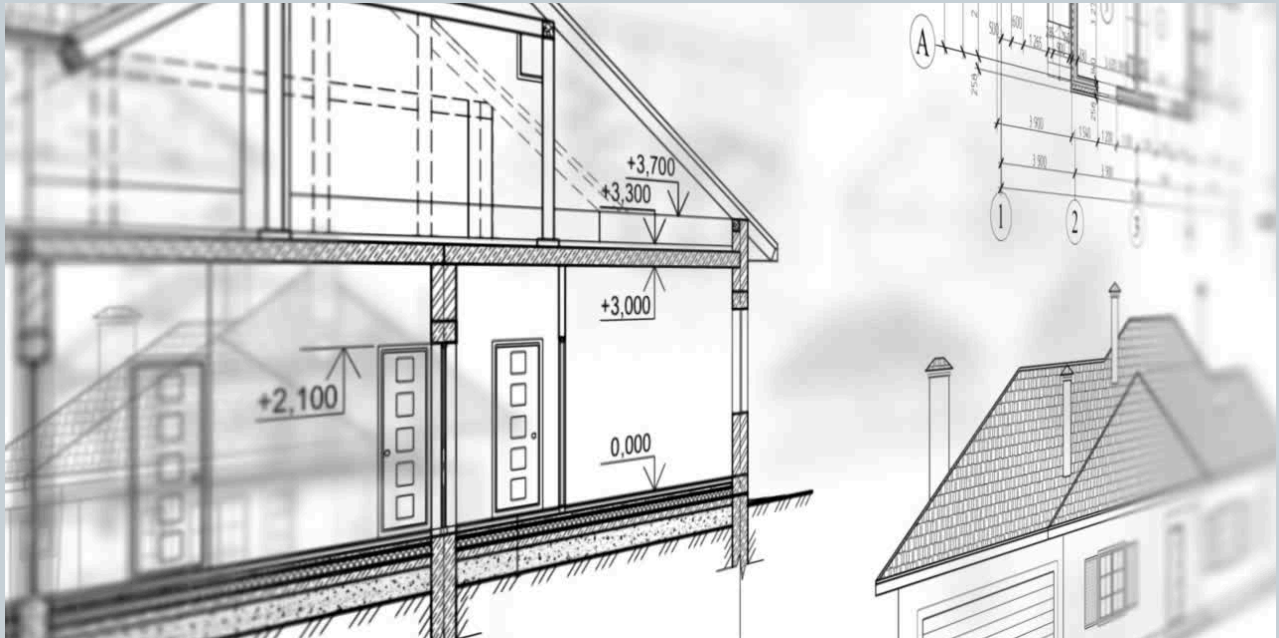


The DMN Roundup

DESIGN MATTERS
NATIONAL
24 July 2025



ESSENTIAL UPDATES

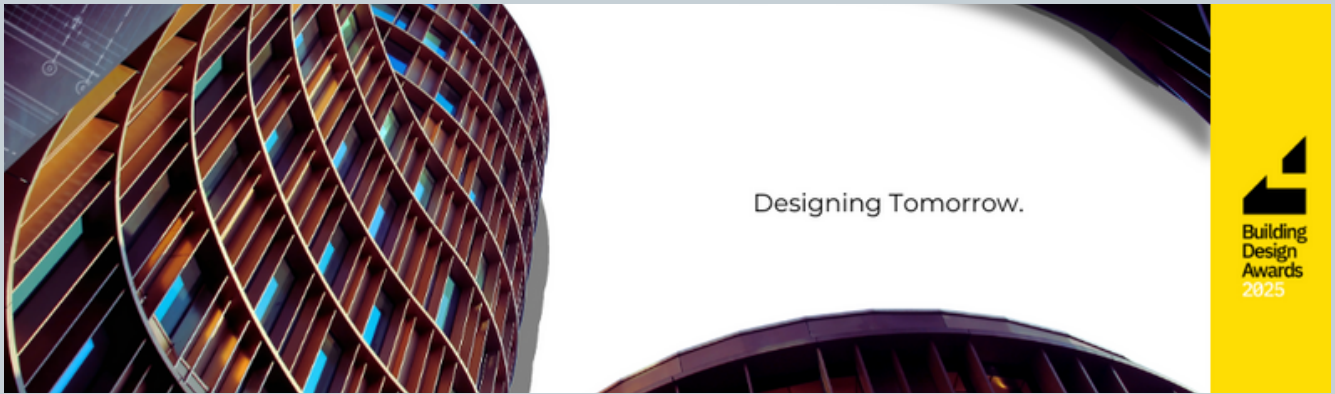
Following our Issue 18 coverage of Victoria's new Building and Plumbing Commission launching from 1 July, this week reveals concerning enforcement gaps as Building Commission NSW fails to seek fines for developers that lag on defect orders, with at least 60 per cent of rectification orders not fully complied with. Not a single developer has been fined despite defying defect orders, highlighting the enforcement challenges facing regulators across jurisdictions. This contrasts sharply with Victoria's new BPC powers that we covered in Issue 18, underscoring the importance of understanding regulatory frameworks and compliance obligations through programs like our Building Practitioner Pre-Registration Course (17 September).

ESSENTIAL UPDATES CONTD...

Construction costs continue their relentless climb with Brisbane becoming Australia's most expensive place to build at \$5009 per square metre, overtaking Sydney by 3 per cent according to Turner and Townsend's 2025 Global Construction Market Intelligence report. These escalating costs are driving innovation in delivery methods, making understanding Modern Methods of Construction (2 September) increasingly critical for maintaining project viability.

Meanwhile, NSW accelerates planning reform with its revolutionary Housing Pattern Book offering 10-day approvals for \$1000, while Sydney councils face unprecedented government intervention over development assessment delays. The Department of Planning has appointed specialist staff to oversee Georges River, Sutherland, Willoughby and Wingecarribee councils after they failed to meet approval timeframes. This intervention demonstrates the accelerated federal response to housing delays we've been tracking across recent issues.

The industry grapples with intensifying YIMBY versus NIMBY debates while Victoria's site amalgamation strategy could unlock 26,000 new social homes, potentially saving nearly \$2 billion. Tasmania embraces AI for planning approvals as modular construction and digital processes emerge as essential solutions to delivery challenges.



Building Design Awards 2025 JUDGING UNDERWAY

Judging for the Building Design Awards 2025 is now halfway through, with our expert panels reviewing record-breaking entries across both east and west coast competitions. The calibre of submissions continues to demonstrate the exceptional talent and innovation within our profession.

Early bird pricing ends 31 July 2025 unless sold out prior. Secure your tickets now for these celebratory events:

- Perth Celebration: [2025 DMN Annual Celebration - Building Design Awards](#)
- Melbourne Dinner: [2025 DMN Annual Dinner - Building Design Awards](#)

These events celebrate design excellence and provide exceptional networking opportunities with industry leaders and award winners.

Building Design Awards 2025

SALE START NOW

SAVE UP TO \$50

Until 31 Jul

Reserve your spot at
WEST COAST
10 OCT

EAST COAST
25 OCT

EARLY BIRD SALE TICKETS

PERTH	GENERAL	\$137
	STUDENT	\$87
MELBOURNE	GENERAL	\$247
	STUDENT	\$97



Modern Homes Forecast 2025

Discover what's shaping modern lifestyles and new directions in contemporary home design.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

The housing crisis continues driving dramatic policy interventions across jurisdictions. NSW's Housing Pattern Book represents a world-first Complying Development pathway, with the Government Architect endorsing eight terrace, townhouse and manor house designs following an international competition. This initiative forms part of what the Minns government describes as the "largest reforms to planning" in state history, directly addressing approval delays that have plagued the sector.

Federal pressure mounts for capital gains tax reform, with McKell Institute research suggesting CGT changes could encourage construction of an additional 130,000 homes before 2030. The proposed approach would increase CGT discounts for new units while reducing them for existing detached house purchases, fundamentally shifting investment incentives toward new supply creation.

Victoria's site amalgamation breakthrough offers a practical pathway forward, with discussion papers revealing how community housing organisations could purchase adjacent land to deliver 26,000 new social homes over the next decade. This innovative approach demonstrates the creative policy solutions emerging as traditional development models face escalating cost pressures.



The YIMBY versus NIMBY debate has intensified, with Yes In My Backyard advocates lobbying for denser cities while resistance movements maintain their opposition. Adding complexity, YIMBY Melbourne questions whether Australia really needs more planners, arguing that planning complexity and declining productivity, rather than planner shortages, are constraining housing delivery. Understanding these planning dynamics is increasingly critical for building designers, making sessions like Ask an Interior Designer: Designing from the inside out (21 August) valuable for navigating integrated design and approval processes. Alternatively, the DMN store has several Ask a Planner webinars available for purchase.

The human cost continues escalating, with housing economist Cameron Kusher questioning whether Australia's love for large homes is fuelling the housing crisis. He suggests returning to building practices from 30-40 years ago to reduce costs and boost productivity, a perspective that connects directly to understanding sustainable building practices through programs like How to affordably upgrade the sustainability of existing buildings (20 August).

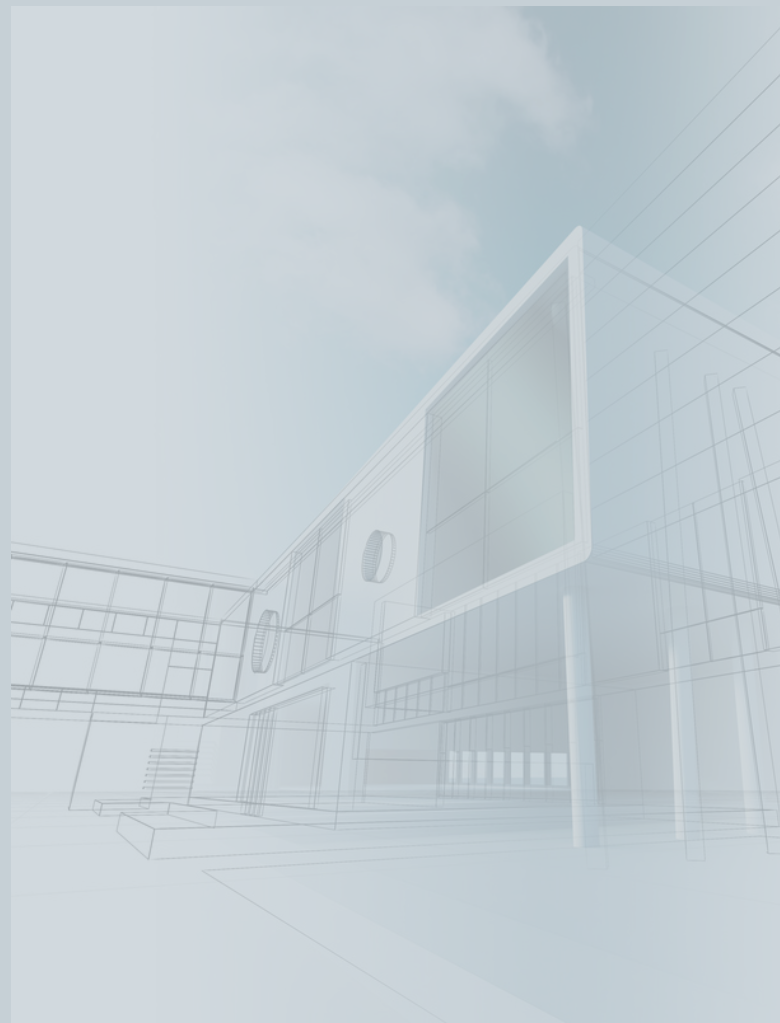


CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Modern construction methods are rapidly evolving in response to cost and delivery pressures. The [Australian Building Codes Board has released an issues paper for a National Voluntary Certification Scheme for Modern Methods of Construction manufacturers](#), aiming to streamline compliance and accelerate MMC adoption. This certification framework addresses a key barrier preventing wider industry uptake of prefabricated and modular construction methods.

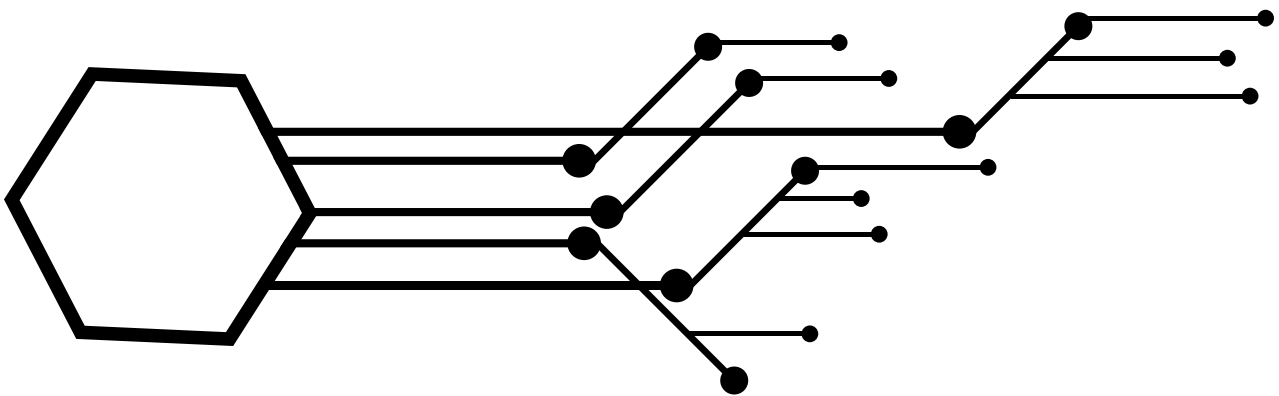
Innovation is occurring across multiple fronts. [Shuttered car factories could be repurposed to make houses faster and cheaper](#), with companies like Hickory Group working to transform automotive manufacturing facilities into housing production facilities. This approach simultaneously addresses industrial decline and housing demand, representing the type of innovative thinking required to meet current challenges.

Meanwhile, [homes built in Chinese mega-factories are coming to Adelaide](#), with SA company BoxMod showcasing completely fitted-out homes built offshore and shipped ready for assembly. These developments highlight the global nature of emerging construction supply chains and the importance of understanding these methods through our [Modern Methods of Construction Series](#) (2 September).



Digital transformation continues accelerating, with [AI cutting red tape to help build 1.2 million homes](#). California Governor Gavin Newsom turned to Australian technology company Archistar's AI-powered assessment tool for wildfire rebuild efforts, demonstrating the potential for Australian innovation to address global challenges. This connects directly to our coverage of Tasmania's council AI initiatives for planning approvals, showing how digital tools are transforming traditional assessment processes.

The [Australian Institute of Architects has launched a new online platform bringing ABIC contracts into the digital era](#), retaining familiar legal protections while addressing manual processing pain points, particularly for smaller practices. This digital transformation of contract management reflects broader industry shifts toward integrated digital workflows.



[Australia is set for more AI data centres](#), with Amazon's \$20 billion pledge for new facilities across Sydney and Melbourne highlighting digital infrastructure expansion. Building designers need to understand these emerging building types and their technical requirements, making our technical masterclasses like [Upskill for Whole of Home Masterclass \(19 August\)](#) increasingly relevant for understanding complex building systems.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REFORM

Environmental considerations are driving significant policy discussions, with former Treasury secretary Ken Henry calling for urgent environmental protection law overhaul. Henry warns that current laws have both failed to prevent environmental degradation and constrained economic growth, highlighting the need for integrated approaches that balance environmental protection with development objectives.

Australian policymakers have prioritised net-zero buildings in long-term construction plans, following international precedents while seeking pathways to achieve sustainable construction goals. This policy focus directly aligns with our True Zero Carbon Challenge launch and reinforces the importance of understanding sustainable design principles through programs like our sustainability-focused events.



**Opening the Door to
Melbourne's Homes of the
Future**

**25 JULY 2025
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

TRUE ZERO CARBON CHALLENGE 2026 REGISTRATIONS OPEN TOMORROW

Following the Expression of Interest period we announced in Issue 18, Design Matters National is thrilled to confirm the True Zero Carbon Challenge officially launches tomorrow, 18 July 2025.

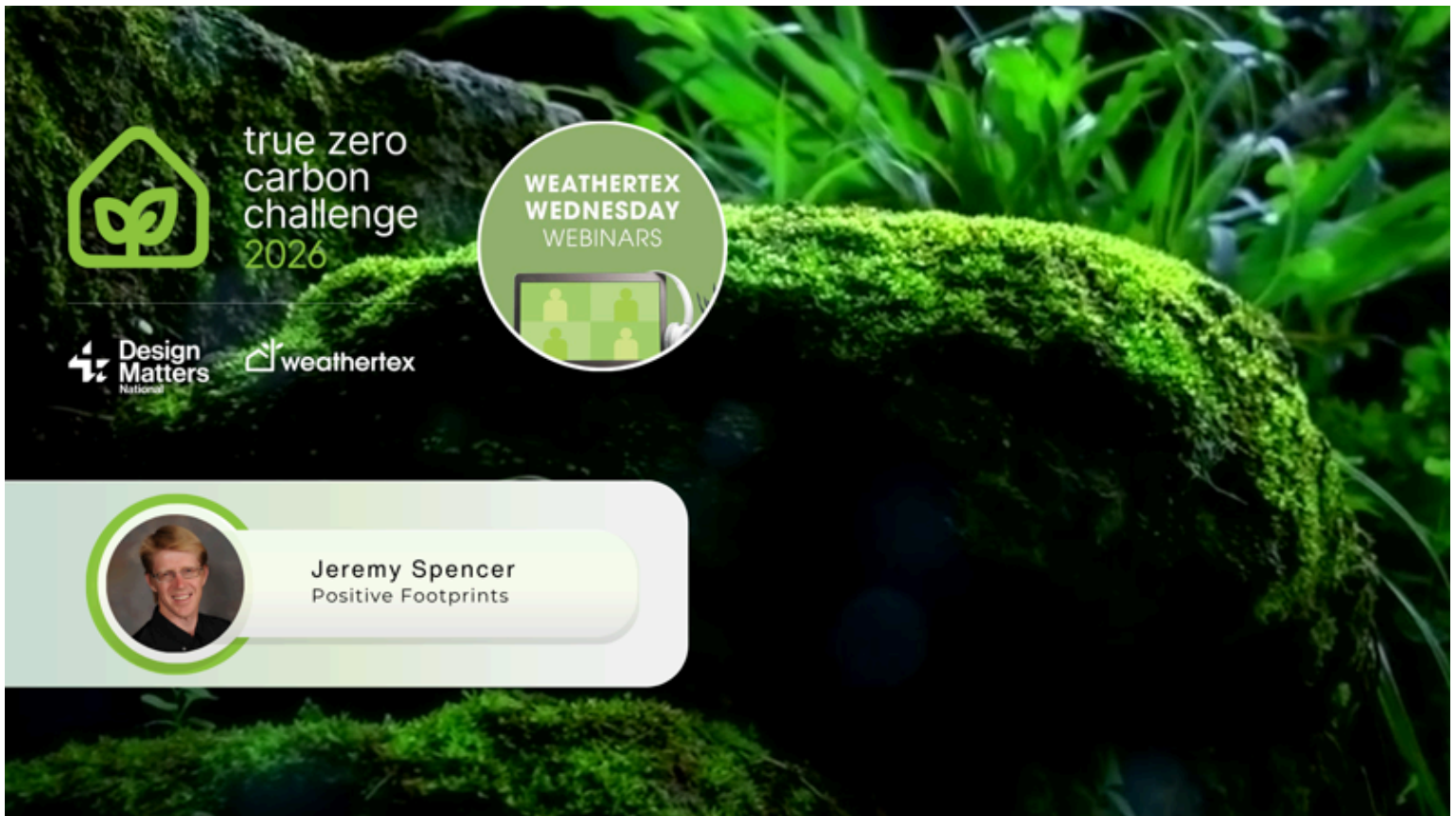
This groundbreaking initiative represents the most significant industry-led carbon reduction challenge for building designers, providing a platform to demonstrate leadership in sustainable design and drive innovation toward eliminating carbon emissions across the building lifecycle. The Challenge showcases cutting-edge approaches to carbon-neutral building design, offering participants recognition as industry leaders in sustainable practice.

Early registration opens immediately following tomorrow's launch, with full program details available on our website. This initiative positions DMN members at the forefront of the industry's transition to net-zero construction, directly supporting the sustainability imperatives outlined in recent policy developments. Learn more about the Challenge at our [information session \(8 August\)](#).



Wed, Aug 6, 2025 2:00 PM AEST

WeatherTex Wednesday with Jeremy Spencer
True Zero Carbon Challenge



 **REGISTER NOW**

INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE AND MARKET CONDITIONS

Property sector confidence remains robust amid uncertainty, according to the latest Procore/Property Council Survey. However, industry leaders are intensifying calls for urgent government action on planning reform, productivity, and investment certainty. The Northern Territory shows particular confidence in economic and housing outlook, suggesting regional markets may offer opportunities as metropolitan areas face escalating pressures.

Construction cost pressures continue with homeowners facing higher costs after builder collapses, as new insurance reforms provide consumer protection but at additional cost. This highlights the critical importance of understanding business fundamentals and fee structures to maintain sustainable practices, directly connecting to our Fee setting for building designers: real talk from the business frontline (13 August) session.



Fee setting for building designers: real talk from the business frontline

One of the most challenging aspects of running a building design practice is setting fees that reflect your value while remaining competitive. Given the cost pressures highlighted throughout this issue - from Brisbane's record building costs to enforcement gaps affecting project certainty - understanding sustainable fee structures has never been more critical.

On **13 August 2025, 2:00PM-3:00PM AEST**, DMN presents "**Fee setting for building designers: real talk from the business frontline**" - a member-exclusive webinar addressing this fundamental business skill.

Led by long-time DMN members, Board Directors, and successful business owners Peter Lombo (Archsign) and Jason Holmes (The Retail Group Pty Ltd), this practical session draws on decades of industry experience to demystify fee setting without fluff - just what works.

Key topics include:

- Approaching pricing based on project scope, complexity and risk
- What to factor in when quoting (and what many designers forget)
- Strategies for positioning your value with clients
- Why underquoting is a race to the bottom and how to avoid it
- The importance of mindset and confidence in discussing fees

This peer-led session is specifically designed for small practice owners, sole traders and emerging designers who want to future-proof their business. The interactive format includes open Q&A to address your specific challenges.

Registration: **Members \$44 | Non-Members \$150 | Students \$5**
CPD: 1 Non-Technical point



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.

AS 4000:2025 Updates

Free Industry Webinar

Standards Australia has released the updated AS 4000:2025 General Conditions of Contract, reflecting key legislative and industry changes. These updates aim to improve contract clarity, risk allocation, dispute resolution, and work health and safety responsibilities.

To support industry understanding, they're hosting a **free webinar** titled "**Understanding the updates to AS 4000:2025**" on **Tuesday 12 August at 1:00PM-2:00PM AEST**.

This session will walk through key changes and provide practical insights for construction professionals, contract managers, and legal advisors.

[Register for the AS 4000:2025 webinar here](#)

This webinar is essential for building designers working with construction contracts and seeking to understand how the updated standard affects project delivery and risk management.

Upcoming Events & CPD

JULY

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)



Opening the Door to Melbourne's Homes of the Future

**25 JULY 2025
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

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

This event is FREE for DMN members

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

Fee setting for building designers: real talk from the business frontline

Date: 13 AUG

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

Location: ONLINE

Presenters: Peter Lombo and Jason Holmes

AUGUST

Upskill for Whole of Home Masterclass

Date: 19 AUG

Time: 1:00PM (AEST)

Location: Online

Presenter: David Canciello | Davita Consulting

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

Tour: 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: 5:00PM

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

Upskill Now Masterclass (Thermal)

Date: Sep 23

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Online (AEST)

Presenter: David Canciello

OCTOBER

Melbourne Build Expo 2025

Date: OCT 22

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: 1 Convention
Centre Pl, South Wharf

Presenter: Jeremy Spencer

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.

PUBLICATIONS REFERENCED IN THIS ISSUE

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Sydney Morning Herald
- Built Offsite
- Sourceable
- Architecture & Design
- The Urban Developer
- Architecture AU
- Adelaide Now
- Elite Agent
- The Mercury
- Build Australia
- NT News
- The Australian
- HVAC&R News

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!
