

Title	New report: Regulating the Transition to a Low Carbon Built Environment
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A new report by the [Cooperative Research Centre for Low Carbon Living](#) (CRCLCL) says Australia's energy efficiency policy and regulation is not keeping up with market realities and best practices in other OECD countries, and has called for a comprehensive review to help Australia transition rapidly to the economically attractive low-carbon built environment of the future.

According to Philip Harrington of [Strategy.Policy.Research.](#), who prepared the report ([Best Practice Policy and Regulation for Low Carbon Outcomes in the Built Environment](#)) on behalf of the CRCLCL, Australia has some examples of best practice policy and regulation, but there is much room for improvement.

"Australia has some excellent initiatives in the built environment, including the voluntary rating scheme, NABERS, which is recognised around the world; the Commercial Building Disclosure (CBD) scheme that requires mandatory disclosure of the energy performance of larger office spaces; as well as ambitious local and state government carbon reduction targets, and initiatives requiring above-minimum energy and sustainability performance standards via some local government planning schemes," said Mr Harrington.

"However, some of the best measures are limited in scope, while the list of poor policy and regulatory practices in Australia's built environment is long. One key reason we are falling behind is that we have not updated regulatory measures, such as minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) for buildings, since 2009, and they are not currently scheduled to be updated until 2019 or 2022. Similarly, product and appliance standards have been largely frozen for many years, due to government-imposed processes such as regulatory offsets. The interests of consumers in high and cost effective standards is not being put to the fore.

"There is a strong case for expanding and updating existing national measures including the MEPS, Commercial Building Disclosure and the NABERS ratings tools, in the shorter term. Opportunities to take action on this include through the National Energy Productivity Plan and the 2017 Climate Policy Review process, to which the CRCLCL has recently made a submission.

"There is also an argument for looking to policy models commonly found overseas, of which Australia has previously been wary, including national energy savings targets and related schemes, and market transformation initiatives that bring down the cost of high-performance equipment," he said.

CRCLCL Deputy Chair Sandy Hollway AO, said there were economically-attractive opportunities to move Australia towards global best practices in built environment policy and regulation.

"ASBEC recently estimated the potential for building energy efficiency improvement to be at least 50 per cent by 2050¹, and we are also seeing reductions in the cost of solar and other renewable energy sources which we must ensure we take advantage of," said Mr Hollway.

¹ ASBEC, [Low Carbon High Performance](#), April 2016, p. 61.

“The report shows that what’s needed is a thorough review and rationalisation of policies and regulations in consultation with states, territories, industry and the community. It is only through a nationally-led, concerted effort that we can hope to achieve an effective policy framework for the low-carbon built environment of the future,” he said.

CRCLCL Chief Executive Officer, Professor Deo Prasad AO, said because Australia’s regulations have not been updated over a period when energy prices have been dramatically rising and technology costs for low carbon solutions, such as solar, have fallen, Australian residents and businesses are paying for it in higher energy costs.

“Setting a forward trajectory for regulatory settings under the National Construction Code could help remove regulatory uncertainty and decrease the riskiness of business investment in low-carbon products, services and business models,” said Professor Prasad.

“The CRCLCL works with government and industry partners to develop applied research projects that address current and emerging policy and practice challenges and opportunities. With more than 80 research projects covering low carbon buildings, precincts and communities, we are delivering a high quality evidence-base for low carbon planning and policy, as well as the tools, technologies and strategies that will help ensure the Australian built environment sector remains globally competitive,” he said.

For a full copy of the report [Best Practice Policy and Regulation for Low Carbon Outcomes in the Built Environment](#), and the associated Policy Guide Note, [visit the CRC for Low Carbon Living website](#).

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About the CRC for Low Carbon Living Ltd

The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is a national research and innovation hub that supports Australian industry to be globally competitive in the low carbon built environment sector.

It brings together property, planning, engineering and policy organisations with leading Australian researchers to develop new social, technological and policy tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment.

A key aim of the CRCLCL is to help cut Australia’s residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes by 2020. It will do this by developing opportunities for lower-embodied carbon manufacturing, creating efficiency and productivity in the built environment sector, empowering and engaging communities, increasing the evidence base for government policy and planning, and building the sector’s capacity for high quality research, education and training.

The CRCLCL is supported by the Cooperative Research Centres programme, an Australian Government initiative.