



INFORMATION SHEET

ENVIRONMENT

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New National Energy Efficiency Package open for public comment

The Federal Government has released a new (second) discussion paper on the potential changes to energy efficiency standards for new homes in the future.

The discussion paper titled **“National Building Energy Standards-Setting, Assessment and Rating Framework”** is available from the [Department of Climate Change](#) and is open for public comment until 6 July 2012.

The Paper flags that for new and existing residential buildings the Federal Government is considering a two staged approach between now and 2020.

- In 2015, an interim step would see the alignment of the existing 6-star standards with the other mandatory requirements for hot water, lighting and other fixed appliances;
- In 2020, there would be a change to the stringency of the standard which would require a yet to be determined per cent reduction in the average energy use of new buildings when compared to a 6-star building.

Essentially this means that the new approach would combine all the current building regulations into one system (as occurs in some states already). So 6-star building fabric, plus 5-star hot water systems, plus energy efficient lighting would be combined and referred to under a new star rating scheme.

The Paper also seeks feedback on the computer rating tools and proposes the question as to whether there should be just one rating tool nationally and who should be allowed to use the rating tools.

The first paper on this topic was released in April 2010, and is based on the National Strategy on Energy Efficiency recommendations which lead to the introduction of 6-star.

Given the rapid rate of change to the standards for houses since 2003 when 4-star was first introduced into the BCA, HIA is pleased to see the proposal would not push for more changes until 2020. However this approach is only suggested and it is unclear whether individual states and territories would remain committed to no changes over the next 7 years if the Federal government does adopt this approach.

The paper also fails to identify what the larger policy objective or goal of the Federal government is in making more changes to energy efficiency requirements for new homes, something HIA called for in our last response to the Government.

How these changes will apply to apartments and alterations and additions to existing homes is also unclear.

HIA made a submission in 2010 and will make a further response to this paper on behalf of members. Any feedback from members about the Discussion Paper or the implementation of 6-star is appreciated and can be forwarded to Kristin Brookfield on k.brookfield@hia.com.au.

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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