



Australian Government
The Treasury

Meeting Brief

MB25-000912



FOR INFORMATION - Industry Housing Productivity Roundtable (Tue 5 Aug 25)

TO: Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Cities - The Hon Clare O'Neil MP

PURPOSE OF MEETING

- You are meeting with industry leaders in Melbourne, to identify practical opportunities for reform and collaboration to lift productivity across the housing sector.
- The discussion will focus on three key themes – regulation, innovation, and labour – as identified in the Productivity Commission's recent report on construction productivity. The outcomes from this meeting will also help inform the Government's Economic Reform Roundtable, convened by the Treasurer later August. The meeting agenda is at **Attachment A** and brief biographies of attendees are at **Attachment B**.

KEY MESSAGES

- Productivity in the Australian housing sector has been stagnating for decades. Uplifting the performance and delivery of the housing construction industry is crucial for achieving the Government's housing agenda, and delivering safe and affordable housing for all Australians.
- There are systemic barriers to productivity in the industry, which also represent reform opportunities. The Government is keen to collaborate with industry to find solutions.
- The Government has initiatives that support streamlining processes, encouraging innovations and upskilling and increasing mobility of labour force for the industry.

BACKGROUND

- Most participants have expressed concerns over the complex regulatory processes involved in building houses, which include technical compliance required by National Construction Code (NCC) and separate jurisdiction-specific planning and environmental requirements. A summary of attendees' views regarding housing industry including productivity is provided at **Attachment C**.
- The Government has existing programs that support productivity increase in the construction industry. A summary of key initiatives to cut red tape, encourage innovations and support construction labour force is at **Attachment D**.

SENSITIVITIES

Access to Australian Standards

- Opportunities to progress free access to standards may be raised as part of this roundtable. On 28 July 2025, Standards Australia met with HIA, MBA, and other industry stakeholders to advocate for a national standards access model for the construction sector to eliminate the costs and barriers to accessing Australian Standards mandated by laws, including the NCC, which references a number of Australian Standards that have a cost to access.

Future of the NCC and NCC 2025

- The NCC is a key instrument to deliver the policy settings for the construction industry and a focal point of regulatory processes involved in building houses. There are views from industry that the NCC is trying to “do too much” from a policy perspective.
- Participants will have an interest in NCC adoption and the future of the NCC. There are likely to have diverse views on the desired future direction of the NCC; stakeholder positions are included at **Attachment C**.
- Your 8 August Building Ministers’ Meeting is not expected to make a decision on NCC 2025.

Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) appointments and membership

- The HIA and MBA do not currently have any representatives appointed to the ABCB Board; some current Board members previously worked at these organisations but have taken on new roles. Of the up to 7 industry positions on the board, 4 have fallen vacant over the last 12 months and not been filled.

Clearance Officer

s 22
Acting Assistant Secretary
Housing Industry Capability Branch
29 July 2025

Contact Officer

s 22
Director
Ph: s 22

CONSULTATION

Cities, Planning Infrastructure and Strategy Branch, Housing Supply and Cities Division

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Agenda
- B: Biographies of Attendees
- C: Key Government Initiatives Supporting Productivity in Construction Industry
- D: Summary of Positions of Industry Stakeholders

ATTACHMENT A: MEETING AGENDA

Time Items for discussion

10:00 – 10:10 Introduction

10 mins

10:10 – 10:40 Cutting red tape:

30 mins

How can we increase certainty, incentivise harmonisation, and improve the governance of the National Construction Code?

How can we streamline environmental approvals?

How can we further improve the planning system?

10:40 – 11:00 Driving innovation:

20 mins

How can we help address barriers to modern construction methods?

How can we help commercialise new construction innovations?

How can we help disseminate new practices across the industry?

11:00 – 11:20 Increasing labour supply and mobility:

20 mins

How can we attract and retain more construction apprentices?

How can we improve labour mobility across states and territories?

11:20 – 11:30 Conclusion

10 mins

ATTACHMENT B: BIOGRAPHIES OF ATTENDEES

Mr Andrew Mihno, Head of Policy and Government Relations, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)**Brief work history:**

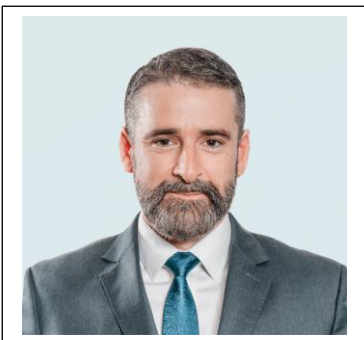
Mr Andrew Mihno is the Head of Policy and Government Relations at UDIA, serving in this role since January 2022. Mr Mihno is responsible for national strategic advocacy, policy negotiation and government relations across housing investment, development and construction in private, institutional and affordable/social housing. Mr Mihno has experience spanning two decades in property, capital markets, corporate finance regulation, commercial law, litigation.

The UDIA is the development industry's most broadly representative industry association, with more than 2,500 member companies.

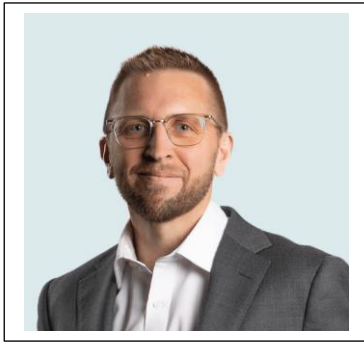
Ms Alexandra (Alex) Waldren, National Director, Master Builders Australia**Brief work history:**

Ms Alexandra Waldren is a National Director leading Industry Policy for Master Builders Australia, working in this role since June 2017. Ms Waldren is attending on behalf of Denita Wawn, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Master Builders Australia. Ms Waldren has 20 years experience in public policy development working with industry and government on housing, cities, infrastructure, regional development and aged care policy and regulatory affairs.

Ms Waldren is a current board member of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), since July 2021. Master Builders Australia is the nation's peak building and construction industry association. Master Builders is the only industry association that represents all three sectors of the industry – residential, commercial and engineering/civil construction.

Mr Michael (Mike) Zorbas, Chief Executive, Property Council Australia**Brief work history:**

Mr Michael Zorbas is the Chief Executive of the Property Council Australia, working in this role since January 2023. Prior to this role, Mr Zorbas held multiple positions at Property Council Australia since March 2018. The Property Council represents the leading organisations that invest in and shape our cities. The Property Council works with members to make those cities, and the property industry more prosperous and sustainable.

Mr Matthew Kandelaars, Group Executive, Property Council Australia**Brief work history:**

Mr Matthew Kandelaars is Group Executive, Policy and Advocacy with the Property Council Australia. Mr Kandelaars has been serving this role since June 2023. Prior to Mr Kandelaars role at Property Council, he was appointed Chief Executive Officer at Urban Development Institute of Australia in Victoria (UDIA Victoria).

Ms Jocelyn Martin, Managing Director, Housing Industry Association (HIA)**Brief work history:**

Ms Jocelyn Martin is the Managing Director at HIA, working in this role since August 2023. Ms Martin has worked in numerous roles within HIA, serving for 10 years. Ms Martin brings vast business experience specifically in the not-for-profit sector and a strong desire to maintain HIA's respected industry voice and enhance the connection with members.

HIA has been representing the Australian residential building industry for over 70 years. It is the peak national industry association for the residential construction and home building, renovation and development industry in Australia.

Mr Simon Croft, Chief Executive Industry and Policy, Housing Industry Association (HIA)**Brief work history:**

Mr Simon Croft is responsible for overseeing HIA's extensive involvement in relevant building policy matters cutting across building codes and Australian Standards, economics, planning, environmental and sustainability, workplace relation and compliance, industry skills and small business.

Simon is HIA's representative on a number Commonwealth and State peak building advisory boards and committees and also sits on a number of industry bodies Boards.

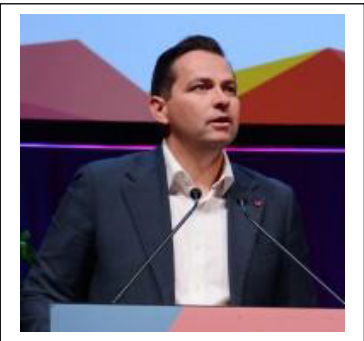
Ms Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz AM, Chair of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council



Brief work history:

Ms Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz AM is the Chair of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council, appointed by the Australian Government in January 2024. Ms Lloyd-Hurwitz AM was previously in the role of President of Chief Executive Women, ceasing this role in June 2025.

Mr Matt Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)



Brief work history:

Mr Matt Collins is the Chief Executive Officer of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), working in this role since April 2023. Prior to Mr Collins becoming CEO, he worked as PIAs State Manager for Queensland and Northern Territory Divisions. PIA is the peak body representing planning and the urban and regional planning profession.

Mr Andrew Fattal, Director of Infrastructure and Planning, Business Council of Australia

Photo unavailable

Brief work history:

Andrew Fattal is the Director of Infrastructure and Planning at the Business Council of Australia. He leads national policy development across transport, infrastructure, and urban planning portfolios. Andrew has a strong background in economics and public policy, as coupled with 15 years' experience in infrastructure, transport, roads, and urban development policy and projects. He works closely with industry leaders, government stakeholders, and regulators to support nationally significant infrastructure reform and long-term planning outcomes.

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce, a Bachelor of Science, and a Master of Commerce from the University of Sydney. Prior to joining the BCA, Andrew held various roles across the public and private sectors, contributing to strategic initiatives in economic development and regulatory policy.

ATTACHMENT C: SUMMARY OF POSITIONS OF INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER ATTENDEES

Organisation	Key Views
Master Builders Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pause needed on unnecessary NCC changes that increase cost and complexity without meaningful improvements in standards. • Changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax will reduce the number of new homes built and drives up rent. • Funding under the Australian Building Codes Board Intergovernmental Agreement to be increased to allow for Australian Standards to be accessible to builders free of charge. • Government must offer flexibility in its contractual dealings with building and construction companies whose operations have been hampered by cost spikes, labour shortages and other supply chain complications. • Abandon all changes negatively impacting the building and construction industry in the Closing Loopholes and Secure Jobs, Better Pay laws. • Implement the recommendations of the National Building Product Assurance Framework to improve compliance in building product use and to appropriately allocate responsibility along the supply chain. • Government should lead by example as a 'model client' and encourage better industry practices by taking a model client approach to the way it procures and manages publicly funded building works.
Housing Industry Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The residential building industry is currently overwhelmed with the significance of a large suite of recent regulatory changes across many policies areas. This follows and coincides in some states with continuing to adapt to the major changes implemented under NCC 2022. • Remains concerned on the timing of further NCC reforms and on the detail of the major reforms in NCC 2025. • Believes innovation in the industry is the result of reinvestment. Where profitability is squeezed by red tape and compliance, there is less chance there will be investment in innovation. • Manufacturing is stifled by state and federal environmental regulations and overlap in these regulations. • Has provided recommendations to the government to undertake a project to review codes and standards across federal standards setting agencies to simplify, remove excessive and outdated regulations and ensure the codes and standards support AI and other technology integration.

Urban Development Institute of Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commonwealth should: Build the homes Australia needs by providing incentives to boost housing for middle Australia (supply boosters), doubling funding for the First Home Buyers Guarantee and the Housing Australia Future Fund, and increasing the Accord Bonus to \$6 billion with provisions for upfront incentives. • Establish a \$5 billion enabling infrastructure fund to unlock dwellings and critical housing infrastructure, with part of the Housing Accord Bonus provided upfront to accelerate funding of infrastructure. • Enable industry to play a role in helping establish Federal applications and allow industry the authority to take an infrastructure application to a council, state or territory at first instance. • Provide incentives to states and territories that open up more development-ready land by halving planning times and accelerating zoning. • Establish independent housing performance metrics to compare the performance of state and territory housing strategies and accurately track new housing supply.
Planning Institute of Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Future Homes Planning Fund which seeks \$150 million over three years (\$50m a year) to establish the Future Homes Planning Fund to support strategic planning across state, territory, and local governments. • Strengthening of the National Urban Policy (NUP) to include a spatial strategy and infrastructure plan for managing population growth. • Setting a national goal for social and public housing delivery of 6 per cent of all housing to be social and public housing, supported by funding through the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH) to achieve this goal. • Creating a 'Planning for Housing' Playbook including developing the playbook to be used as a basis for professional development that optimises planning systems and drives better housing outcomes. • In the past, PIA has joined peak organisations in calling on the Government to deliver on its commitments in housing, and to take a greater role in planning. • Specifically, PIA called on the Government to create a national disaster and climate adaptation plan, developing a National Housing Strategy and Data Hub, and ensuring a nationally consistent approach to regional planning.

Property Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a strong and stable pipeline of new housing supply to take the pressure off prices.• Make strong infrastructure pipelines and clear city growth policies to make cities more productive and better connect communities with the jobs and services they need.• Grow the economy by overhauling the tax system to reduce the burden on property and improve housing affordability.• Has expressed a frustration at state-by-state fragmentation.• Have called for increased and consistent funding of the Australian Building Codes Board and backing for modernisation pathways.• Believes the current system creates barriers to growth and that with the right reforms, property can help deliver the economic gains that Australia requires.• Streamline planning rules and assessment processes to reduce cost and delays, and ensure clear long-term plans are in place for our cities, suburbs and CBDs.• Promote smart policies to improve the uptake of energy efficiency initiatives and clean energy, and incentivise best practice development and community creation.• Target red tape reduction to lift productivity, encourage innovation and reduce the time and cost of doing business.
------------------	---

ATTACHMENT D: KEY GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES SUPPORTING PRODUCTIVITY

Streamlining processes/cutting red tape

- National Productivity Fund: in the Budget 2025-26 the Government has committed \$120 million from the National Productivity Fund to incentivise states and territories to remove red tape preventing the uptake of modern methods of construction, which will help more homes be built faster.
- In the Budget 2025-26, the Government also offers \$3 billion in incentive payments under the New Homes Bonus, with up to \$4.5 billion in funding committed for states and territories to address infrastructure backlogs and deliver new housing.
- Prefabricated and Modular Housing: in the Budget 2025-26, the Government is also investing \$54 million to accelerate the uptake of modern methods of construction, including \$4.7 million investment to develop a voluntary national certification process for offsite construction to streamline approvals while ensuring high-quality standards are met.

Encouraging innovation

- National Reconstruction Fund Corporation (NRFC): it is established to support priority areas of the Australian economy and provide finance in the form of debt, equity and guarantee to support projects that can drive high-value industry transformation.
- Prefabricated and Modular Housing: the Government is investing \$54 million supporting jurisdictions to accelerate the uptake of modern methods of construction.
- Building 4.0 Cooperative Research Centre (CRC): an industry-led initiative co-funded by the government. The CRC aims to develop an internationally competitive, dynamic and thriving Australian advanced manufacturing sector, delivering better buildings at lower cost and the human capacity to lead the future industry.
- SmartCrete CRC: an independent, for-impact CRC that empowers innovation collaborations to transition concrete for a sustainable Australia. This program collaborates with industry and government to invest \$21 million Commonwealth funding in university-delivered research and development projects that promote sustainable design, use and management of concrete.
- Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive: it aims to drive innovation that leads to productivity improvements and economic growth. This tax incentive offsets some of the costs to encourage industry to undertake additional research and development activities.
- Industry Growth Program: the program supports innovative small and medium sized businesses undertaking commercialisation or growth projects that will build capabilities in key areas under NRFC.

Supporting labour force

- National Licensing for Electrical Trades: the Government has committed \$900 million in the 2025-26 Budget to the National Productivity Fund to drive the National Licensing Scheme through the National Competition Policy Framework. It will help housing affordability by easing workforce shortages that are holding back construction of more houses. The licensing for electric tradies will enable people in the trade to work seamlessly across jurisdictions without reapplying for a separate licence or additional fees.
- The 2025-26 Budget is providing \$722.8 million in cost-of-living relief for apprentices and their employers, encouraging the growth of the construction workforce needed to help deliver 1.2 million homes over the next five years.
- Under the 2025-26 Budget, The Government is establishing the Housing Construction Apprenticeship stream as part of the new Key Apprenticeship Program. From 1 July 2025, eligible apprentices in housing construction occupations will receive up to \$10,000 in financial incentives over the course of their apprenticeships. Employers of apprentices in priority occupations may also be eligible for up to \$5,000 as a Priority Hiring Incentive, which includes many occupations relevant to housing construction. These current settings for the Priority Hiring Incentive have been extended for an additional 6 months to 31 December 2025.
- The Government will invest over 4 years, commencing in 2024-25 to:
 - drive structural and systemic cultural change in work and training environments in the new Building Women's Careers program;
 - support the implementation of the Australian Skills Guarantee, to help train the next generation of skilled workers;
 - raise community awareness of Fee-Free TAFE courses in areas of high skills need, also boosting the status of VET and encourage the uptake and use of VET pathways; and
 - provide funding to supporting states and territories to deliver 20,000 additional Fee-Free places by TAFEs and industry Registered Training Organisations, for courses relevant to the construction sector.
- The Government is also streamlining skills assessments for around 1,900 potential migrants from countries with comparable qualifications who want to work in Australia's housing and construction industry, and prioritising processing of around 2,600 Trades Recognition Australia skills assessments in targeted construction occupations.