


# Federal election 2025: Our policy priorities



## Acknowledgment of Country

The Green Building Council of Australia acknowledges First Nations peoples of all Countries throughout Australia, and their cultural, spiritual, physical and emotional connection with their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge that ecologically sustainable development is not a standalone concept but is intrinsic to First Nations peoples. The built environment can embrace these values by embedding a Connection to Country into the design process and as part of operational practices.





Established in 2002, Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) is the nation's authority on sustainable buildings, communities and cities. Our vision is for healthy, resilient and positive places for people. Our purpose is to lead the sustainable transformation of the built environment. GBCA represents more than 550 individual companies with a combined annual turnover of more than \$46 billion.



## Foreword



**Davina Rooney**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Green Building Council  
of Australia

Around Australia, governments, businesses and communities are making real strides towards net zero targets, climate resilience and a sustainable built environment.

### Momentum is building.

Every state and territory government has committed to net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier.

More than 5,870 Green Star-rated buildings and communities are delivering lower emissions, healthier places and significant cost savings nationwide.

Australia's property sector leads the world on sustainability benchmarks like GRESB.

And a record 47.4% of Australia's electricity generation came from renewables in October 2024, putting the nation within striking distance of 82% by 2030.

These are positive proof points. But there is still much more to do. The next Australian Government has a critical opportunity to build on this progress with clear, long-term policy settings that provide certainty for industry, drive economic growth, unlock innovation, enhance climate resilience, bolster energy security and attract global investment.

We stand committed to working with elected representatives and parties that place a strong emphasis on lowering the cost of living, enhancing efficiency and unlocking economic opportunities. With the right settings, our built environment can be a powerful lever to cut emissions, reduce energy bills, ease cost-of-living pressures and strengthen Australia's competitiveness in a changing world.

We are ready to contribute with solutions that deliver immediate savings and long-term value.



## Our policy priorities

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- 1. Make every building count: Unlock resilience, cut costs and power a net zero future**

Energy-efficient, all-electric buildings with flexible energy demand will boost energy security, reduce costs, cut emissions and enhance climate and national resilience – benefiting households, businesses and the economy.
- 2. Smarter rules, better buildings: Apply governance and regulatory frameworks to future-proof homes and buildings**

A well-structured regulatory environment ensures buildings are safe, comfortable and efficient – protecting quality while preparing for a changing climate.
- 3. Sharpen Australia’s competitive edge: Back innovation to unleash opportunity**

The world is demanding circular, low-carbon building materials and workforces that can deliver future-ready buildings and infrastructure. Supporting innovation will position Australia as a leader.
- 4. Sustainable finance, stronger economy: Invest in Australia’s future**

Attract and leverage international investment by reinforcing Australia’s commitment to climate targets, transparency and disclosure.
- 5. Government leadership, industry momentum: Lead by example to accelerate better building performance**

When governments set the standard, they help to shape the future. Ongoing commitment to net zero and circularity in government procurement drives better building performance and delivers economic, environmental and social benefits.





## 1. Make every building count: Unlock resilience, cut costs and power a net zero future

Energy-efficient, all-electric buildings with flexible energy demand will boost energy security, reduce costs, cut emissions and enhance climate and national resilience – benefiting households, businesses and the economy.

Buildings consume half of Australia’s electricity and generate almost a quarter of its emissions. They also offer some of the lowest-cost opportunities for emissions reduction.

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) report, [Unlocking the pathway: Why electrification is the key to net zero buildings](#)<sup>1</sup> confirms 100% electrification is the lowest cost, fastest emissions reduction pathway to net zero buildings.

ASBEC research shows that electrifying Australia’s buildings could save \$49 billion in energy costs between 2024 and 2050, compared to business-as-usual, and avoid 199 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>2</sup>

1. ASBEC. 2022. [Unlocking the pathway](#)  
2. ASBEC. 2022.

The technology we need to achieve zero-carbon-ready buildings exists today.

Many households, businesses and commercial building landlords are already transitioning to healthier, more energy efficient and resilient buildings. However, real and perceived barriers remain. Government action is needed to accelerate and scale up progress.

A clear, long-term strategy for the built environment – backed by the right policy settings – will give industry certainty and drive action. This will ensure our homes and buildings contribute to emissions reduction targets, can withstand future climate conditions, support national energy security and are efficient to operate.

Maximising energy efficiency and demand management are critical to electrification and can support a smooth transition away from gas while maintaining grid stability and affordability. By prioritising energy efficiency, homes and businesses can reduce overall consumption and ease demand on the network, reducing the need for costly infrastructure upgrades.



## GBCA recommends

Establish a clear plan for delivering zero-carbon-ready, resilient, future proof buildings by developing and aligning, in consultation with industry:

- a Built Environment Sector Plan, including sector-specific abatement targets for upfront and operational emissions
- an updated Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings
- a National Climate Resilience Plan
- a strategy for quality retrofits for existing commercial buildings and homes that prioritises low-income and vulnerable households.

Empower owners, buyers and renters with a single national rating for home energy performance, based on NatHERS for existing homes, and implement mandatory performance disclosure for homes at the point of sale or lease.

Continue to build on the internationally recognised success of NABERS and the Commercial Building Disclosure (CBD) program.

This includes a commitment to fully fund NABERS to continue its program of work and expand rating tools to other building types, as well as development of a pathway to expand the CBD program.

Reduce peak energy demand, improve energy security and reduce energy bills by supporting households to access consumer energy resources and supporting uptake of flexible energy demand in commercial buildings at scale.

For further detailed recommendations for government action to support a productive, healthy, resilient and sustainable built environment, see [Every Building Counts](#).<sup>3</sup>

See [From net zero to zero](#)<sup>4</sup> for recommendations to support the uptake of grid-interactive, electrified and demand-responsive buildings.

3. GBCA and Property Council of Australia. 2023. [Every Building Counts](#)

4. GBCA. 2023. [From net zero to zero: A discussion paper on grid-interactive efficient buildings.](#)



## 2. Smarter rules, better buildings: Apply governance and regulatory frameworks to future-proof homes and buildings

**A well-structured regulatory environment ensures buildings are safe, comfortable and efficient – protecting quality while preparing for a changing climate.**

Australia needs robust regulation to ensure homes and buildings are safe, healthy, resilient and affordable –not just today but in 40, 50, and even 80 years' time.

Our regulatory environment should support innovation, boost productivity and empower industry to build homes faster, and at higher levels of quality.

The National Construction Code (NCC) sets critical standards for safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability. It covers issues like fire protection, structural integrity, energy efficiency, as well as emerging challenges like embodied carbon and climate resilience. A single, nationally consistent building code has been key to improving productivity and reducing regulatory inconsistency across states and territories since the 1990s.

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) needs full resourcing to play its role coordinating safe and sustainable building regulations and to prevent regulatory fragmentation. Regular, comprehensive and consultative reviews of the NCC will help Australia to future-proof our buildings with proven cost-effective upgrades.

Failing to support the critical work of the ABCB will result in higher costs for industry, homeowners and occupants – alongside lost innovation opportunities and benefits to society.<sup>5</sup>



Fairwater, NSW, Frasers Property Australia Pty Ltd, 6 Star Green Star Communities v1.1

5. ABCB. [History](#). Retrieved April 2025.



## GBCA recommends

- Fully fund and resource the ABCB to lead effective, national coordination of building regulation, deliver regular reviews and improvements and anticipate future changes and challenges.
- Ensure a program of regular, ongoing updates to building regulation, including appropriate standards for energy efficiency, electrification, resilience and embodied carbon in line with an updated Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings and national climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.
- Adopt the Australian Productivity Commission's recommendation for an independent review of building regulation. This should focus on how the building code can contribute to improved productivity without compromising building quality or climate goals.
- Implement the next revision of the NCC in 2025 as planned.





### 3. Sharpen Australia's competitive edge: Back innovation to unleash opportunity

The world is demanding circular, low-carbon building materials and workforces that can deliver future-ready buildings and infrastructure. Supporting innovation will position Australia as a leader.

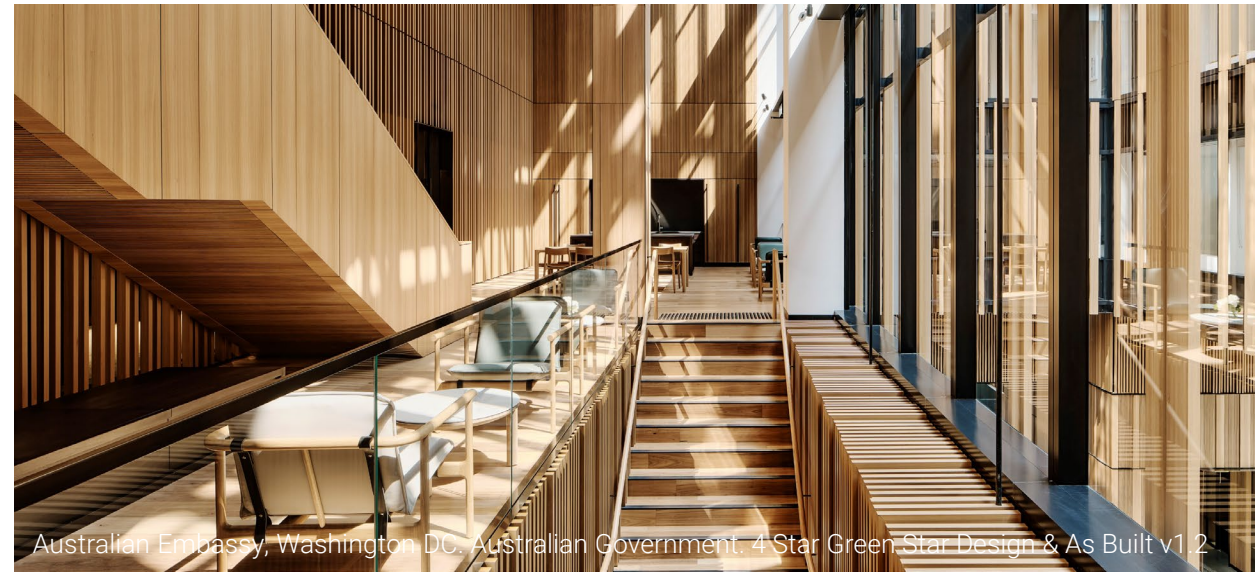
A growing, decarbonising economy needs a nimble, innovative and competitive supply chain. Demand is growing – both locally and globally – for circular, low-carbon building materials. Australian businesses must be encouraged and supported to drive innovation, capture new markets and contribute to global climate goals.

By prioritising low-carbon and circular materials, Australia can cut waste, reduce emissions and create new products and business eco systems.

The International Energy Agency<sup>6</sup> emphasises that all countries should be targeting net zero emissions from material use in buildings – a major contributing factor to the upfront carbon emissions of our buildings.

Unless we make significant reductions in upfront carbon, the construction of new homes will exhaust the built environment's share of Australia's carbon emissions budget by 2040. That's without factoring in the construction of other types of building. A global race for solutions is underway.

A workforce skilled in emerging technologies like electrification, in low-carbon materials and circular construction methods will strengthen Australia's reputation for high-quality, future-ready buildings and infrastructure.



Australian Embassy, Washington DC. Australian Government. 4 Star Green Star Design & As Built v1.2

6. IEA. 2022. [Net Zero by 2050. A roadmap for the global energy sector.](#)



## **GBCA recommends**

- Adopt the Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group's call for a national circular economy policy framework and built environment circular economy strategy. These will drive Australia's transition and galvanise action among industry, governments and researchers.
- Incentivise and provide support for innovative, low-carbon and circular materials and products.
- Integrate circular economy principles into policies, programs, procurement and projects to drive demand for sustainable materials and practices.
- Invest in skills, training and research to foster innovation and future-proof the built environment workforce. This includes ensuring that nationally recognised training initiatives for the built environment and its value chain are fit for purpose and meet industry's decarbonisation needs.



#### 4. Sustainable finance, stronger economy: Invest in Australia's future

Attract and leverage international investment by reinforcing Australia's commitment to climate targets, transparency and disclosure.

Australia is strategically positioned to leverage the \$3.3 trillion surge in sustainable finance and attract investment that can accelerate our net zero transition.

Australian organisations consistently rank highly on global sustainability indices like the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB) and the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. Our real estate sector is already deploying green finance instruments like green loans and bonds to drive decarbonisation efforts, support sustainable development, mitigate climate risks and meet Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals.

Global investment in the net zero transition was US\$2.1 trillion (AUD \$3.3 trillion) in 2024 – 20% more than Australia's GDP.<sup>7</sup> By fostering a stable policy and regulatory environment that encourages sustainable finance and investment, Australia can attract capital for high-impact projects.

7. BloombergNEF. 2025. [Global Investment in the Energy Transition Exceeded \\$2 Trillion for the First Time in 2024, According to BloombergNEF Report.](#)

Clear climate targets and transparent reporting provides certainty and will continue to strengthen investor confidence. The development of the Australian Sustainable Finance Taxonomy will complement widespread, voluntary adoption of reporting frameworks such as the Taskforce on Climate-related Disclosures and the Taskforce for Nature-related Disclosures, and the continued uptake of trusted, independent verification tools such as NABERS and Green Star.



The Greenhouse, QLD. Sekisui House Holdings. 6 Star Green Star Design & As Built v1.2





## GBCA recommends

- Maintain consistent climate policies and set an ambitious 2035 emissions reduction target to guide sector-specific abatement plans.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy that aligns Australia's financial ecosystem with the growing demand for ESG-focused investments.
- Incentivise investment in verified, sustainable assets, green technologies and projects with measurable carbon, nature-positive or social impact outcomes.
- Establish a robust green bond market to support Australian governments and companies in funding environmentally and socially impactful projects.
- Prepare industry for mandatory climate-related financial disclosure, including support for small businesses (which may be required to provide data to reporting entities) and encouragement for voluntary reporting.



## 5. Government leadership, industry momentum: Lead by example to accelerate better building performance

When governments set the standard, they help to shape the future. Ongoing commitment to net zero and circularity in government procurement drives better building performance and delivers economic, environmental and social benefits.

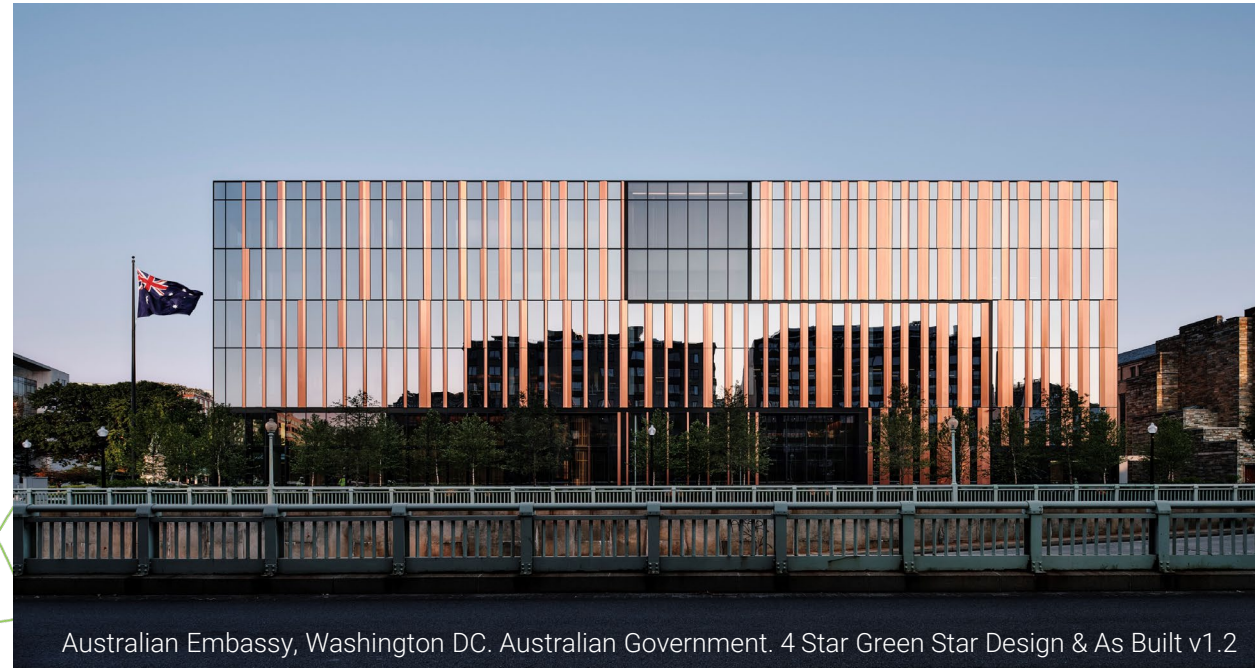
The Australian Government has a significant market presence in Australia's property sector. This includes 649 office tenancies of more than 500 square metres, equating to nearly 3 million square metres of office space.<sup>8</sup>

The Australian Government's procurement decisions are a powerful lever to drive improvements in building energy performance, emissions reductions and change across the supply chain.

Continuing commitment to the Australian Public Service (APS) Net Zero Emissions by 2030 target and Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy (NZGO Strategy), along with the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement (ESP) Policy and Reporting Framework, will transform government owned and occupied buildings and deliver long-term cost, energy and emissions savings.

By setting clear and consistent procurement expectations, the Australian Government provides certainty and confidence for the supply chain to invest in innovation, build capacity, and adopt low-carbon and circular products and practices.

Governments can also lead by example by setting mandatory embodied carbon targets for government-owned and funded projects. This can harness collective purchasing power to create economies of scale for low-carbon products and stimulate innovation.



Australian Embassy, Washington DC. Australian Government. 4 Star Green Star Design & As Built v1.2

8. Australian Government, 2023. [Australian Government Office Occupancy Report](#)



## GBCA recommends

- Continue implementing the NZGO Strategy and ESP Policy, sharing learnings and upskilling industry.
- Apply trusted and credible rating systems like Green Star and NABERS to existing assets and accommodation, as well as to all new government projects and leases.
- Introduce embodied carbon objectives, targets and requirements for government owned and funded construction projects. Embed net-zero and low-carbon considerations into decision-making for all government construction projects from the early planning stages and provide incentives for bids to exceed minimum expectations, including through tender evaluation criteria, financial incentives or expedited approvals processes.
- Continue to partner with state and territory governments to expand the Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative. This includes delivery of performance upgrades to existing public and community housing stock, as well as the design and delivery of high-performance, all-electric new housing.



To find out more about our policy priorities for the 2025 federal election, contact us below:

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