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2017-18 Pre-Budget Submission

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the 2017-18 Commonwealth Budget.

The GBCA established in 2002, is a member based, not-for-profit organisation committed to developing buildings, cities and communities that are productive, liveable, healthy, resilient and sustainable:

- **We rate** the sustainability of buildings and communities through Australia's only national, voluntary, holistic rating system – Green Star.
- **We educate** industry and government practitioners and decision-makers and promote green building programs, technologies, design practices and operations.
- **We advocate** for the sustainable transformation of the built environment.

The policy challenges demanding a response in this Budget, to boost productivity, maintain fiscal discipline, reduce emissions, increase our resilience, and maintain and increase our standard of living, are substantial. The policies announced and funded, and those that follow, will be instrumental in meeting these challenges.

Following Australia's commitments in Paris to reduce our emissions to limit global warming to well below 2°C there can be no delay to policies and programs that help deliver that goal in line with the Government's review of climate change policy through 2017. Similarly, the Government's commitment to our cities and communities through city deals must be supported by appropriate policy and funding to maximise the opportunities created through the delivery of priority infrastructure and investment.

To place Australia on a clear, long-term pathway delivering both increased productivity and sustainability, the GBCA advocates government leadership across our five policy priorities:

1. Achieving more productive, liveable, sustainable and healthy cities

The Australian Government should leverage city deals to support better governance for improved decisions, ongoing investment, long-term integrated planning and sustainable development across our major cities and urban growth areas.

The GBCA recommends immediate and long-term increases in infrastructure funding to substantiate future city deals. This funding should be supported by policies and instruments that encourage co-investment by state, territory, local governments and the private sector. This should include initiatives that facilitate asset recycling and value capture in consultation with industry and the community.

In our cities and communities priority infrastructure should be delivered with success measured through the application of the National City Performance Framework. The delivery of better economic, social and environmental outcomes at a community and project level should complement this through independent third party certification of outcomes, like that provided by Green Star.

2. Securing more resilient communities.

The Australian Government's investment supporting the resilience of our communities and cities is critical to help manage risks associated with future economic, environmental and social change.

As part of this leadership the GBCA recommends ongoing funding to support the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF). With the work of the NCCARF having delivered concrete and positive outcomes over the years, the GBCA recognises its significant potential in further contributing to the creation of resilient communities. We encourage the Government to endorse a third round of funding for NCCARF as it will be critical to the increased uptake of important resilience research and products which are currently in the process of being delivered.

3. Delivering a low carbon, high performing built environment.

Increasing the efficiency of our built environment is critical to help meet Australia's energy productivity goals, reduce emissions and help keep global warming below 2°C with net zero emissions by 2050.

As the Government commences its review of climate change policies this year, the GBCA recommends collaboration between government and industry to incentivise new markets that leverage the opportunity to deliver efficiencies within the building sector. This could include initiatives like green depreciation to accelerate uptake of energy upgrades to existing commercial buildings when refurbished, and target the mid-tier commercial building sector specifically.

The GBCA continues to recommend leadership by example through best practice procurement by government demonstrating the opportunity within our built environment, and driving market demand. Government should implement and enforce more ambitious targets for government-owned and occupied buildings, and incentivise energy efficiency through their supply chains.

4. Raising minimum standards through the National Construction Code.

The GBCA recommends continued support for the upgrade of the National Construction Code to raise minimum energy performance standards by 2019, and help establish a trajectory for ongoing upgrades to support continuous improvement across industry.

5. Facilitating sustainable utility infrastructure

The role of sustainable utility infrastructure should be fully considered as part of the Government's climate change policy review. Reforms should be considered to: facilitate district-based utilities; address energy market barriers; ensure and provide fair tariff structures and value for distributed solutions; and improve access to networks.

Strong leadership is essential in this Budget across these five priorities if we are to successfully tackle interconnected challenges such as climate change, sustainable population growth, affordable housing and infrastructure planning and delivery. The GBCA looks forward to working collaboratively with the Government to support the sustainable transformation of the built environment and deliver our vision for more healthy resilient and positive places for people,

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 8239 6200, or via email at jonathan.cartledge@gbca.org.au, for further information.

Yours sincerely



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