

## HIGH PERFORMANCE BUILDINGS OPEN THE DOOR TO AUSTRALIA'S CLIMATE FUTURE

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Australia's building sector can deliver up to 28% of Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target, save \$20 billion and create healthier, more productive cities if a suite of targeted policies are introduced, according to a new report by the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC).

ASBEC President Prof Ken Maher said "Buildings account for almost a quarter of Australia's emissions. This sector must be a strong focus if Australia is to meet its international obligations under the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

"Over the last decade, market leaders in the building sector have shown that rapid improvements are possible, and this report demonstrates just how much more opportunity exists."

"Our modelling found that without further action, buildings would consume almost half of Australia's total national carbon budget. This is not an option."

"The good news is that major improvements are possible with the right public policies."

Key findings of the *Low Carbon, High Performance* report, authored by ClimateWorks Australia, show:

- buildings account for 23% of Australia's emissions, so strong action in buildings is essential to meet our international obligations to transition to zero net emissions by around 2050
- buildings can achieve zero carbon by 2050 using existing technologies
- in addition to \$20 billion in energy savings, buildings can deliver one quarter of the national emissions target and over half of the national energy productivity target by 2030
- leading property companies have demonstrated a rapid improvement in energy performance is possible, but a range of complex barriers limits progress across the sector

Property Council of Australia Chief Executive and chair of the ASBEC's Energy Efficiency and Emissions Task Group Ken Morrison said the report was a blueprint for government action.

"Major emissions reduction gains can be made with the property industry, but it requires a focused plan that includes regulation, strong incentives, energy market reform and market information to support transformation."

"When we're talking about the built environment, we're talking about literally millions of individual home owners as well as thousands of businesses across the property supply chain. That is a level of complexity which requires a nuanced approach."

"Australia consistently tops international tables for green building leadership, and we have more than 1,000 low-carbon, Green Star-rated buildings around the country. While buildings generate 23 per cent of Australia's carbon emissions, we have the technology, the skills and the knowledge to halve emissions, while also boosting the productivity, health and wellbeing of the people who live, learn, work and play in our buildings," says Romilly Madew, Chief Executive Officer of the Green Building Council of Australia.

"This report makes a clear business case that the residential and commercial building sector can punch well above its weight to help Australia achieve a goal of net zero emissions before 2050. Zero carbon buildings are not a pipedream but a reality." said WWF spokesperson Monica Richter.



The *Low Carbon, High Performance* report provides a roadmap with five policy solutions to drive the transition to a zero carbon building sector and improve the living and working environment of all Australians:

1. A national plan towards 2050 zero carbon buildings
2. Strong mandatory minimum standards for energy performance of buildings and appliances
3. Targeted incentives and programs, including
  - Accelerated depreciation to encourage the uptake of green plant and equipment,
  - Stamp duty discounts for the purchase of green homes and properties, and
  - Planning incentives
4. Energy market reforms, to remove market distortions that undermine the business case for energy efficiency and distributed generation
5. Enabling data, information, research and education measures

Prof Maher said delaying action to reduce emissions from buildings would mean a substantial amount of opportunity is lost.

“Every year we delay will cost us significantly in emissions, climate change, money, and quality of life. Installing inefficient equipment or appliances locks in excessive emissions for many decades into the future. Even five years of delay in the take-up of these opportunities could lead to \$24 billion in wasted energy costs and more than 170 megatonnes of lost emissions reduction opportunities.” said Prof Maher.

“The time is now. ASBEC calls on governments to open the door to our low carbon future.”

#### **For comment**

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#### **Further reading**

[Media brief: Low carbon, High Performance](#)

[Low carbon, High Performance Summary report](#)

[Low carbon, High Performance Full report](#)

#### **About ASBEC**

*The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) is a collective of leading industry organisations committed to a sustainable built environment in Australia. ASBEC’s membership consists of a range of key industry government and academic organisations who are involved in the planning, design, delivery and operation of our built environment and who are concerned with the economic, social and environmental performance of the sector.*

*ASBEC’s activities, including research and policy development on built environment issues, are an example of a collaborative, co-ordinated approach undertaken across all segments of the built environment. ASBEC works actively to develop and promote leading practice in the design, planning and operation of our cities, at a buildings, precincts and citywide scale.*

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