



A policy plan for the built environment

POLICY PAPER

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Document Information

Contact for Enquiries

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact:

Name: Andrew Eagles

Project Role: Chief Executive Officer

Email: Andrew.eaglesCEO@nzgbc.org.nz

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Why drive change in buildings?

The case for improving the energy efficiency of our building stock is easy to make. New Zealand has a long-term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. Every sector of the economy will have to chip in to meet this target and buildings are no exception, being responsible for 20% of New Zealand's energy related greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the buildings we are constructing now will still be in operation in 2050 so it's vital that we do not lock in a legacy of poorly performing buildings.

It's also important to acknowledge the synergies between our buildings and our transport systems. Fuel used in transport is responsible for around 20% of our total greenhouse gas emissions and much of this fuel use is down to the way in which we plan our cities. New Zealand needs to continue to have grown up conversations about how certain patterns of development reinforce car dependence.



But the argument for better buildings is not just about the environment, it is also about the health of New Zealanders.

Health - To put it plainly our homes are making us sick. New Zealand has the second-highest rate of asthma in the world. One in four New Zealand children and one in six adults have asthma largely due to mould in poorly ventilated, heated and insulated homes.

We can, and should, do much better.

In the US, California has a plan to make all new homes zero net energy by 2020. Similarly, the 27 countries that make up the European Union have a directive to make all new buildings nearly zero energy by the same date. In stark contrast, the energy requirements of New Zealand's woefully inadequate Building Code have not been substantially updated since 2007 and Government has no plans to do so.

The rush to build more homes to deal with our housing crisis risks is leaving a legacy of substandard housing unless decision-makers drive the uptake of much higher standards.

Productivity - Green buildings are also good for the economy. There is now a well-established link between green buildings and productivity. Better ventilated and day lit offices have more productive workers. This is increasingly being recognised by the investment community as more and more international property investment funds looks to exclusively hold green property portfolios.

The following policy document sets out our policy priorities. We welcome your feedback on these. We would especially welcome any organisations wishing to support or contribute to our call for change.



NZGBC calls on the Government to work with the sector to establish a national roadmap for better homes and buildings.

Around the world countries are setting out plans to get to a lower carbon more productive future, including plans to decarbonise the building industry. This provides certainty for the sector and allows suppliers and innovators to invest millions in new products and techniques to help transform industry.

The 2017 OECD Environmental Performance Review of New Zealand notes that the country has low building standards by international comparison and calls on the Government to modernise and strengthen the Building Code. The Royal Society report Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy for New Zealand 2016 also outlined that moving to low carbon buildings is a key part of a low carbon future.

NZGBC calls on Government to provide certainty for the sector at a national level by setting a trajectory for buildings and homes (new build and existing) to get to zero carbon. It is recommended that this policy include interim targets for 2020 and 2030 and a national working group is established to develop the proposals.



NZGBC will continue to challenge the property, construction and investment community to deliver a low carbon quality future.

The move to a low carbon future will require commitment from both government and the private sector. NZGBC will continue to engage with the private sector and industry, identifying and working with key influencers to actively encourage the construction of quality buildings with a reduced carbon footprint.

We will continue to promote the benefits of sustainable building practices to developers, asset owners and tenants alike, to drive change within the New Zealand marketplace. Events run, and training delivered by NZGBC will be relevant, informative and inspiring, to enable up skilling of industry in support of this mission.

We will continue to provide rating tools and independent certification processes which provide evidence supporting New Zealand's trajectory towards a low carbon future within the building sector.



NZGBC will provide useful tools and develop these with the sector, including tools that widen the market to existing buildings AND other types of buildings.

For ten years NZGBC has offered building rating tools to the New Zealand market:

- **Green Star**, launched in NZ in 2007 and applied to the design and as-built phases of non-residential construction projects
- **Homestar**, developed in conjunction with BRANZ and released in 2011 for residential dwellings, including detached dwellings, terraced housing and apartments
- **NABERSNZ**, supported by EECA to benchmark the energy performance of commercial offices, launched to the NZ market in 2013

The New Zealand Green Building Council is committed to: providing the market with useful tools and working with the sector to develop these tools to ensure relevance and uptake. These tools will also be broadened to include **existing buildings** and **community-scale developments**

In line with this commitment, the NZGBC is currently:

- actively engaging with project teams and developers involved in community-scale developments to promote use of the **Green Star Communities** framework and assessment process.
- working towards the launch of the **Green Star Performance** rating tool to the New Zealand market in late 2017. This rating tool has a focus on improving building operations, can be applied to existing buildings of all typologies, and is streamlined for use on building portfolios.
- undertaking a significant review of the **Homestar** rating tool and certification processes, with a focus on making it faster, cheaper and less complicated.



NZGBC calls on Government to lead with their own portfolio of homes and buildings.

We call on Government to:

- construct buildings and homes to certified green standards where they build directly or through development agencies
- gain independent accreditation on the performance of office and other buildings they use (Green Star Performance and/or NABERSNZ)

In doing so, Government will:

- deliver more liveable, prosperous and sustainable communities
- demonstrate leadership and a commitment to long-term sustainability
- ensure credibility through independent, third party verification of best practice outcomes or above, providing transparency of the performance levels achieved
- work collaboratively with private sector developers to ensure the best possible community outcomes
- ensure asset values are retained, and operating and maintenance costs are reduced
- support the health and wellbeing of building occupants
- mitigate future risks, such as extreme weather events and regulatory changes



NZGBC calls on local government to facilitate better buildings and homes through the levers they have, thereby facilitating improved quality at a time when density is increasing.

Where only minimal or inadequate regulation is in place to ensure building quality, incentive programmes can offer support to building projects improving on minimum performance levels. Incentive programmes are generally received more positively than mandated requirements as they leave the power of choice within the hands of the building owner/ developer, enabling them to take ownership of decisions made with regards to sustainable initiatives implemented on a building project.

Local Government can encourage the uptake of green building practices by:

- reducing development contributions for building projects able to demonstrate reduced demand on public infrastructure, or those contributing positively to public infrastructure
- reducing resource or building consent processing times for projects targeting green building certifications
- offering increased density (for example number of dwellings, site coverage or height allowances) in return for better buildings
- requesting accreditations such as Homestar or Green Star without requiring achievement of a minimum standard (e.g. 6 Homestar)
- rates remissions for buildings lessening their impact on public infrastructure

Partnership working and other suggestions

While leadership can provide the vision and the drive, the global challenge of climate change will not be overcome in isolation. We simply cannot do it alone.

We will work with not-for-profit, government, education and research organisations to enhance and leverage the objectives of the policy position paper in New Zealand. We will aim for Green Star to be recognised as a mechanism that demonstrates commitment to these targets.

We will continue to work closely with NABERSNZ to accelerate the adoption of NABERSNZ Energy ratings in commercial offices. We will continue to partner with the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) and other Asia Pacific GBCs to accelerate the pace of change in this significant geographical zone.

Thank you to all those that have contributed ideas and suggestions for these policies.

Next steps

The feedback of members and our broader stakeholder network is mission critical in helping to achieve these objectives. Please email us with your thoughts or suggestions andrew.eaglesCEO@nzgbc.org.nz
Feedback is open until Friday 12 May.

About NZGBC

The NZGBC is a not-for-profit industry organisation dedicated to a sustainable built environment. The Council achieves this by setting standards of best practice through green building rating tools; education and training for all areas of the building industry value chain; and providing access to networks, information and resources for our members to lead the market.

To learn more about NZGBC, our rating tools and read our latest news please visit www.nzgbc.org.nz