



Fab, Fast & Fair Housing

AMPLIFY's submission to the Australian Building Codes Board on a National Voluntary Certification Scheme for Manufacturers of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

Executive Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute a community perspective to the consultation on the National Voluntary Certification Scheme for Manufacturers of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). The communities' voice is too often missing from policy making but, working together, we can change this.

AMPLIFY is a national, non-partisan organisation powered by everyday Australians who are stepping up to find consensus around bold, practical solutions to the country's biggest challenges—starting with housing.

In early 2025, we brought together 100 representative Australians for a national deliberation on housing. After reviewing 13 expert-led reforms, 96% backed accelerating modern housing.

To better support the uptake of modern housing, AMPLIFY's Fab, Fast & Fair campaign calls on the ABCB and its partners to modernise regulations by:

- Defining modern construction consistently across national, state and local government planning and building regulatory arrangements, harmonising nationally.
- Streamlining planning, building and consumer protections to achieve regulatory neutrality between modern and conventional methods of construction.
- Streamlining certification and compliance pathways for modern construction building design, systems and products so approved products and systems can be accepted and used elsewhere.

Terminology: *AMPLIFY refers to ‘modern housing’ and ‘modern construction’—language that invites trust and avoids framing these homes as ‘other’. When we say ‘modern housing’, we are referring to the spectrum of modern construction approaches and the modern housing types they produce, including prefabricated and modular homes, as well as process innovations such as Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) and digital design integration.*

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation on the National Voluntary Certification Scheme for Manufacturers of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). We commend the ABCB for its part in modernising regulatory arrangements for home building in Australia.

AMPLIFY is a non-partisan, not for profit organisation, established in 2024. We are a national community of everyday Australians who are stepping off the sidelines and helping to build a better Australia. AMPLIFY uses the power of community to identify the solutions to our biggest challenges and to campaign for those ideas.

Australia is facing a national housing crisis. The promise of affordable and secure housing has been broken—and it is impacting people across the spectrum, including those experiencing homelessness, renters, and current or hopeful homeowners.

Levels of trust in government to address the housing crisis are low. Only 17% of Australians trust government more than fellow citizens, compared to 55% who trust fellow citizens more than governments when it comes to solving housing issues¹.

AMPLIFY is changing this by amplifying the community’s view in public policy discourse.

The community backs action to accelerate modern housing

In February 2025, our national AMPLIFICATION on housing brought together a representative group of 100 Australians to assess 13 expert-led housing reforms. This microcosm of Australians analysed the evidence and weighed policy options to address the housing crisis.

The people’s message was clear: bold, system-wide action is needed, and boosting housing supply is key.

An overwhelming **96% of participants backed accelerating modern prefabricated housing**, with strong support across all ages, regions and political views—signalling a broad national appetite for modern building solutions.

¹ According to a representative sample of Australians in the 2025 AMPLIFY Insights poll, scheduled for public release in September 2025.

The community identified modern housing as a policy priority capable of improving construction productivity and accelerating housing supply. Participants viewed prefabrication methods as a practical solution—particularly in regional and greenfield contexts—if supported by appropriate procurement, regulatory and skills settings.



Let's build those homes 30% quicker so people can start to live in them. As long as the building regulations are adhered to, this is a great way to get houses built quicker. Developers can build these as well as Mum and Dad investors. We could also have fab prefab tiny homes for our most vulnerable community members.



– 52-year-old mortgagee in VIC



[This reform] creates unity across states for private sector to boost housing naturally. If implemented and business built around the new regulations, it could reduce requirement of labour, reduce cost to build, and with shorter build times, it can increase supply.



– 24-year-old renter in NSW



[MMC] can be mobilised reasonably rapidly, provides an opportunity to establish a national standard code, leads to faster construction and fewer trades on site and may produce cheaper housing.



– 82-year-old homeowner South Australia

After information and debate, participants identified the following key benefits of modern homes:

- Faster build times enabled by factory-based production;
- Greater consistency and quality assurance;
- Significant reductions in material waste; and
- Safer and more attractive jobs in controlled environments.

In a recent nationally representative AMPLIFY poll conducted in collaboration with YouGov, over **70% of Australians supported the use of more prefabricated housing to address Australia's current housing shortage.**

Updating regulations and building codes, using purchasing power to buy at scale, and investing in skills and training were ranked by respondents as some of the top actions governments should take to support modern housing. Only 9% of Australians polled thought Governments should take no action in relation to enabling modern construction.

This submission reflects this public consensus for **Fab, Fast & Fair Housing**. Specifically, a consensus for reform that:

- seeds the pipeline of modern homes;
- mobilises skills for modern methods of construction; and
- modernises regulations pertaining to housing.

This submission focusses on ‘modernising regulations’.

Policy recommendations

AMPLIFY supports all elements of the work program of the ABCB contained in the Issues Paper. Implementing consistent definitions and a fit-for-purpose certification approach for MMC are critical elements of a wider set of regulatory reforms necessary for greater uptake of modern construction in Australia.

However, these measures alone and their three-year timeframe are insufficient. AMPLIFY’s policy position, detailed below, is broader. It contains important reforms that must be pursued in coordination with the work that the ABCB is responsible for. The ABCB is uniquely positioned to play a stronger coordinating and harmonising role across State and Territory regulatory systems and reform processes underway or planned, of which there are at least six, including this one and the Federal Government’s new ‘NCC streamlining project’.

A ‘regulatory taskforce’ is needed to join up these processes and remove gaps and duplication of effort between them. Such a taskforce, which the ABCB and Standards Australia would be key voices in, should undertake the following:

- Streamline and modernise the rules across layers of regulation, particularly between the three layers of government where inconsistencies and regulatory burden have proliferated.
- Expedite the timeline for agreeing MMC definitions, the above-mentioned streamlined rules and MMC compliance arrangements.
- Put all jurisdictions on expedited and coordinated pathways to implement harmonised modern regulatory arrangements. Without harmonisation or integration of jurisdiction-specific building codes, certified elements may still be subject to reinspection to meet local requirements, undermining the efficiencies a centralised scheme is meant to deliver.

- A communications and engagement programme with industry running in parallel with the regulatory review process. At present, industry's lack of awareness of MMC and an MMC compliance scheme puts the scheme at serious risk of low take-up, a situation faced by New Zealand's BuiltReady.²

These recommendations aim to create the conditions necessary for MMC to prosper, enabling the industry and consumers to access its benefits of efficiency, certainty, and sustainability.

AMPLIFY's specific recommendations for modernising regulations are outlined below.

Define modern construction explicitly and consistently recognise new methods in planning rules and building codes at Federal, State, Territory, and Local Government levels.

This can be achieved by updating regulatory instruments with a comprehensive classification framework that reflects the broad spectrum of modern prefabricated systems. As identified in the Issues Paper, a broad and flexible definition of modern construction will enable the future integration of emerging technologies without requiring constant amendment to regulatory definitions.

The definition of modern construction should include, but not be limited to, off-site and near-site construction, product-based construction, Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA), Building Information Modelling (BIM), manufactured housing, tiny homes, modular units, pods, container homes, and transportable housing.

Streamline Federal, State, Territory and Local Government planning, building and consumer protection legislation, ensuring regulatory neutrality between modern and conventional methods.

This includes adding specific prefab and modular typologies with standard jointing, waterproofing and fixing methods into the DTS pathway; easing design requirements to better accommodate, and not unnecessarily penalise, modern design; and removing other Federal, State and Local Government regulatory frictions arising from outdated rules applied to modern construction. Where there is a choice, prioritise regulatory neutrality for rules most relevant to social, affordable and key worker housing, so these housing types can benefit from fast-tracked approvals processes sooner.

² As of 28 August 2025.

Streamline certification and compliance pathways for modern construction building design, systems and products.

This includes fast-tracking the establishment of the National Voluntary Certification Scheme for Manufacturers of Modern Methods of Construction to launch sooner than its intended date of 2027-28, to provide assurance that buildings meet rigorous standards for safety, durability, energy efficiency and design quality; and to ensure clear allocation of legal and operational duties across all parties involved in the design, manufacture, transport, assembly, and certification of building components (chain of responsibility).

We recommend emphasising the traceability approach in the NCC to support quality, transparency, accountability and compliance of modern homes in a light-touch and efficient way and standardised testing for key building performance measures, such as waterproofing, fire resistance, and acoustic performance, enabling one-time-only product certification (within relevant time periods).

Conclusion

Modern housing is not a complete solution, but it offers credible, scalable contributions to improved productivity, faster housing delivery, and new workforce pathways. Support from the public is clear. Realising this potential depends on a nationally coordinated policy response.

AMPLIFY urges the ABCB to act swiftly to deliver the certification scheme and nationally consistent definitions ahead of the planned 2027–28 launch. This work should be done in coordination with other related regulatory reform efforts, including the NCC streamlining project and state-led regulatory reform processes. A ‘regulation taskforce’ should drive this forward in an integrated way.

AMPLIFY’s proven deliberative methods can help the ABCB build consensus across industry and the community. We have developed a scalable approach to consensus building, supported by a comprehensive toolkit of deliberative and participatory processes.

We welcome the opportunity to provide further community insights and perspectives on modern housing and to support the ABCB in consensus building activities to inform and engage the broader construction industry.

Sources

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