

14 October 2026

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Building Policy and Reform
Housing Building and Land Delivery
Department of Transport and Planning

Via email: building.policy@transport.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr O'Meara

Joint submission: Implementing carpentry registration and licensing

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed *Implementing Carpentry Registration and Licensing* consultation.

This is a joint submission from the Office of the Building Monitor (OBM) and Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC).

The Building Monitor is an independent advocate for consumers to improve their experience of the building system.

Consumer Action Law Centre is an independent, not-for profit consumer organisation with deep expertise in consumer and consumer credit laws, policy and direct knowledge of people's experience of modern market. We make life easier for people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage in Australia, through financial counselling, legal advice, legal representation, policy and campaigns

Our position

Carpenters play a fundamental role in residential construction, delivering work critical to a home's structural integrity, weatherproofing, safety and overall quality. Defects in carpentry work can have far-reaching consequences for consumers.

We support a registration and licensing framework that:

- establishes minimum competency standards and strengthens accountability for those undertaking carpentry work;
- improves transparency about practitioner qualifications, registration status and disciplinary history to support informed consumer decision-making;
- adopts a proportionate, risk-based approach that focuses regulatory effort on activities with the greatest potential for consumer harm; and
- has implementation arrangements that maintain consumer protections while recognising workforce capability, training capacity and transition considerations.

Consumer outcomes, accountability and transparency

Consumer protection and confidence should be a priority in considering carpentry registration and licensing.

Consumers often have limited information when selecting a building practitioner and are generally not well placed to assess a tradesperson's competence, qualifications or regulatory history before engaging them.

Registration and licensing can help address these information gaps by establishing minimum competency requirements and improving transparency about carpenters' qualifications, registration status and disciplinary history. This can support more informed consumer decision-making and strengthen accountability by making it easier to identify practitioners responsible for defective work and undertake regulatory action where appropriate.

While registration and licensing cannot eliminate defective work, they establish minimum standards and provide an important safeguard that promotes accountability, informed consumer choice and confidence in the building system. They can also support a regulatory approach that deters poor conduct and practices, by helping ensure higher-risk work is undertaken by appropriately qualified and accountable practitioners before consumer harm occurs.

A proportionate, risk-based approach

We support the proposed risk-based approach to regulating carpentry work.

Defective carpentry work can have severe and long-lasting consequences for consumers, particularly where it affects the structural integrity, weatherproofing, durability or safety of a building. For example, a case study from Weir and Hall's *Case for Transformation* report identified major defects affecting timber and roof framing, alongside other serious defects. More than four years after the builder abandoned the project, the home remained incomplete and rectification costs were estimated at \$670,000 against an original contract price of \$497,000.¹

Licensing requirements, competency standards and regulatory oversight should reflect the level of consumer risk and potential harm. Where carpentry work has the potential to affect structural integrity, weatherproofing, durability or safety, stronger competency and accountability requirements are justified. A proportionate framework should focus regulatory effort on higher-risk work while avoiding unnecessary regulatory burden where risks are lower.

Implementation should support workforce capability while maintaining standards

These reforms align and can dovetail with various reforms already in train under Government's Buyer Protection Reforms. Key to the reforms' success will be effective implementation will be important in achieving the objectives of the reform.

¹ Bronwyn Weir and Frances Hall, [The Case for Transformation](#) (2024), Case Study 1, pp. 10-11.

Transition arrangements should recognise existing competence, qualifications and experience while maintaining appropriate standards. Where competence can be demonstrated, implementation should avoid unnecessary duplication of training, assessment or administrative requirements.

Implementation should also ensure that any supporting education, training and assessment arrangements are fit for purpose and operationally ready. Clear and credible competency pathways are important to ensuring the framework delivers meaningful consumer protection outcomes.

Implementation should provide clear guidance, effective communication and sufficient lead time to enable practitioners, businesses and consumers to adapt to the new requirements. A well-designed transition process can support workforce capability while maintaining confidence in the integrity of the regulatory framework.

Consumer protection and implementation impacts should be considered together

The potential impacts of registration and licensing, including workforce, implementation and affordability impacts, should be carefully considered.

However, consideration of regulatory burden should extend beyond the direct costs of registration and licensing. A balanced assessment should consider both the costs of regulation and the significant costs – financial and non-financial – of defective building work, including rectification expenses, delays and disputes borne by consumers. The key consideration is whether the framework delivers meaningful consumer benefits while minimising unnecessary costs and unintended consequences.

Conclusion

OBM and CALC support the introduction of registration and licensing for carpenters. A proportionate, risk-based framework can strengthen consumer protection, improve building outcomes and enhance confidence in the building system.

Kind regards,



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