



ABCBC

Continuing professional development on the National Construction Code

Discussion paper on BCR
recommendation 3

July 2021

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Executive summary

In 2017, Building Ministers authorised an assessment of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the Australian building and construction industry. Recommendation 3 of the resulting [Building Confidence Report](#) (BCR) states “*that each jurisdiction requires all practitioners to undertake compulsory continuing professional development (CPD) on the National Construction Code (NCC)*”.¹

In response to this recommendation, the BCR Implementation Team (the Team) within the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) is developing model guidance to provide assistance to governments and industry and to facilitate national consistency. The Team has received input from an Experts Panel², an industry *CPD* working group and governments.

Consistent with the objective of BCR recommendation 3, the purpose of the model guidance is to assist:

- jurisdictions establishing or amending mandatory ‘CPD on the NCC’ requirements, and
- development and integration of *CPD on the NCC* into *CPD schemes*.

This discussion paper explores and proposes content that could be included in national model guidance, in the form of 6 principles. These principles are listed in Table 1.

Examples are provided throughout this discussion paper (in grey boxes) to assist interpretation and understanding of the proposed principles. Consultation questions are included throughout the document (in blue boxes) to facilitate feedback from stakeholders.

Responses to the consultation questions will inform the final national model guidance to be considered by Building Ministers in late 2021. Following consideration by

¹ Shergold and Weir, [Building Confidence report](#), February 2018, pg 18.

² [Building Confidence Report Implementation Team](#)

Ministers, governments and industry will then consider implementing reforms to *CPD* based on the agreed national model guidance.

Table 1 Principles for CPD on the NCC

Principles for CPD on the NCC	
1	CPD on the NCC is compulsory
2	The amount, type and expiration of CPD on the NCC is regulated
3	CPD on the NCC is evidence-based and is complemented by ethics CPD
4	Transparent and consultation-based CPD on the NCC
5	Evidence and records of CPD on the NCC are retained
6	CPD on the NCC is oversighted

Acronyms and definitions

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this document:

ABCB means Australian Building Codes Board

AIA means Australian Institute of Architects

AIB means Australian Institute of Building

AIBS means Australian Institute of Building Surveyors

AMR means Automatic Mutual Recognition

BCR means Building Confidence Report

CPD means Continuing Professional Development

EA means Engineers Australia

FPAS means Fire Protection Accreditation Scheme

HIA means Housing Industry Association

MPA means Master Plumbers Association

NCC means National Construction Code

NRF means National Registration Framework

PSA means Professional Standards Authority

PSS means Professional Standards Scheme

RICS means Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

RTO means Registered Training Organisation

TAFE means Technical and Further Education

VBA means Victorian Building Authority

Definitions

Terminology used in the education and building industry differs across jurisdictions and among *practitioners*. The definitions used in this paper aim to assist readers with interpretation and to clarify the intent of the proposed model guidance. Definitions have been italicised throughout the document.

Explanation of the definitions, including examples, are provided for some terms as notes. The notes do not form part of the definitions.

Some of the definitions provided in this paper are proposed for inclusion in a Preferred Terms Publication due to their importance in supporting nationally consistent implementation of *CPD on the NCC*. As notes do not form part of the definitions, they would not be included in the Publication. The Preferred Terms Publication is discussed later in this paper.

For the purposes of this paper the following definitions apply:

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) ‘involves maintaining and enhancing the knowledge, skills and experience related to professional activities following completion of formal training.’³

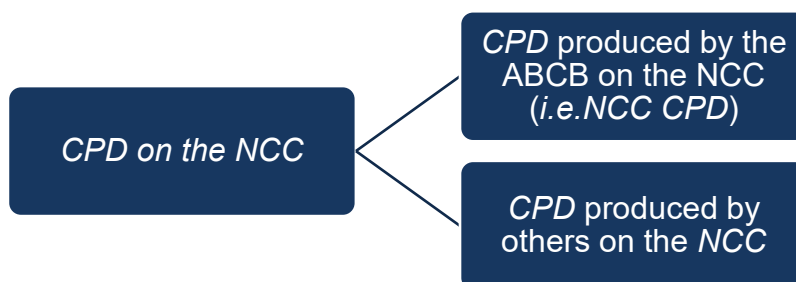
CPD activity means an action or undertaking that contributes towards an individual *practitioner’s CPD*.

CPD content means *CPD* educational material on a particular subject.

CPD on the NCC means a *CPD activity* that primarily contains content on the *National Construction Code (NCC)*. This includes content on *NCC* referenced documents.

Note: The term ‘CPD on the NCC’ captures *NCC CPD* that is produced by the ABCB (refer to definition below), as well as *CPD activities* with content on the *NCC* that have been developed by others. Figure 1 illustrates this term.

Figure 1 The term ‘CPD on the NCC’



CPD provider means an entity, typically an organisation or government that develops and/or provides *CPD activities* or *CPD content*.

³Shergold and Weir, [Building Confidence report](#), February 2018, p8.

Note: For example, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) is a *CPD provider*.

CPD providers are usually accredited or approved by individual *CPD scheme administrators* to ensure the development and/or provision of *CPD activities* or *CPD content* is appropriate.

CPD scheme means a documented set of plans, rules and arrangements for *practitioners* to undertake *CPD* and includes both government and industry *CPD schemes*.

Note: For example, there is an Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) *CPD scheme*, an Australian Institute of Building (AIB) *CPD scheme*, an Engineers Australia (EA) *CPD scheme* and a Tasmanian government *CPD scheme*.

CPD scheme administrator means the entity that is responsible for governance and oversight of a particular *CPD scheme* and typically has responsibility for prescribing minimum amounts of *CPD* and *CPD content* for specific *practitioner* disciplines. The term includes both government bodies and industry association entities that could administer a *CPD scheme*.

Note: AIBS, AIB and Engineers Australia are examples of industry association entities that are *CPD scheme administrators*. The Tasmanian government is an example of a government *CPD scheme administrator*.

National Construction Code (NCC) means the Building Code of Australia (BCA), Volumes One and Two; and the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA), Volume Three. Reference to the *NCC* includes all *NCC* referenced documents such as Australian Standards.

NCC CPD means the *CPD activities* and *CPD content* developed by the ABCB on the *NCC*. *NCC CPD* is captured by the term *CPD on the NCC*.

Note: For more information, refer to the definition of *CPD on the NCC* above and Figure 1.

Practitioner means an individual involved in the design, construction or certification of buildings and identified in the National Registration Framework (NRF) which was developed in response to BCR recommendations 1 and 2.

Preferred Terms Publication

The BCR noted each jurisdiction has developed different ways of describing the same or similar terms and processes, and that this makes it difficult for governments to compare systems and share results. It also provides challenges for businesses and consumers operating across jurisdictions or at a national level. To address this, the BCR recommended development of preferred language for jurisdictions to adopt over time as they revise and amend their laws (BCR recommendation 22).

If agreed by Building Ministers, these terms will be consolidated into a Preferred Terms Publication for adoption into State and Territory laws. Current legislative terminology used across Australia has been considered when developing the proposed terminology. The agreed terminology used in the Preferred Terms Publication will not be legal definitions unless adopted by jurisdictions.

This discussion paper proposes that the terminology for '*continuing professional development (CPD)*' and '*CPD on the NCC*' be included in the Preferred Terms Publication.

Consultation questions:

1. Do you agree with the terminology proposed for '*continuing professional development (CPD)*' and '*CPD on the NCC*'? Please explain your answer and, if applicable, propose alternative terminology.
2. Are there additional terms that are relevant to BCR recommendation 3 that should be defined in the Preferred Terms Publication? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.

Context

The [Building Confidence Report](#) (BCR) highlighted shortcomings in the implementation of the NCC and made 24 recommendations to address these issues.

Recommendations 1 to 3 of the BCR focus on the registration and training of *practitioners*, including the need for compulsory *CPD on the NCC*.

BCR recommendations 1, 2 and 3

Recommendations 1 and 2 of the BCR propose the registration of building *practitioners* involved in the design, construction and maintenance of buildings, and that each jurisdiction prescribes consistent registration requirements covering knowledge of the *NCC*, competency and experience, insurance and financial viability, and integrity.

In response to these two recommendations, the Team developed the National Registration Framework (NRF). The NRF provides a consistent, high-level framework for registration of core building-related occupations as a first step towards implementing recommendations 1 and 2 of the BCR. The BCR occupations, competencies and levels of registration provide a national framework and will assist in determining whether building occupations are equivalent between states and territories and will complement the introduction of [automatic mutual recognition \(AMR\)](#). The NRF *practitioner* disciplines are shown in Table 2.

Refer to the [ABCB website](#) for more information on the NRF.

Table 2 NRF practitioner disciplines

Field	Category	Discipline	
Building production	Design	General Design	Architect
			Building Designer
		Engineering Design	Geotechnical designer
			Structural designer
			Electrical designer
			Mechanical designer
			Fire safety designer
		Specialist Design	Plumbing designer
			Fire systems designer
	Specialist Consultants	Access consultant	
		Energy efficiency consultant	
	Construction	Builder (individual)	
		Plumber	
Fire systems installer			
Building approval	Compliance	Building surveyor	
Coordination	Project coordination	Project manager	

BCR recommendations 1 and 2 recognise that while knowledge of the *NCC* must be a prerequisite to entering the industry and gaining registration prior to practicing, currently “large numbers of *practitioners* operating in the industry either lack competence, do not properly understand the *NCC* and/or have never had proper training on its implementation”⁴.

The NRF aims to address this deficiency by setting out basic registration requirements (qualifications, experience) for each occupation and a separate requirement for *NCC* Accreditation relevant to the occupation. The NRF requires *practitioners* to demonstrate that they have acquired adequate *NCC* competency through their base education, or have undertaken further training to develop the necessary *NCC* competency.

Recommendation 3 aims to ensure that *practitioners*’ knowledge, skills and experience in their use and understanding of the *NCC*, is maintained after the attainment of *NCC* Accreditation, as required by the NRF. This aligns with the intent

⁴ Shergold and Weir, [Building Confidence report](#), February 2018, p3.

and definition of *CPD* from the BCR. Maintaining *NCC* competence must be a standard *CPD* requirement for all registered construction industry *practitioners*.

The specific details of *NCC* Accreditation will be worked through as part of further work on the NRF, however, it is anticipated that the training course(s) required to obtain *NCC* Accreditation for a *practitioner* already registered could be through a *CPD activity*. This paper does not address this initial training.

Benefits of implementing BCR recommendation 3

CPD is an ongoing process that maintains and/or improves practitioner competency, and for the purpose of this paper, in understanding and applying the *NCC*. It aims to improve *NCC* compliance, as *practitioners* are more likely to have an in-depth understanding of the *NCC* that allows them to:

- better interpret and apply the *NCC*,
- identify non-compliance quickly and to rectify it,
- have confidence in the decisions they make in designing, constructing and/or inspecting buildings for compliance, and
- justify their design and construction decisions to other *practitioners*.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that ensuring a person has confidence in their own level of understanding of regulatory requirements also allows them to contribute to an overall workplace and industry culture where meeting regulatory requirements is valued. It provides them the confidence to identify instances of non-compliance and explain to others why the work is non-compliant. Additionally, understanding the *NCC* allows *practitioners* to understand how to rectify work so it is compliant. *CPD* is an educational lever that can contribute to the building industry better valuing compliance with the *NCC* and other requirements.

Ultimately, *practitioners* having up-to-date knowledge of the *NCC*, and how to apply it, will increase the number of *NCC*-compliant buildings, reduce defects and increase consumer confidence in new building and plumbing work.

Current CPD landscape

There are mandatory *CPD* requirements for some building *practitioners* in some jurisdictions, for example in Tasmania⁵. In other jurisdictions, there are proposals to expand existing mandatory *CPD* requirements to additional *practitioners* covered by the NRF or plans to introduce *CPD* requirements for the first time.

There are several industry association-led *CPD schemes*. There are *CPD schemes* for building surveyors through the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Other well-known industry *CPD schemes* are managed and led by Engineers Australia (EA) and the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA).

In relation to *CPD scheme* administration, in some instances, a government body is the *CPD scheme administrator*, such as in Tasmania. In other jurisdictions, for some *practitioners*, government legislation defers to specific industry-led *CPD schemes* that an individual practitioner can comply with to meet the mandatory requirement. In NSW, building surveyors can meet the mandatory *CPD* requirement by satisfying the *CPD scheme* requirements of specified industry association-led *CPD schemes*⁶.

Industry-led schemes are currently voluntary (AIA, AIB and MPA) or mandatory (AIBS, RICS, EA) for their members, noting that reference to an industry-led scheme in a jurisdiction's legislation can mean that an industry-led scheme may become one method of meeting a mandatory *CPD* requirement.

Many *CPD schemes* have mandatory content areas for *practitioners* to ensure holistic educational outcomes. For example, EA requires *CPD activities* relevant to a member's area of professional engineering practice, risk management and professional development activities related to business and management skills.⁷

Across all schemes, typical content areas include:

- Business skills
- Safety skills

⁵ [Occupational Licensing \(Building Services Work\) Determination 2019](#)

⁶ [NSW Certifiers CPD Guidelines](#)

⁷ [Engineers Australia CPD Procedure](#)

- Trade skills; and
- Professional skills.

CPD on the NCC would fall under ‘Trade skills’ or ‘Professional skills’ depending on the *practitioner* discipline.

There are currently no known⁸ requirements in any jurisdiction for one or more *practitioners* to undertake compulsory *CPD* specifically on the *NCC*⁹.

A non-exhaustive summary of existing *CPD* requirements and schemes that may apply to *practitioners* covered by the NRF is outlined in Table 3, noting the requirements specified for each jurisdiction are mandatory.

⁸ The BCR Implementation Team undertook research and consultation with jurisdictions to determine current and proposed mandatory *CPD* requirements. Due to the differing terminology, registration definitions and categories, legislation, ministerial directions, regulations and deferrals to industry-led schemes, it was difficult to determine the exact *CPD* requirements in many jurisdictions for all *practitioners* with respect to the NRF.

⁹ 1 of the 5 competencies defined in South Australia’s Accredited Professionals scheme relates to building code matters.

Table 3 Summary of CPD requirements (hours/annum) and schemes

Discipline	NSW	QLD	Vic	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT	Industry scheme	Notes
Architect	20	20	20	20	20	20	-	-	AIA (20)	
Building Designer	3	-	-	NR	NR	20	-	NR	Building Designers Association of Australia (25) Building Designers Association of Queensland (20) Design Institute of Australia (50 - Accredited Design members only)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part. Vic - Registered as "Draftsperson - Building Design (Architectural) or (Interior)".
Geotechnical designer	-	50	50*	NR*	NR	30	NR	NR	EA (50)	Vic - Included under civil engineering. Applies from 1 October 2022.
Structural designer	3	50	50*	NR*	NR	30	NR	NR	EA (50) Professional Engineers Australia (50)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part Vic - Applies from 1 October 2022. Tas - Licenses Certifying Engineer (Structural).
Electrical designer	3	50	50*	NR*	NR	20/30	NR	NR	EA (50) Professional Engineers Australia (50)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part Vic - Applies from 1 June 2023. Tas – 30 pts is for engineers, 20 pts is for building services designer.
Mechanical designer	3	50	50*	NR*	NR	20/30	NR	NR	EA (50) Professional Engineers Australia (50)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part Vic - Applies from 1 December 2023. Tas - Licenses Certifying Engineer (Mechanical). 30 pts is for engineers, 20 pts is for building services designer.
Plumbing designer	3	50	-	NR*	NR	20/30	NR	NR	EA (50)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part Tas – see Note 3.
Fire systems designer	3	50	50*	NR*	NR	20/30	NR	NR	EA (50) Fire Protection Accreditation Scheme (20pts)	NSW - Applies to building work on a Class 2 building or buildings with a Class 2 part Vic - Applies from 1 December 2021. FPAS - 20 pts required but activities range from 0.5 - 2.5 pts per hour. Tas – 30 pts is for engineers, 20 pts is for building services designer.
Disability access consultant	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	Association of Consultants in Access Australia (20 accredited member, 30 non-accredited member)	
Energy efficiency consultant	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	Australian Building Sustainability Association (12)	Tas - has category for energy management under Engineering Building Services, but does not directly licence energy efficiency consultants.
Builder (individual)	12	- *	- *	-	-	12	-	-	Australian Institute of Building (20)	The AIB requires a minimum of 70 pts over 3 years, and 20 pts per year.
Plumber	-	- *	- *	-	-	12	-	-	Master Plumbers has a non-mandatory scheme that recommends 12 pts per year.	Tas – see Note 3.
Fire systems installer	-	- *	- *	NR	NR	12	NR	NR	Fire Protection Accreditation Scheme (20pts)	NSW, Vic - Fire systems are a category of work under Plumbing, Draining and Gas fitting. ACT - Of the four categories in the NRF, only "Fire sprinkler fitter" is registered. FPAS - 20 pts required but activities range from 0.5 - 2.5 pts per hour.
Building surveyor	25	30 *	-*	-	30	30	-	30	AIBS (30) Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (30) Accredited Professionals Scheme (20)	QLD and ACT rely on accreditation by an industry association to be registered, including their <i>CPD schemes</i> . SA may rely on these schemes. SA requires 20 h/a CPD for building surveyors acting as relevant authorities. AIBS recommends 90 hours over three years, with a minimum of 20 hours in any one year.
Project manager	NR	-	-	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR		Vic - Applies only to domestic building work.

Key:

- * *CPD scheme* under consideration or being rolled out
- Discipline is registered or licensed in a jurisdiction, but does not have a mandatory *CPD* requirement
- NR Not registered or licensed in the jurisdiction, so does not have a mandatory *CPD* requirement
- h/a means hours/annum

Notes:

1. In the NRF, fire systems installer is expressed as four disciplines: Water-based fire sprinkler installer, Fire detection and alarm system installer, Emergency exit and lighting systems installer and passive fire and smoke systems installer
2. The NRF does not include Gas-fitting in the Plumbing discipline.
3. Tasmania also licences technical designers, for example services designers that are permitted to do DTS Solutions and/or certain residential buildings. Engineers can perform un-restricted work.

National initiatives

In December 2020, Chief Ministers signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Automatic Mutual Recognition of Occupational Registration. This agreement was to establish a widespread uniform scheme for [automatic mutual recognition \(AMR\)](#) for the purpose of streamlining occupational registration processes where individuals seek to work in a second or subsequent jurisdiction.

Changes to the Mutual Recognition Act 1992 of the Commonwealth that came into effect from 1 July 2021, mean that a person who is registered in their home jurisdiction for an occupation, is permitted to undertake activities in the host jurisdiction that are substantially the same as those under their home registration. Some jurisdictions have made changes to their legislation to recognise the Commonwealth Act.

These changes aim to encourage national consistency that increases productivity through lowering operating costs of businesses, ultimately reducing end costs to consumers.

To address the [Building Confidence National Framework](#) and specifically recommendation 3, the ABCB is:

1. Developing model guidance that outlines minimum requirements for:
 - a) *practitioners* to undertake *CPD on the NCC*,
 - b) *CPD content* on the *NCC*, and
 - c) *CPD schemes* that include, or intend to include *CPD on the NCC*.
2. Producing *NCC CPD* courses, which is work already well advanced through the ABCB's Enhanced Education Project and is not the purpose of this paper.

These activities support and encourage national consistency, regulatory compliance, practitioner mobility, facilitate AMR and also help to ensure a level playing field for all *practitioners*.

Overview of model guidance

Consistent with the objective of BCR recommendation 3, the purpose of the model guidance is to assist:

- jurisdictions establishing or amending mandatory *CPD on the NCC* requirements, and
- development and integration of *CPD on the NCC* into *CPD schemes*.

Achieving this purpose will:

- improve practitioner competency on the *NCC*,
- increase *NCC* compliance, and
- improve outcomes for consumers.

For stakeholder clarity, and to ensure alignment with other work being undertaken on the BCR, the proposed model guidance has been developed with reference to the NRF *practitioner* disciplines. Alignment to the NRF is not intended to prevent jurisdictions and industry from expanding or narrowing the application of the model guidance to other building and construction *practitioners*. The NRF provides a single and consistent platform from which to discuss *CPD on the NCC*.

Given the variation in existing *CPD schemes* and the skills and knowledge required of different *practitioners*, model guidance must be sufficiently flexible and high-level so its content can be applied across jurisdictions. The guidance should also align with the principles used for *CPD* by Professional Standards Schemes (PSS) where they currently exist for certain *practitioners*.

To explore the content of the model guidance, this discussion paper proposes 6 principles with recommended minimum requirements, examples and supporting information.

The guidance proposed in this paper is based on existing *CPD* requirements, existing *CPD on the NCC* as well as government and industry-led schemes where possible, with substantial input from government and industry stakeholders.

Adoption

Consistent with the direction from Building Ministers, the model guidance produced will be non-mandatory and will have no legal effect unless adopted by individual jurisdictions into their respective legislation.

Similarly, for industry-led *CPD schemes* that are given legal effect under jurisdictional legislation, the guidance produced would have no legal effect unless adopted into these schemes.

However, to fulfil the purpose of the model guidance it is expected that jurisdictions and industry bodies involved in *CPD on the NCC* would have regard to the content of the model guidance when:

- developing or amending a mandatory requirement for *practitioners* to undertake *CPD on the NCC*,
- developing or amending *CPD on the NCC* for *practitioners*, and/or
- implementing *CPD on the NCC* into new or existing *CPD schemes*.

Scope

This paper outlines principles that can contribute to the development and implementation of *CPD on the NCC*. These principles can encourage national consistency, increase *practitioner* competency, reduce poor and unsafe practices and ultimately improve outcomes for consumers.

The following matters are outside of the scope of this paper:

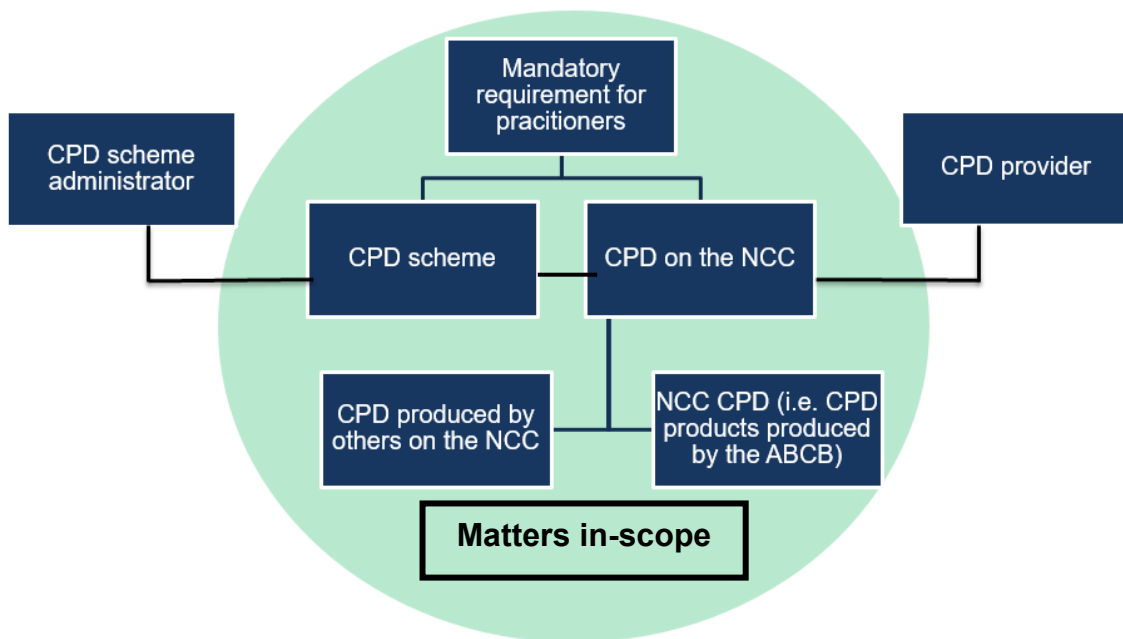
1. the administration of *CPD schemes*,
2. whether or not *CPD on the NCC* must be integrated into existing or new *CPD schemes*¹⁰
3. approving specific *CPD providers*, and
4. assessing or approving specific *CPD on the NCC*, or
5. assessing or approving the suitability of *CPD schemes* to deliver *CPD on the NCC*.

¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence suggests that incorporating *CPD activities* completed as part of a *CPD schemes* requirements produce better outcomes compared to stand-alone completion of a *CPD activity*.

In addition, this paper is limited to *CPD on the NCC* and does not consider *CPD* on other topic areas except where they are considered to contribute to achieving the overall objectives. For example, *CPD* on the subject matter ethics is proposed under Principle 3 as it contributes to increasing integrity in the building approvals process and the application of the *NCC*.

The scope of the model guidance is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Scope of model guidance



Principle 1: CPD on the NCC is compulsory

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that all *practitioners* identified in the NRF undertake compulsory *CPD on the NCC* each year by 30 June.

Discussion

NRF disciplines

The BCR stated:

“practitioners operate in a dynamic environment. New products, technologies and practices are actively encouraged through the performance-based NCC which, itself, is amended every three years”,¹¹
and

“large numbers of practitioners operating in the industry either lack competence, do not properly understand the NCC and/or have never had proper training on its implementation”.¹²

In response to these statements, and for clarity and consistency, Principle 1 proposes all *practitioner* disciplines identified in the NRF (refer Table 2), should be required to complete mandatory *CPD on the NCC* each year.¹³

This principle is not intended to prevent states and territories from requiring individuals not covered by the NRF to also complete *CPD on the NCC*.

Consultation question:

3. Should all registered *practitioners* identified in the NRF complete *CPD on the NCC*? If you answered ‘no’ or ‘unsure’, please explain your answer.

¹¹ Shergold and Weir, [Building Confidence report](#), February 2018, pg 18.

¹² Ibid p3.

¹³ This Principle is not intended to require practitioners to repeat the same *CPD activity* on the *NCC* each year where the content has not been updated.

Annual CPD requirement

Jurisdictions have various registration periods for *practitioners* ranging from one year to five years. A 3-yearly registration cycle is most common. Where mandatory *CPD* requirements exist, they are usually linked to a practitioner's registration cycle.

Updates to the *NCC*, which include *NCC* referenced documents, may not align with individual *practitioner* registration cycles. Therefore it's recommended that *practitioners* be required to undertake some *CPD on the NCC* each year so their knowledge remains current.

In addition, jurisdictions with registration cycles of more than one year have raised concerns with requiring *CPD on the NCC* to be undertaken by, or demonstrated at, the conclusion of a registration cycle. It can be onerous for *practitioners* to complete 3 or 5 years' worth of *CPD* immediately prior to applying for re-registration. This may also produce poor learning outcomes for *practitioners*, with less chance for *practitioners* to properly understand and apply new information in a staged way.

However, government regulators prefer not to deny registration where possible. This is because denying re-registration can reduce registered *practitioner* numbers, leading to increased costs and delays for projects, which can significantly affect an end consumer.

Therefore requiring some *CPD on the NCC* to be undertaken each year by *practitioners* can mitigate these instances from occurring and ensure that knowledge on the *NCC* is as up to date as possible.

Consultation question:

4. Should all *practitioners* be required to undertake *CPD on the NCC* each year? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure', please explain your answer.

CPD year

Currently the *CPD* year varies between states and territories. For example Queensland's *CPD* period is 1 April to 31 March and South Australia's is from 1 July to 30 June.

To encourage national consistency, mutual recognition and facilitate occupational mobility, it is proposed that a practitioner complete their *CPD on the NCC* by 30 June each year. This aligns with the end of each financial year and could help minimise confusion for *practitioners* and governments. Feedback is sought from stakeholders on this proposal.

During the development of this paper, some stakeholders suggested a 12 month rolling average requirement as an alternative to a *CPD* year. This would mean that during any given 12 month period, a *practitioner* would need to meet the minimum amount of *CPD on the NCC*, outlined in Table 6.

The type and amount of *CPD on the NCC* is discussed in more detail in Principle 2.

Consultation questions:

5. Should *CPD on the NCC* be completed by 30 June each year by all *practitioners*? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure', please explain your answer.

Principle 2: The amount, type and expiration of CPD on the NCC is regulated

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that:

1. Practitioners undertake:
 - a. *CPD on the NCC* through the types of *CPD activities* described in Table 4 and specified for each NRF discipline in Table 5; and
 - b. a minimum amount of *CPD on the NCC* each year as specified in Table 6.
2. The amount of *CPD on the NCC* required each year to be undertaken by a *practitioner*:
 - a. is pro-rata apportioned as necessary due to: part-time work, maternity leave, paternity leave and personal (sick) leave, and registration of a *practitioner* part-way through a *CPD* year; and
 - b. with multiple related registrations, is the highest amount for the registration specified otherwise the amounts for both disciplines are required.
3. Carrying-over be permitted for *CPD on the NCC* that was undertaken in the previous year that was greater than the minimum required to a maximum of 50% of the required *CPD on the NCC*.

Discussion

Types and allowable CPD activities

There are many different types of *CPD activities*. Table 4 groups them into 13 types that reflect the range of activities available to most *practitioners* through existing *CPD schemes*. Some examples¹⁴ of known *CPD on the NCC* are provided in Table 4.

¹⁴ Other than *NCC CPD*, examples of *CPD on the NCC* should not be interpreted as endorsement of these activities by the ABCB or governments.

Table 4 Types of CPD activities

Type	CPD activity	Description
1	University education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes formal face-to-face education, distance education, and short courses provided by a university Typically provided as a unit/component on the <i>NCC</i> Usually includes an assessable component Includes degree, postgraduate diploma and courses or units undertaken on a semester basis or part-time basis Example: Courses provided by a university on the <i>BCA</i>¹⁵
2	Vocational education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes formal face-to-face education, distance education and short courses on the <i>NCC</i> delivered by TAFE or a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Typically provided as a unit/component on the <i>NCC</i> Undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis Usually includes a formal assessable component Example: TAFE NSW provides a short online course on reading plans and specifications and applying codes and standards¹⁶
3	Seminar, webinar, conference or workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars, webinars, conferences and workshops provided by an industry association or government body Face-to-face or online delivery, or pre-recorded seminars, conferences or workshops. Examples: Seminars run by the ABCB¹⁷ or a government body such as the VBA (Victorian Building Authority) on changes to the <i>NCC</i>, Workshops run by an industry association - the HIA runs workshops on <i>NCC</i> referenced documents.¹⁸
4	Industry or government education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on the <i>NCC</i> provided by an industry association or government body Face-to-face or online delivery Example: <i>NCC CPD</i>¹⁹ These activities typically involve some formal assessment.
5	Structured on-the-job training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A structured program agreed to between an accredited practitioner and another party Details of the program would need to be provided including objectives, activities, timeline and content on the <i>NCC</i> that will be covered This document would need to indicate completion date and be signed off by the building practitioner and other party
6	Information session, Trade session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events hosted by suppliers and manufacturers Face-to-face or online delivery These events typically discuss products used in the building and construction industry.
7	Lecturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presentation of lectures and keynote papers in a formal setting such as classrooms, seminars, conferences and symposia

¹⁵ [University of Technology Building regulation courses](#)

¹⁶ [TAFE NSW Reading plans and specifications and applying codes and standards](#)

¹⁷ [ABCB NCC Seminars](#)

¹⁸ [HIA Timber Framing Code training](#)

¹⁹ [ABCB NCC CPD](#)

Type	CPD activity	Description
8	Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The preparation of material for papers/publications for seminars, conferences, symposia, journals, books, technical papers and magazines
9	Private (Individual) Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time spent reading books, journals, magazines, manuals, or watching short videos on and other pertinent information on topics aimed to update and extend knowledge, skills and practice
10	Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings run by industry and government on industry-related matters
11	Committee Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative at industry association or institute meetings on industry-related matters
12	Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in discussion groups run by industry or acknowledged experts on industry-related matters
13	Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing professional and personal development to another practitioner

Notes:

1. It is considered that hours claimable towards a *CPD* requirement would only be for the duration of the activity that covers the *NCC*. This means time associated with lunch, preparation, travel, discussions, meetings or presentations on non-*NCC* related-matters would not be included.
2. As stated in the definitions, the term '*NCC*' includes *NCC* referenced documents such as Australian Standards.

Consultation questions

6. Are there any types of *CPD activities* missing from Table 4 that should be included? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.
7. Do you have any comments on the content of Table 4? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.

CPD terminology

CPD scheme administrators and *CPD providers* use different terminology for the types of *CPD activities* identified in Table 4. Some common terms used for *CPD activities* include structured/un-structured, or formal/informal.

In general, structured or formal activities are activities that recognise the importance of ensuring learning outcomes are clear, achievable and enable the *practitioner* to provide evidence to a registration body that they are competent in their understanding and application, in this case, of the *NCC*. This means these activities typically have a defined learning outcome(s), have structured learning content and usually, but not always, require the completion of an assessment. Structured or formal activities typically include activity Types 1 – 4 as described in Table 4.

Un-structured or informal activities are typically more relaxed and commonly include attending industry meetings (activity Type 10 from Table 4) or undertaking private/individual study (activity Type 9 from Table 4). They generally do not have a defined learning outcome(s), do not have structured learning content and do not require completion of an assessment.

Consequently, structured/formal activities are often weighted higher than un-structured or informal activities when calculating an activities' contribution to an individual's *CPD* requirement.

For example, under most existing *CPD schemes* a university course may qualify for 2 points / hour of learning as opposed to private study which would typically qualify for 1 point / hour learning.

Other approaches used by *CPD schemes* include categorising different types of activities, with minimum hours or points required from some categories and not others, or caps used to limit the amount of certain types of *CPD activities*. This is the approach used by the AIBS in its *CPD scheme*. Specific terms such as structured/un-structured, or formal/informal are avoided, however, the activities in the categories that are weighted higher than others would typically be described as structured or formal activities.

Consultation with industry and government stakeholders has indicated general support for a mandatory requirement for *practitioners* to undertake *CPD on the NCC* primarily through structured or formal activities (i.e. Types 1 – 4 from Table 4) , given the potential for *CPD on the NCC* to contribute to increased compliance. This view is also consistent with weightings used in existing *CPD schemes*.

For trade based *practitioners* such as builders, plumbers and fire-systems installers, practical learning can be beneficial, particularly in relation to learning about changes to *NCC* referenced documents such as Australian Standards. These types of skills and knowledge may not be appropriately captured by more traditional structured or formal activities and likely require structured on-the-job training.

In addition, some types of structured or formal learning activities may not be appropriate for some *practitioners* if their literacy and numeracy levels are not sufficient to complete a formal assessment. It is also important to ensure that a

mandatory learning requirement for *CPD on the NCC* would not unduly disadvantage *practitioners* who have not engaged with formal training for several years, have a disability, or are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. This means that choice and flexibility are important considerations, particularly for trade-based NRF disciplines, being builders, plumbers and fire systems installers.

In the interests of supporting national consistency, mutual recognition and occupational mobility, Principle 2 proposes the types of *CPD activities* that would be considered suitable for the delivery of *NCC* content for each *practitioner* discipline from the NRF. Alignment with existing *CPD scheme* requirements has been undertaken where possible and consideration given to the factors described above.

Using the types of activities and descriptions from Table 4, the allowable types of activities to meet *CPD on the NCC* requirements, for each discipline, are provided in Table 5.

Feedback from stakeholders is sought as to whether the proposed allowable types of activities for *CPD on the NCC* for each NRF discipline provided in Table 5 are reasonable, meaning they would provide enough flexibility for *practitioners* to complete compulsory *CPD on the NCC* while still ensuring the objective of compulsory *CPD on the NCC* is met.

Consultation question:

8. Do you agree with the content of Table 5 Proposed allowable types of activities for *CPD on the NCC* based on NRF discipline? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure' please provide further information.

Table 5 Proposed allowable types of activities for CPD on the NCC based on NRF discipline

Discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	University education	Vocational education	Seminar, webinar, conference or workshop	Industry or government education	Structured on-the-job training	Information Session, Trade Session	Lecturing	Publications	Private (individual) studies	Meetings	Committee Representation	Discussion Groups	Mentoring
Architect	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Building Designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Geotechnical designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Structural designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Electrical designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mechanical designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fire safety designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Plumbing designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fire systems designer	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Access consultant	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Energy efficiency consultant	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Builder (individual)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Plumber	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fire systems installer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Building surveyor	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Project manager	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Note: Proposed allowable types of activities for CPD on the NCC would need to have NCC content.

Amount of CPD on the NCC

In order to determine the amount of *CPD on the NCC* that different *practitioners* covered by the NRF should undertake, current *CPD scheme* requirements were first examined - refer Table 3 Summary of *CPD* requirements (hours/annum) and schemes. As can be seen in this table, within the one NRF discipline there are different amounts of *CPD* required, both by jurisdiction and industry association. In addition, specifically in terms of *CPD on the NCC*, there is limited information available to indicate what may be an appropriate amount for each NRF discipline.

The *NCC* is used differently and to different degrees by *practitioners* when undertaking their roles in the building design, construction or approval process. For example, some *practitioners*, such as architects, designers and building surveyors are expected to have a deeper and broader understanding of the *NCC* than a practitioner specialising in one area of the *NCC*, for example a fire systems installer. Therefore the amount of *CPD on the NCC* required to be undertaken should reflect this.

However, BCR Expert Panel members²⁰ have indicated that one of the current problems is that *practitioners* don't have enough knowledge and understanding of the *NCC* and consequently rely on the building surveyor for this information. This is not the role of the building surveyor and can affect the independence of the statutory building surveyor in undertaking their arm's length assessment.

The *NCC* references other documents containing necessary technical information to assist with meeting the *NCC's* Performance Requirements. These are called *NCC* referenced documents and include Australian Standards.

NCC 2019 contains 150 primary referenced documents across all three volumes of the code. A primary referenced document is one referenced in Schedule 4 of the *NCC*. A secondary referenced document is one referenced in a primary referenced document. Combined, this means there are thousands of *NCC* referenced documents.

²⁰ [Building Confidence Report Implementation Team](#)

Often the detailed application of standards is not included in design documents meaning those responsible for construction must know where to find this information. It is therefore essential for *practitioners*, such as builders, to understand the documents that are referenced, such as Australian Standards. Stakeholders have indicated that *practitioners* involved in construction will likely need as much *CPD on the NCC* as other *practitioner* disciplines given how many standards they need to apply to ensure building work complies with the *NCC*.

With the above in mind the BCR Team’s Expert Panel members have proposed that for a given discipline, 25% of any existing or known *CPD* requirements (refer Table 3) should specifically relate to *CPD on the NCC*.

The amounts proposed in Table 6 are a starting point for discussion and to seek the views of industry and government stakeholders, as well as the wider community.

Table 6 Proposed CPD on the NCC amount (hours/annum) for each NRF discipline as a proportion of ‘Typical CPD requirement’

Discipline	Typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)	Proportion of ‘Typical CPD requirement’ proposed as CPD on the NCC (25%) (hours/annum)
Architect	20	5
Building Designer	20	5
Geotechnical designer	17	4
Structural designer	17	4
Electrical designer	17	4
Mechanical designer	17	4
Plumbing designer	17	4
Fire systems designer	17	4
Disability access consultant	20	5
Energy efficiency consultant	20	5
Builder (individual)	12	3
Plumber	12	3
Fire systems installer	12	3

Discipline	Typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)	Proportion of 'Typical CPD requirement' proposed as CPD on the NCC (25%) (hours/annum)
Building surveyor	30	7
Project manager	12	3

Notes:

1. The 'typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)' for each NRF discipline is based on the information contained in Table 3 with the following assumptions made:
 - a. Where there is more than one CPD requirement across the jurisdictions, and this differs in value, the highest requirement has been used as the 'typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)'
 - b. Where there is no CPD requirement in any of the jurisdictions, the highest voluntary CPD requirement from an industry scheme has been used as the 'typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)'
 - c. The 'typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)' for an energy efficiency consultant has been set at 20 hours/annum to bring into-line with other consultants recognised under the NRF
 - d. In recognition that there is no known CPD requirements for project managers, the 'typical CPD requirement (hours/annum)' for a project manager has been set at 12 hours/annum to align with builders, plumbers and fire systems installers
2. The 'typical CPD requirement' for geotechnical designer, structural designer, electrical designer, mechanical designer, plumbing designer and fire systems designer has been set at 17 hours to align with EA's existing CPD requirement for practitioners to undertake 50 hours of the 150 hour triennium requirement (i.e. 17 hours/annum) on their area of practice, which in this case would be on the NCC.
3. The 'typical CPD requirement' for building surveyors has been aligned with the AIBS recommendation.²¹
4. The proportion of 'Typical CPD requirement' that is proposed as CPD on the NCC has been set as a minimum of 25%, expressed as hours/annum and rounded down to the nearest hour where required.

To demonstrate how Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6 are intended to apply together, the following two examples are provided.

Example 1: Building surveyor

It is proposed that a building surveyor undertake a minimum of 7 hours of CPD on the NCC each year as part of a typical CPD requirement of 30 hours/annum (refer Table 6),

²¹ [AIBS CPD Program](#)

Further, it is proposed that the minimum 7 hours/annum of *CPD on the NCC* requirement be undertaken through activity Types 1 – 4 (refer Table 4 and Table 5).

These activities are:

- University education (Type 1)
- Vocational education (Type 2)
- Seminar, webinar, conference or workshop (Type 3)
- Industry or government education (Type 4)

To meet this 7 hour/annum *CPD on the NCC* requirement, a building surveyor could undertake the following:

- A 4 hour course on timber-framing run by an RTO such as the College of Professional Development (Type 2 activity).
- A 2 hour workshop on changes to the NCC run by an industry association such as the AIBS (Type 3 activity).
- A 1.5 hour online *NCC CPD* course run by the ABCB that is focussed on compliance *practitioners* such as building surveyors (Type 4 activity).

Example 2: Builder

It is proposed that a builder undertake a minimum of 3 hours of *CPD on the NCC* each year as part of a typical *CPD* requirement of 12 hours/annum (refer Table 6).

Further, it is proposed that the minimum 3 hours/annum of *CPD on the NCC* requirement be undertaken through activity Types 1 – 5 (refer Table 4 and Table 5).

These activities are:

- University education (Type 1)
- Vocational education (Type 2)
- Seminar, webinar, conference or workshop (Type 3)
- Industry or government education (Type 4)
- Structured on-the-job training (Type 5)

To meet this 3 hour/annum *CPD on the NCC* requirement, a builder could undertake the following:

- A 2 hour face-to-face *NCC* seminar run by the ABCB or government body (Type 3 activity), and
- A 1 hour online workshop on changes to an *NCC* referenced document (e.g. an Australian Standard) run by an industry association such as the HIA (Type 3 activity).

Another consideration raised during development of this paper is whether the amount of *CPD on the NCC* required to be undertaken by a *practitioner* should vary based on their level of registration. Input from stakeholders is sought on this proposal.

Consultation question:

9. Do you agree with content of Table 6 Proposed *CPD on the NCC* amount (hours/annum) for each NRF discipline as a proportion of 'Typical CPD requirement'? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure' please provide further information.
10. Should the required amount of *CPD on the NCC* vary according to a *practitioner's* level of registration? If you answered 'yes' please explain why and how the requirements should vary.
11. Do you have any other comments on the type and amount of *CPD on the NCC* proposed for a particular *practitioner* discipline? If you answered 'yes' provide further information.

Pro-rata apportionment of required CPD

Most *CPD schemes* allow *practitioners* only practising for part of the year or who have personal reasons (illness, maternity or paternity leave etc.), to apportion the *CPD* requirement for that year. Consequently, this is proposed as part of Principe 2.

Similarly, where a practitioner is registered part-way through a *CPD* year, the required *CPD on the NCC* under Table 6 be pro-rata apportioned.

Example: Mechanical designer

It is proposed that a mechanical designer undertake a minimum of 4 hours of *CPD on the NCC* each year as part of a typical *CPD* requirement of 17 hours/annum (refer Table 6).

A mechanical designer works part-time 2.5 days/week due to caring commitments. This equates to 6 months work over a 12 month period, or a 50% load.

The amount of *CPD on the NCC* required to be undertaken is proportioned due to the reduced load. This means only 50% of the 4 hours is required.

This equates to 2 hours of *CPD on the NCC* per annum.

Multiple registrations

Where a practitioner has multiple registrations, consideration needs to be given to how much *CPD on the NCC* should be required per annum.

If the registrations are related, then one approach is to require the minimum amount of *CPD on the NCC* for the highest registration category as long as technical competency is ensured for both registrations. An approach similar to this is used in Tasmania²² and this is proposed as part of Principle 2.

For un-related registrations, which is understood to be less common, it is proposed as part of Principle 2 that the minimum amount of *CPD on the NCC* as specified in Table 6 for each discipline would be required.

Example: Mechanical designer and energy efficiency consultant

A registered mechanical designer specialises in heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system design. They are also a registered energy efficiency consultant that specialises in the NCC Volume One energy efficiency provisions covering air-conditioning and ventilation systems.

²² [Occupational Licensing \(Building Services Work\) Determination 2019](#)

It is proposed that a mechanical designer undertake a minimum of 4 hours of *CPD on the NCC* each year as part of a typical *CPD* requirement of 17 hours/annum (refer Table 6).

It is also proposed that an energy efficiency consultant undertake a minimum of 5 hours of *CPD on the NCC* each year as part of a typical *CPD* requirement of 20 hours/annum (refer Table 6).

Since this practitioner is registered in both disciplines and these disciplines are related, then the highest amount of *CPD on the NCC* of the two disciplines is required to be undertaken, which is 5 hours/annum.

Consultation question:

12. Do you agree with the proposal that outlines the required *CPD on the NCC* for *practitioners* with multiple registrations? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure' please explain your answer.

Carrying-over CPD

Many *CPD schemes* allow the carrying over of hours or points into a new *CPD* year where an excess of hours or points has been obtained by the *practitioner* in the previous year.

For example, in NSW, where a professional engineer earns more than 50 *CPD* hours in a *CPD* year they can carry forward up to 10 surplus *CPD* hours into the next *CPD* year. If a professional engineer earned 60 hours in one year, 10 hours could be carried over to the next year. In the second year, the professional engineer would only need to complete 40 hours to satisfy the annual *CPD* requirement.

This paper proposes that a *practitioner* can carry-over excess *CPD on the NCC* to the following *CPD* year up to a maximum of 50% of the amount required by Table 6 to ensure that some *CPD on the NCC* is still undertaken each year.

The figure of 50% has also been proposed to give *practitioners* flexibility in planning the *CPD on the NCC* activities they will undertake in the coming year(s), such as

potentially undertaking more *CPD on the NCC* in a *CPD* year where an amendment to the *NCC* has occurred.

Example: Architect

It is proposed that an architect undertake a minimum of 5 hours of *CPD on the NCC* each year as part of a typical *CPD* requirement of 20 hours/annum (refer Table 6).

An architect chooses to undertake 9 hours of *CPD on the NCC* in one *CPD* year.

50% of the amount required by Table 6 can be carried-over to the following year. This means 2.5 hours can be carried over to the following *CPD* year. Therefore the architect only needs to undertake 2.5 hours of *CPD on the NCC* in the following year, rather than 5 hours.

Consultation question:

13. Do you agree with the proposal for carrying-over *CPD on the NCC*? If you answered 'no' or 'unsure' please explain your answer.

Principle 3: CPD on the NCC is evidence-based and is complemented by ethics CPD

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that:

1. *CPD on the NCC* should:
 - a. have a clearly stated purpose;
 - b. be targeted at specific *practitioner* disciplines;
 - c. have a method of delivery that is suitable for the specific type of practitioner;
 - d. use up-to-date *NCC* content and terminology and link to an *NCC* edition;
 - e. be developed using a risk and evidence-based approach, and be informed by data; and
 - f. include a feedback loop to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the *CPD* being undertaken.
2. In addition to *CPD on the NCC*, *practitioners* undertake 2 hours/annum of compulsory *CPD* on ethics.

Discussion

Clear purpose and targeted

The purpose and defined learning outcomes of *CPD activities* are not always clear.

The purpose of any *CPD on the NCC* should be clearly defined so that individual *practitioners* understand how the training may be relevant to them and how they are likely to benefit from undertaking it. For example, the purpose of specific *CPD on the NCC* may be improvement in knowledge on a particular topic such as understanding recent changes to the NCC Volume One energy efficiency provisions so they can be applied correctly to all new commercial buildings.

A clearly defined purpose of the *CPD on the NCC* can also indicate whether the content is suitable to meet the needs of wider industry. For example, *CPD scheme administrators* and governments need to understand intended learning outcomes for

a particular type of *practitioner* in order to achieve alignment to nationally agreed and defined competencies where they are in place.

The following example is provided.

Example:

The *NCC CPD* course for compliance *practitioners* on Evidence of Suitability²³ states it is intended to provide guidance and understanding on how to apply the NCC's evidence of suitability provisions. The course outline describes the contents of the course and upon completion of the course, *practitioners* will be able to:

- Understand and apply evidence of suitability across provisions of the NCC
- Understand appropriate forms of evidence using the suitability framework
- Understand how the evidence of suitability framework can be used to demonstrate compliance for a range of technical scenarios
- Utilise the decision flow chart.

This *CPD on the NCC* has a stated purpose.

In conjunction with its referenced documents such as Australian Standards, the *NCC* is a large document. Different *practitioners* need to understand different parts of the *NCC* to undertake their roles effectively and to help ensure an *NCC* compliant building at the end of the building approval, construction and certification process.

CPD on the NCC should be targeted and relevant for differing *practitioners*. For example, plumbers need to know different things about the *NCC*, compared to building surveyors. Plumbers would likely require a detailed knowledge specifically of *NCC* Volume Three and its referenced documents like the AS/NZS 3500 series of plumbing standards, whereas building surveyors should have a broad understanding of all three Volumes of the *NCC* given their certification role. The *CPD content* should reflect this.

In addition, consideration should be given to targeting the *CPD on the NCC* to *practitioners* that work in particular jurisdictions, where necessary.

²³ [ABCN NCC CPD course on evidence of suitability](#)

The following examples are provided.

Example:

The *NCC CPD* courses were designed specifically to target key *practitioner* groups, these being:

- Compliance *practitioners* which includes building surveyors and inspectors,
- Design and engineering *practitioners* which includes architects, designers, draftspersons, specialists and engineers (including fire and hydraulic), and
- Construct and install *practitioners* which includes builders, plumbers, fire protection *practitioners* and site/project managers.²⁴

Example:

When a new edition of the *NCC* is adopted by a jurisdiction, a relevant government body may offer *NCC* seminars to outline how the specific *NCC* changes apply in their jurisdiction. This *CPD on the NCC* is targeted at *practitioners* in their jurisdiction.

Method of delivery

As outlined as part of Principle 2, *CPD activities* in most *CPD schemes* are available in many forms including online courses and webinars, face-to-face presentations and meetings, and private/individual study. In relation to trade-based *practitioners*, such as builders or plumbers, practical or demonstration type *CPD activities* may also be appropriate.

The method in which a *CPD activity* is delivered does not suit all *practitioners'* learning styles, level of formal education, location and access to reliable internet. Practitioner preferences for method(s) of delivery of *CPD on the NCC* should be checked through surveys and consultation or captured through a feedback loop as discussed in more detail as part of this principle. Targeting the method of delivery of *CPD on the NCC* can help ensure *practitioner* outcomes are achieved.

The following example is provided.

²⁴ [ABCB NCC CPD](#)

Example:

The preferred method of delivery of *CPD on the NCC* for an engineer located in a major city may be face-to-face presentations or seminars such as the *NCC* seminar run by the ABCB each year.

A plumber located in a remote region of Australia who has good access to the internet, may prefer completing online courses and attending webinars at their own pace.

The preferred method of delivery of these two different *practitioners* should be considered when developing *CPD on the NCC*.

Up-to-date NCC content

The *NCC* is amended every 3 years or as agreed by governments. Typically, new or amended referenced documents are included in each new edition of the *NCC*.

Typically *CPD on the NCC* is concerned with:

1. The current²⁵ edition of the *NCC*, including its referenced documents; or
2. Changes proposed to the next edition of the *NCC*.

To contribute to nationally consistent *CPD on the NCC* either the current *NCC* edition's content and terminology (i.e. *NCC* defined terms) should be used as the basis for the *NCC* content or the proposed changes for the next edition of the *NCC* should be used. *CPD on the NCC* should clearly communicate to stakeholders which version of the *NCC* formed the basis of the content by linking it to the current or proposed next edition of the *NCC*.

Once the *NCC* is amended (either 3-yearly or out-of-cycle), and/or a new or amended version of a referenced document is called up by the *NCC*, the affected *CPD on the NCC* should be amended as soon as reasonably practical.

If a *CPD on the NCC* provider becomes aware that an aspect of their *CPD on the NCC* is out-of-date, the provider should incorporate a notice to *practitioners* to warn

²⁵ The current edition of the *NCC* is the version of the *NCC* that is in effect in each jurisdiction.

them of this until the *CPD on the NCC* has been updated. This would not preclude the *CPD on the NCC* from being completed by *practitioners*, but would be a practical way to ensure *practitioners* are aware of any potential discrepancies between the *CPD on the NCC* and the current edition of the *NCC*.

The following example is provided:

Example:

The *NCC CPD* course for compliance *practitioners* on Performance Solutions provides guidance and understanding of matters that impact the development and acceptance of Performance Solutions. The course covers the four-step process for creating and documenting Performance Solutions introduced in *NCC 2019 Amendment 1*, which came into effect on 1 July 2021.

Therefore this *CPD on the NCC* uses up-to-date *NCC* content and terminology and links to *NCC 2019 Amendment 1*.

CPD on the NCC to be evidenced-based

CPD on the NCC should aim to mitigate risks that are identified through available evidence. This is consistent with the approach used by PSSs to develop *CPD*.

Risks may include commonly known *NCC* non-compliances and misinterpretations or knowledge gaps in the areas where *practitioners* overlap in their roles and responsibilities. Sources of evidence identifying risks may include data captured by governments, such as intelligence gained through auditing and compliance activities, and feedback from industry or individual *practitioners*.

Other sources could include data captured by industry associations on new and emerging risks. Litigation, complaints records, discussions on social media and media reporting may also play a role in determining development of *CPD on the NCC*.

Emerging risks within the building and construction industry can also be identified through the auditing and enforcement processes used by *CPD scheme administrators*, refer to Principle 6.

CPD on the NCC should clearly communicate to stakeholders that it has been developed to mitigate risks, is evidence-based and uses available data.

The following example is provided.

Example:

By analysing building applications, a jurisdictional government regulator identified domestic builders with experience in Class 1 and 10 buildings moving into building low rise residential apartments, which are commercial Class 2 buildings.

Given their experience has been limited to domestic single dwellings, these *practitioners* may not be aware of the more complex fire safety and structural requirements for these buildings. *CPD on the NCC* was developed that focussed on these areas of the *NCC* to upskill *practitioners* and address gaps in their competencies.

The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) has highlighted that *practitioners* tend to pursue activities in content areas of interest and increasing expertise, rather than areas where they have less experience, confidence or interest. This produces a risk that *practitioners* have low understanding outside their areas of interest, resulting in persistent underdeveloped competence in some areas. Requiring *CPD on the NCC* on identified risk areas would help to counter this deficiency.

To further inform suitable focus areas for *CPD on the NCC* for different *practitioners* the following consultation question is asked.

Consultation questions:

14. What sources of data should inform *CPD content* (focus areas of the *NCC*) for each *practitioner* discipline?

Feedback loop

Practitioners can identify emerging risks during their use and application of the *NCC*. Incorporating a feedback loop can help governments, industry and/or providers of *CPD on the NCC* to collect information about potential risks from *practitioners*. Other sources of feedback include complaints data, disciplinary actions and environmental scanning.

This data can be used to further inform the development of *CPD on the NCC*. A feedback loop may also support the *CPD provider* to understand whether *practitioners* feel the stated purpose of the *CPD on NCC* has been achieved and is therefore *practitioner* and outcomes focussed. To collect feedback, *practitioners* could be asked to undertake evaluations on the *CPD on the NCC* they undertake.

Consultation question:

15. Do you have any comments on the proposal for *CPD on the NCC* to be based on evidence and data? If you answered ‘yes’ please provide further information.

CPD on other subject matter

To achieve the objective of BCR recommendation 3, *CPD* must be broader than the *NCC* and also focus on increased compliance and improved building outcomes for consumers.

As outlined in the Context chapter of this paper, this is consistent with the majority of existing *CPD schemes*, which have mandatory content areas for *practitioners* to ensure holistic outcomes.

The integrity of *practitioners* underpins many of the BCR recommendations. During the development of this paper, the BCR Team’s Experts Panel stressed the importance of ethics contributing to improved practitioner behaviour, reduced non-compliance and consequently better building outcomes for consumers.

Ethics are moral principles that governs a person’s behaviour or the conduct of an activity. Instilling and upholding ethical behaviours is a fundamental component of PPS’s, codes of conducts and typically a compulsory or recommended *CPD* topic for numerous professions and *CPD schemes*.

Expert Panel members strongly recommended this discussion paper propose that in addition to compulsory *CPD on the NCC*, *practitioners* should undertake 2 hours/annum of compulsory *CPD* on ethics to improve integrity in the building approvals process, thereby improving application of the *NCC* and ultimately compliance.

In addition to ethics, feedback is sought from stakeholders on other appropriate *CPD* subject matters for each NRF discipline that could also help contribute to increased *NCC* compliance.

For example, BCR recommendation 11 states that building surveyors should be provided training to assist them to exercise their enforcement powers to fix non-compliance. This can contribute to increased compliance and improved outcomes for the society and this training could be provided through compulsory *CPD*.

Consultation question:

16. Do you believe compulsory *CPD* on ethics should be undertaken by all *practitioners*? Please explain your answer.
17. Besides the *NCC* and ethics, are there other subject matters that should be mandatory for some types of *practitioners*? If you answered yes, please provide further information.
18. Do you have any comments on the proposed model guidance for Principle 3? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.

Principle 4: Transparent and consultation-based CPD on the NCC

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that:

1. *CPD on the NCC* should be developed in consultation with industry and governments.
2. A *CPD scheme* should be
 - a. periodically reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and as part of a continuous improvement plan; and
 - b. transparent, i.e. its policies and procedures should be publically available and accessible.

Discussion

Consultation

Some *CPD activities* on offer to *practitioners* have been developed and reviewed by panels of experts, or approved for use by governments. Other *CPD activities* have been created with limited input from stakeholders as there may be few limitations on how *CPD content* can be developed.

Undertaking consultation with wider industry and government during development of *CPD on the NCC* will help ensure the *CPD on the NCC* is likely to be implemented consistently, be relevant and effective for *practitioners*, and meet the needs of government(s).

Ongoing consultation is also important to ensure that the *CPD on the NCC* is NCC-specific only and does not overstep into regulatory processes, as determined by the jurisdictions.

The following example is provided:

Example:

The *NCC CPD* courses have been developed in consultation with industry, government and subject matter experts. Experts from relevant disciplines contribute to developing the course content and supporting materials, to help ensure *NCC CPD* courses are practical and relevant to the everyday work of *practitioners*.²⁶

Periodic review

For a *CPD scheme*, planned periodic reviews and defined linkages to a continuous improvement plan can help ensure a *CPD scheme* remains relevant for participants, continues to meet the needs of governments and demonstrates improved compliance with the *NCC*. This review process is also an important step in collecting information and data from *practitioners* and broader stakeholders to help inform continuous improvements to the *CPD scheme* and suitable content for *CPD on the NCC*.

Relevant stakeholders including scheme participants, governments and the wider industry should be provided an opportunity to participate in major proposed changes to a *CPD scheme*, such as through a public consultation process.

Major proposed changes could be considered to include changes to:

- increase or decrease the amount of *CPD on the NCC* required to be undertaken by practitioners,
- documentation and evidence requirements for practitioners,
- an auditing or enforcement strategy.

Consideration should also be given to undertaking a cost benefit analysis when major proposed changes to a *CPD scheme* are proposed. This information can help inform all stakeholders of the potential impacts of the changes and the likely benefits to individuals and the wider community with respect to *NCC* competency and improved building outcomes.

²⁶ [ABCB NCC CPD](#)

Transparency

Transparency can assist *practitioners*, governments and wider industry to determine whether a particular *CPD scheme* may be suitable to incorporate and deliver *CPD on the NCC*.

A *CPD scheme* should be transparent with all *CPD scheme* requirements, policies and procedures clearly defined, available publicly and accessible by all people such as through meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Published information about the scheme should use plain English, visual aids, where appropriate and provide a point of contact with the scheme administrator, should *practitioners* or other stakeholders wish to ask for further information.

Transparency should also extend to the role and powers of the *CPD scheme administrator* in the interests of good governance. This should also include transparent objectives and requirements, clearly setting out functions and powers of the scheme administrator, publishing lists of suitable *CPD on the NCC* activities, the *CPD* evidence that must be recorded by *practitioners*. The recommended evidence and records to be kept by *practitioners* is described in Principle 5.

The review rights of *practitioners*, practitioner exemptions (if any) and the process for applying for an extension of time for completion should also be transparent and publicly available.

The following example is provided:

Example:

Engineers Australia has published *CPD Procedures*²⁷ and *Policies*²⁸ on its website. These procedures and policies provide detailed information on most matters relating to the Engineers Australia *CPD scheme*.

²⁷ [Engineers Australia CPD Procedure](#)

²⁸ [Engineers Australia CPD Policy](#)

Consultation questions:

19. Are there other matters that can assist transparency and improvement of *CPD on the NCC* and/or *CPD schemes*? If you answered 'yes' please provide more information.

Principle 5: Evidence and records of CPD on the NCC are retained

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that:

1. A *CPD scheme* should:
 - a. provide appropriate tools and resources to assist participants of its scheme to comply with its requirements; and
 - b. have adequate record-keeping processes and procedures.
2. A *practitioner* should:
 - a. document completion and retain evidence of their *CPD on the NCC* and retain their records for at least six years;
 - b. record as evidence of completion of *CPD on the NCC* the following information:
 - i. Date,
 - ii. Duration,
 - iii. Description of the activity,
 - iv. Type of activity,
 - v. A description of what they learnt,
 - vi. A certificate where supplied, or other documentary evidence of the activity, and
 - vii. Contribution towards annual CPD requirement.
 - c. provide to an appropriate authority:
 - i. a signed declaration confirming fulfilment of *CPD on the NCC* prior to re-registration; and
 - ii. evidence outlined in 2b as part of an audit showing completion of their *CPD on the NCC*; and
3. An 'appropriate authority' in 2c means:
 - a. a government authority,
 - b. a registration board, or
 - c. an industry body that is a *CPD scheme administrator*.

Note: Auditing is discussed in Principle 6.

Discussion

Tools and resources

Appropriate regulation and administration of *CPD* often reflects the push from an industry towards enhanced professionalism and trust from wider society, as can be seen through the approach used by PSS.

This means that rather than *CPD* being merely an obligation, there is a collective view formed of the importance of ‘lifelong learning’ amongst participants of the *CPD scheme* and the creation of a culture of responsibility to wider society.²⁹

Providing *CPD scheme* participants with appropriate tools and resources, such as templates or an online *CPD* portal can enable *practitioners* to undertake and record their *CPD on the NCC* easily and efficiently. This can help embed undertaking *CPD on the NCC* as part of their everyday work, save time and improve compliance with overall *CPD scheme* requirements.

These tools can also assist a *CPD scheme administrator*, particularly a jurisdiction, with auditing participants of its *CPD scheme*. Auditing is discussed in the next principle.

The following example of a *CPD* tool is provided:

Example:

Engineers Australia has an online *CPD* record-keeping tool called eCPDRecord³⁰, which sits alongside Engineers Australia’s *CPD* training portal. This allows participants to record *CPD activities* as soon as they undertake them in an easy to use and structured way. A manual template is also provided.

²⁹ Professional Standards Councils, [CPD Models](#), pg 9.

³⁰ [Engineers Australia Portal](#)

Retaining records

As stated earlier, some states and territories offer 1 or 3 year registration, so records should be retained for a minimum of 4 years to provide authorities time to audit them following a registration cycle, if required. Queensland and NSW require that *CPD* records are kept for five years. South Australia requires practitioners to maintain and retain records for 6 years after the end of that *CPD* period. This has informed the model guidance that recommends *practitioners* retain records of *CPD on the NCC* undertaken for at least 6 years.

The principle does not cover whether records should be in soft or hard-copy. Some websites allow completed *CPD* to be recorded digitally, however *practitioners* are also encouraged to keep independent records of their *CPD on the NCC*. Requiring that *practitioners* retain their own records ensures that they are available to authorities, if requested, to avoid reliance on third party storage.

Consultation question:

20. Should *practitioners* retain their *CPD on the NCC* records for at least 6 years? If you answered 'no', or 'unsure' please explain your answer.

Evidence

To ensure that any *CPD on the NCC* undertaken by *practitioners* is meaningful and contributes to improved *practitioner* competency, stakeholders have recommended that after completion of *CPD on the NCC*, a *practitioner* should document, in their own words, what they learnt and retain this as evidence. Therefore this has been specifically included in the proposed minimum guidance.

Consultation question:

21. Do you have any comment on the recommended evidence that a *practitioner* should record and retain of *CPD on the NCC* they have completed? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.

One approach for re-registration is to require a *practitioner* to submit evidence that *CPD* requirements have been met to the relevant government body prior to re-registration.

Requiring that *practitioners* document, retain and provide evidence of their fulfilment of the requirements of *CPD on the NCC*, prior to registration, is consistent with some existing CPD requirements. In NSW, for example, architects must annually upload evidence of *CPD activities* for the last year in the month prior to the anniversary of their registration. Feedback received from stakeholders suggests that this approach can be resource-intensive for both a *CPD scheme administrator* as well as a *practitioner*.

An alternative approach is to require *practitioners* to provide a signed declaration each year stating that they have completed all required *CPD on the NCC* prior to re-registration. *Practitioners* would be required to retain evidence to support their signed declaration if audited.

This approach would be less burdensome for governments and *practitioners*, especially in light of the *CPD* year proposed under Principle 1 and is consistent with that used by other professions. Therefore this approach has been included in the proposed minimum requirements for Principle 5 and as part of a broader auditing and enforcement strategy proposed under Principle 6.

Record-keeping

Record keeping can be used to monitor the success of the *CPD scheme* in meeting its objectives and identifying areas that require improvement or need to change. Adequate record-keeping is paramount for effective auditing and can increase the likelihood of a *CPD scheme's* success and the success of its participants, in this case in relation to improved competency on the *NCC*.

Record-keeping will also be critical to facilitate AMR. It can assist in providing assurances between governments and industry that their *CPD schemes* are being complied with, managed appropriately and lead to effective outcomes for *practitioners* and the wider community.

Consultation question:

22. Should a *practitioner* be required to provide evidence of their fulfilment of *CPD on the NCC* prior to re-registration or would a declaration be sufficient? Please explain your answer.

Principle 6: CPD on the NCC is oversighted

Proposed minimum requirements

It is recommended that a *CPD scheme* implement the following auditing and enforcement strategy to ensure appropriate oversight of *CPD on the NCC*:

1. A *CPD scheme* should annually and randomly audit *practitioners* by giving them a specified period (e.g. 21 business days), to submit evidence of completion of their *CPD on the NCC* that supported their declaration.
Refer to Principle 5 regarding appropriate evidence.
2. Where a *practitioner* has not completed their *CPD on the NCC*, the following enforcement action should be undertaken:
 - a. Providing a set amount of time to a *practitioner* to bring themselves into compliance with the *practitioner* having to proactively report until compliant. It is also recommended that the practitioner proactively submit records of *CPD on the NCC* at the end of the next 1 or 2 *CPD* years;
 - b. If 2a is not met, escalation to suspension pending completion of *CPD on the NCC* within a further specified period;
 - c. Escalation to cancellation for 1 year if 2b is not met. A *practitioner* would need to re-apply for registration and, in doing so, satisfy the registration body or *CPD scheme administrator* about how they will address their repeated non-compliance.

Discussion

Auditing

An audit is an independent examination of records. In relation to *CPD*, regular and appropriate audits of *practitioners* *CPD* records by a *CPD scheme administrator* can help ensure *practitioners* comply with a compulsory requirement to undertake *CPD on the NCC*. Wider benefits of auditing include detection and minimisation of fraud, improved credibility of the *CPD scheme* and identification of improved processes that could assist *practitioners* in meeting their *CPD* requirements with less administrative burden. The PSA has identified incremental auditing to be an effective mechanism when assessing member non-compliance (or patterns of unsatisfactory professional conduct) to professional integrity systems.

Although not all publicly available, the majority of *CPD schemes* examined have an auditing strategy.

The following examples are provided:

Example:

The AIB policy on CPD³¹ specifically states:

‘The AIB National office will review, on an annual basis, a random selection of 10% of members to verify that they are meeting their *CPD* obligations.’

Example:

Engineers Australia details its processes for conducting audits of *practitioner’s CPD* through its *CPD Procedures* document³².

Therefore to help facilitate compliance, it is proposed that *practitioners* participating in a *CPD scheme* should be randomly audited each year by the *CPD scheme administrator*.

In addition, there is often a commercial nature to *CPD schemes* in that scheme participants must undertake *CPD*, usually for a fee, to be a member of certain industry associations. Industry associations usually deliver a proportion of the required *CPD*. This leads to the potential for a conflict of interest in ensuring appropriate auditing is undertaken to identify when a scheme participant fails to complete a *CPD scheme’s* requirements.

To address this, one approach is to specify that a minimum proportion of a *CPD scheme’s* participants should be audited each year, for example 10%. Feedback is sought from stakeholders on this approach.

³¹ [AIB policy on CPD](#)

³² [Engineers Australia CPD Policy](#)

Consultation question:

23. Should a proportion of a *CPD scheme's* participants be randomly audited each year? If so, please explain your answer and include a suggested percentage e.g. 10%.

Enforcement

When a *practitioner* fails to complete required *CPD*, a *CPD administrator* may undertake enforcement action. The undertaking of appropriate enforcement action by a *CPD scheme administrator* can also help ensure that its *CPD scheme* participants, wider industry and governments have confidence in the *CPD scheme* itself.

Enforcement action may include cautioning; reprimanding; requiring further education; conditions or limitations on registration; a penalty; suspending registration; and/or cancelling registration.

In addition, some non-government *CPD scheme administrators* have indicated they have limited powers to undertake appropriate enforcement action. This matter can only be addressed by governments through mandatory or compulsory *CPD* linked to licensing and registration requirements.

Another issue occurs where a practitioner has intentionally provided a false declaration stating they have completed their required *CPD on the NCC*. Some stakeholders have indicated that this type of behaviour would be un-ethical conduct, and likely breach practitioner codes of conduct, where they are in place. Feedback is sought on whether additional disciplinary measures are needed for practitioners that make false declarations.

To ensure effective delivery of *CPD on the NCC* oversight is essential, therefore guidance on an auditing and enforcement strategy for *CPD schemes* is proposed for inclusion in the national model guidance.

Consultation questions:

24. Do you have any comments on the proposed auditing and enforcement strategy? Please explain your answer and provide further information if necessary.

25. Should all *practitioners* be subject to the same potential consequences? Please explain your answer.
26. Should *practitioners* be subject to additional disciplinary measures where they make a false declaration? Please explain your answer.
27. Do you have any other feedback or suggestions to improve the national model guidance proposed for BCR recommendation 3? If you answered 'yes' please provide further information.