



FAQ – Improved NCC useability

As part of the Australian Building Codes Board's (ABCBC) commitment to delivering a National Construction Code (NCC) that is user-friendly and modern, NCC 2022 comes with some important changes to its structure and format.

On 20 April 2021 the ABCBC presented the *A new look for NCC 2022 webinar - Information and Q&A session*. After the webinar, the ABCBC reviewed the questions asked by participants to identify some common themes and frequently asked questions (FAQs). This document sets out those themes and FAQs along with answers to help explain changes to the structure and format for NCC 2022.

The changes cover three broad categories:

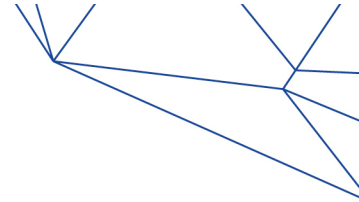
- Consistent volume structure
- Section, Part, Type, Clause (SPTC) referencing system
- Web content accessibility.

This FAQ forms part of the suite of resources the ABCBC has developed to support practitioners through the changes, explain why and how the code is changing, and what it means in practice.

Further, detailed information is also provided on the ABCBC website at:

abcb.gov.au/ncc-useability.





Background

The improved NCC useability project builds on the successful implementation of free online access to the code in 2015.

The ABCB is committed to delivering an NCC that is user-friendly and modern, through a range of initiatives. This initiative forms part the ABCB's long-term strategy to provide a more user-friendly online NCC that is better understood by a broad base of practitioners, with the next round of enhancements coming in NCC 2022.

These enhancements focus on digitisation of the code and improving its readability. Because the code has evolved over many decades and was originally designed as a print publication, changes to its structure and format are required. This is to ensure the NCC operates in a consistent and predictable way, within and across its volumes, without changing the intent of the code in any way.

FAQs

General

Will there be PDF versions of the new format NCC?

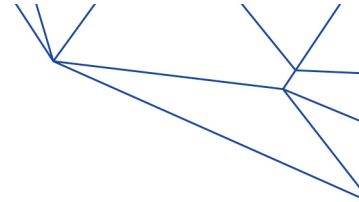
Yes, online and PDF versions will be provided.

Can I still buy a printed version?

The ABCB no longer produces printed editions of the NCC. However, printed editions of the NCC can be purchased from the [commercial providers](#) listed on the ABCB website.

Can I filter the NCC to see only what applies to a specific class of building?

Yes. The new look NCC 2022 online will provide filtering and improved search functionality. The filtering function, known as 'build your own code', will enable the NCC to be filtered by state/territory, building classification and climate zone. This improvement is made possible by ensuring the NCC has a consistent volume structure, numbering system and clause structure throughout. This is planned for the Preview publication of NCC 2022.



‘Build your own code’ sounds great but what about its legal status; can I rely on it?

‘Build your own code’ is intended for guidance purposes only. Whilst every effort will be taken to ensure its accuracy, it should not be relied upon for regulatory purposes.

Consistent volume structure

Is Volume Two being merged into Volume One?

No. Volume Two will remain separate but will have the same structure as Volumes One and Three. The 2015 readability review of the NCC recommended a consistent volume structure but did not recommend merging these two NCC Volumes.

What happened to Section H in Volume One?

The 2019 content of NCC Volume One Section H will be moved to Section I, which is currently vacant. This will allow the ‘H’ designation to be used exclusively for Volume Two.

Why is there only a Section H in Volume Two?

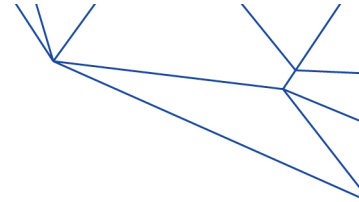
The Section H designation has been reserved for Volume Two to avoid number clashes with Volume One, which is important given that many practitioners work with both.

Previously, number clashes were avoided through Volume Two having a completely different structure and numbering system. Now that all three Volumes use the same structure and system, a new solution is needed to ensure that users can tell instantly whether a clause belongs to Volume One or Volume Two. If the clause number starts with ‘H’, you know it is from Volume Two (think ‘H’ for ‘housing’).

Section H will, of course, be preceded by the Governing Requirements (Section A), which are standard for all three Volumes.

Why do the Acceptable Construction Practices need to be separated out of Volume Two?

Separating out the ACPs was the only way to achieve a consistent volume structure while also preserving the choice of using either the ACP or a referenced Standard such as an Australia Standard (i.e. Acceptable Construction Manual).



Will the Housing Provisions have the same status as the NCC?

The Housing Provisions will form a part of the NCC Suite, but will not be an NCC volume in their own right. Rather, they will apply only when they are referred to by Volume Two, as part of that volume’s Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions.

This means that the Housing Provisions will be more like a referenced document of the NCC, but with one key difference which is that the Housing Provisions will take precedence to the extent of any conflict between it and any other NCC referenced document (see the ‘Application’ box for clause A4G1 in the NCC 2022 public comment draft).

Because the Housing Provisions are derived from the former ACP content of Volume Two, they will not cover all aspects of housing construction regulated by Volume Two. The reason for this is that not all Parts of NCC Volume Two included an ACP compliance option.

Section, Part, Type, Clause (SPTC) referencing system

Will SPTC cause confusion for NCC users?

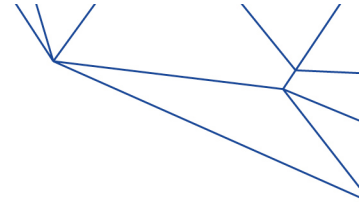
As with any significant change to an existing system, there is likely to be some initial confusion. To address this, the new NCC will include an ‘archive number’ to the right of every clause title so that not only can practitioners easily identify clauses using a system they might be familiar with but also to allow search engines to easily find a reference. So, for example, typing EV3.2 into Google or our NCC search engine will take you straight to E3V2.

The archive number will appear in square brackets with the prefix “2019:”. Clauses that were added after NCC 2019 will have the words “New for 2022” in place of the archive number.

It is important to note that the archive number is intended only for reconciling SPTC clause numbers with the clause numbers used in NCC 2019. The archive number does not indicate whether or not the text of a clause has been amended as part of NCC 2022.

Can we keep using the existing referencing system?

Industry resources are expected to start using the SPTC system from September 2022 onwards—when the 2022 edition of the code is adopted. Over time, usage the SPTC system will become the widespread.



What will happen to the Guide to NCC Volume One?

The Guide will be updated to use the SPTC referencing system as part of the general update process for the Guide for NCC 2022. Similar updates will also be rolled out for other ABCB publications that refer to specific NCC clause numbers.

How will the changes affect state and territory variations?

State and territory variations, including additions, will be converted to the SPTC system as part of the general process of updating state and territory variations for NCC 2022.

Web content accessibility

Will the word search function in NCC online be improved?

Yes, this is one of many improvements made possible by the changes to how the NCC is structured and presented. It is expected that NCC 2022's search function will be powered by Google's search function, which will provide all the accuracy of Google search but operating just within NCC online.