

## Building Confidence Report and the difference between conformance and compliance

NATSPEC received requests from Government departments and industry organisations to set up a register of construction products, in response to an increase in non-conforming building products being used in the Australian construction industry. The recently released [Shergold and Weir report](#), commissioned by the Building Ministers' Forum, has highlighted the government's next 3-year trajectory of a more effective NCC compliance enforcement. The series of recommendations identified a broad suite of power for regulatory bodies, including state governments, local governments and private building surveyors. The recommendations called up each jurisdiction to share information on registration and NCC compliance requirements of relevant building practitioners. Moreover, the recommendations confirmed the BMF' position in a compulsory certification scheme for high-risk building products.

### **The difference between conformance and compliance?**

Product conformity is a term used to convey that a product meets specified conformance requirements. The conformance requirements for building products are often specified in standards. These are voluntary consensus documents setting out specifications and procedures to make sure products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistently perform the way they are intended to perform. Their application is by choice unless they are mandated by government or called up in the building contract (generally in the specification).

Product compliance is a term used to specify that a product satisfies the required building regulations in the National Construction Code (NCC). Product compliance provides information or recommendation on the suitability or use of product for a particular application, situation or project. While evidence of conformity only supports the use of a product or material in general terms, evidence of compliance may provide information on manufacturing controls, limitations on the use of product and maintenance requirements.

The NCPR (National Construction Product Register) was soft-launched in September 2017 and it has been welcomed by the building and construction industry. We have taken industry feedback and we are currently working with more product manufacturers, particularly in high-risk building product categories, to promote the awareness of product conformity in Australia. On the premise of the distinction between conformance and compliance, we have gained an increasing understanding of designers' need to access products with evidence of compliance. The NCPR is expanding to incorporate additional product compliance requirements with the NCC where applicable. With an influence of various global product compliance schemes, addressing product compliance has been a part of the NCPR's comprehensive suite of resources to mitigate the risk of NCBP (non-conforming and non-compliant products) for the industry. Stay close, more details are coming in this space.