



Aims of the building reform

South Australia is undertaking a program of building reform to ensure higher standards of management and compliance in the building sector and to create a safer, more durable and adaptive built environment for the community.

The building reform program specifically aims to:

- strengthen the building regulatory system through improved building controls
- facilitate the creation of high quality, well-constructed and compliant buildings
- promote greater economic investment in South Australia.

Rationale for the building reform

The building reform program is being driven by two main factors: (1) the new *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the Act) and (2) broad sector-wide changes.

The Act

The new Act has initiated the biggest modernisation of South Australia's planning and development system in 20 years.

The success of the new planning system is dependent on the state having an equally modern and effective building sector to work alongside it and support it.

As such, reforms to the planning sector have necessitated a number of twin reforms in the building sector, including the development of new building instruments that will help deliver a more robust, responsive and accountable building industry in South Australia.

Sector changes

Beyond the Act, the building reform program is also informed by the broader impact of technological innovation; the growing need to build public trust in building and construction standards; the increasingly complex responsibilities of building professionals; and the outcomes of the 2018 Shergold and Weir Report on compliance in the building and construction industries.¹

¹ Shergold, P and Weir, B. Building Ministers' Forum. (2018). *Building Confidence – Improving the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement systems for the building and construction industry across Australia*. Canberra: Australian Government.

Who will the building reform affect?

The building reform program will primarily affect building professionals who are responsible for applying South Australia's building regulations, namely building certifiers, building officers and council inspectors.

How will the building reform be delivered?

The building reform program will be delivered via three new instruments:

1. Ministerial Building Standards

The Ministerial Building Standards will be derived from (and replace) existing Ministerial Building Specifications, but will be amended and consolidated as required to provide clearer building rules related to South Australian variations under the National Construction Code.

These Standards will seek to facilitate improved health and safety in existing buildings; maintenance of essential safety provisions; and onsite retention of stormwater.

2. Updated building regulations

Current regulations related to building will be reviewed to improve consistency and useability.

New building regulations will be prepared to better support improved performance, integrity and accountability in the building system, and to address any gaps or areas of emerging need in the building sector. Existing regulations and consent protocols will be enhanced and clarified where needed, such as that for swimming pool safety.

New building regulations will be supported by an Accredited Professionals Scheme, which will ensure that decision-makers in the building profession are appropriately qualified to make key decisions.

3. New inspection policies

A state-wide set of council inspection policies will be created to foster a more consistent and greater level of compliance across council regions. These can be tailored to meet a range of council requirements. This is a change from the current system whereby councils determine many of their own inspection policies based on set criteria.

These three instruments will be developed by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (the Department) in collaboration with experts from the public and private sectors and with oversight from the State Planning Commission's Building Committee.

What is not in scope for the building reform?

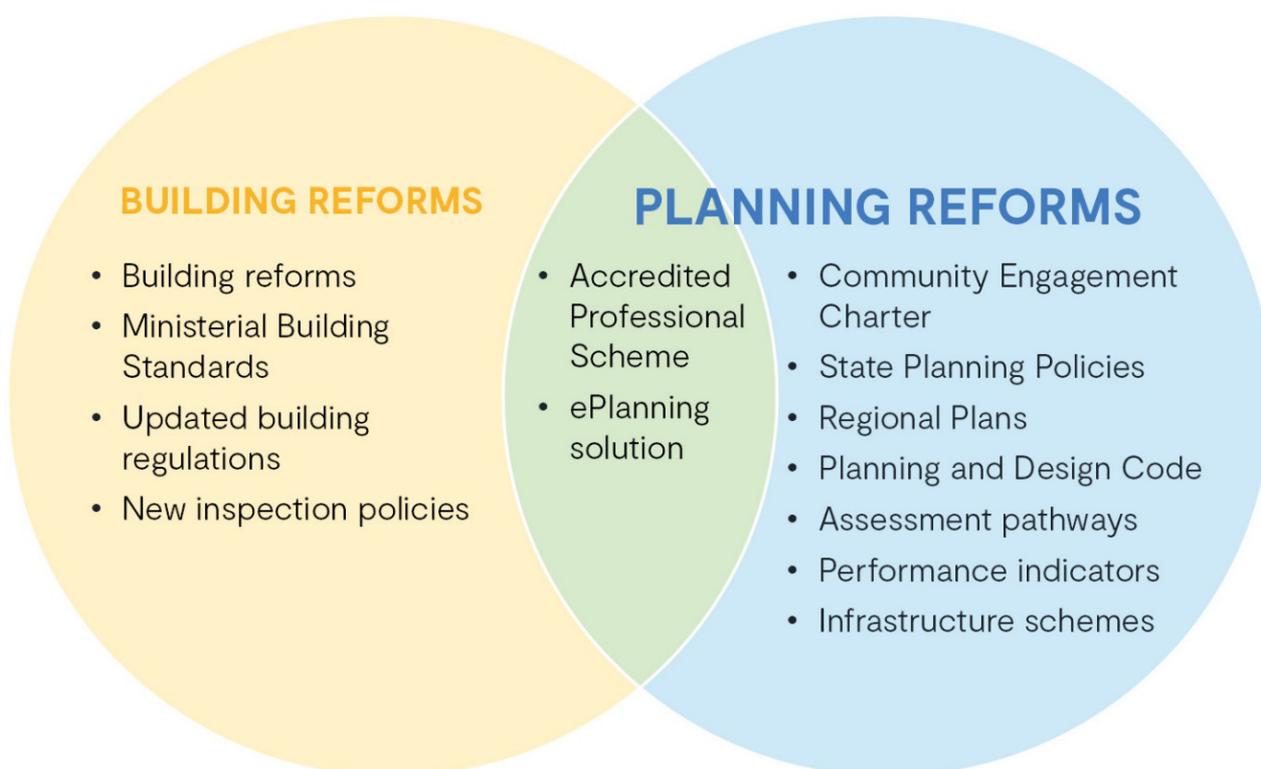
At this stage the building reform program does not propose to make any fundamental changes to:

- the basic role of building certifiers, building officers and council inspectors, or the role of the Department and Consumer and Business Services as state-wide regulators
- licensing requirements for builders, plumbers, gas fitters, electricians, and other tradespeople
- specific training on the National Construction Code
- mutual recognition laws for building certifiers.

How will the building reform program link to South Australia's new planning system?

The building reform program will link with South Australia's new planning system via two major new initiatives: the Accredited Professionals Scheme and the ePlanning solution.

These are illustrated in the diagram below.



Accredited Professionals Scheme

The Accredited Professionals Scheme is a new scheme that aims to ensure that decision-makers in the development assessment process are appropriately qualified to make key decisions and that a high standard of ethical conduct and professionalism is met.

As part of the scheme, all building certifiers, building officers and council inspectors will be required to be registered and accredited within defined levels and meet Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards.

The new scheme will also include revised procedures for complaints; investigations; compliance and enforcement; and auditing.

ePlanning solution

South Australia's paper-based planning system will soon migrate to a state-wide ePlanning platform. As part of this change, all development applications across the state will be lodged via a 24-hour online portal (the SA Planning Portal).

In this future state, the portal will become the 'one-stop-shop' for building practitioner registration, building approvals and building inspection records. All Ministerial Building Standards, building regulations and inspection policies will also be housed on the SA Planning Portal.

Have your say

Interested parties are invited to comment on this document via the following means

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- Post: DPTI Building Policy Unit, GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001