

Advisory Notices are issued to assist in the interpretation of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016

TECHNICAL: Energy efficiency provisions and the use of solar offsets

This Advisory Notice provides information about the energy efficiency provisions and the use of solar offsets.

BACKGROUND

All new homes and extensions built in South Australia must meet the minimum energy efficiency provisions prescribed in the National Construction Code (NCC).

The energy efficiency performance requirements have been developed to ensure that the building fabric and the building's domestic services be dealt with separately. On-site renewables are seen as a companion to, but not a replacement for, good levels of building fabric performance. This is a result of government objectives to promote longevity through good thermal performance of the building fabric rather than reliance on solutions that may only have limited life spans.

DISCUSSION

The NCC Volume Two contains two distinct and separate Performance Requirements which are to be addressed individually:

- **Performance Requirement 2.6.1 to ensure a level of thermal performance that facilitates the efficient use of energy**

The thermal performance requirements include measures to reduce heating and cooling loads, thermal insulation in roofs, walls and floors; adequate glazing performance, appropriate building sealing and draught proofing as well as adequate ventilation and air movement.

- **Performance Requirement 2.6.2 to ensure features that facilitate the efficient use of energy**

The domestic services requirements include insulation of services such as ductwork and piping; appropriate sealing of heating and cooling ductwork, performance of artificial lighting and the use of renewable energy sources.

In South Australia, a variation to the NCC permits P2.6.2 to offset P2.6.1 in certain limited circumstances. The variation permits a one star offset (5 star rating in lieu of 6 stars) for new elevated Class 1 buildings with a lightweight flooring system that are constructed on or off site and are capable of being moved (including transportable buildings). However the one star offset can only be used when the Class 1 building is located in Climate Zone 4 as defined in the NCC or in a local government area specified in NCC Variation SA 3.12.0.1(g). Note that the SA variation to 3.12.0.1 was amended in May 2020 to identify the heating and cooling load limits to be used for this 5 star concession (refer [Ministerial Building Standard MBS 007 dated March 2021](#)).

Where the variation applies, the additional energy consumed by a 5 star elevated building must be offset by the installation of a renewable energy source (such as an appropriately sized on- site renewable energy source determined in accordance with SA Table 3.12.0.1 in NCC 2019 Vol 2, Amendment 1.

The variation also allows for these types of Class 1 buildings that have a floor area not exceeding 60m², (regardless of the location) to achieve a house energy rating of not less than 5 stars, without the requirement to offset additional renewable energy.

'Performance Solutions' are not supported which allow the use of solar offsets in order to achieve compliance outside of the above criteria. Individuals or businesses that claim the Department supports this approach are **incorrect**. Should such claims be made, please advise the Department so that appropriate action can be taken.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Downloads

For advice on addressing the current energy efficiency requirements in NCC 2019 Volume 2 please refer to the information handbook www.abcb.gov.au/Resources/Publications/Education-Training/energy-efficiency-ncc-volume-two published by the Australian Buildings Codes Board.

Photovoltaic panel installation information

The Energy Advisory Service in the Department of Energy and Mining can assist with information to determine the size of a photovoltaic installation as being a residential (small embedded generator) or commercial (large embedded generator) application and the relevant approvals.

Telephone: 08 8204 1888

Email: energyadvice@sa.gov.au

Further Information:

Attorney-General's Department
Planning and Land Use Services
Building Policy and Compliance
Level 2, 101 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Telephone: 1800 752 664

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