

## POLICY STATEMENT

### BUILDING MATERIALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

#### **Policy Precise**

Building and construction materials and products play a significant role in the environmental performance of a buildings and infrastructure. The assessment and comparison of building and construction materials and products should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent across product categories and based on a life cycle approach.

<b>Dates</b>	Policy or amendment approved	[21/11/2014]
	Policy or amendment takes effect	[21/11/2014]
	Policy is due for review (up to 2 years)	[10/2016]
<b>Approved by</b>	BPIC Board Meeting number/date 21 November 2014	
<b>Sub-Committee Chair</b>	LCI Sub-committee: Kristin Brookfield	
<b>Relevant to</b>	All members	
<b>Related documents</b>	BPIC Constitution	
<b>Superseded documents</b>	N/A	

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## **1. Policy Issue**

Building and construction materials and products play a significant role in the environmental performance of buildings and infrastructure.

In Australia, the current framework for the assessment of building and construction materials and products in relation to their environmental impacts is limited to matters covered by the National Construction Code and voluntary standards. However the National Construction Code does not currently include any minimum acceptable standards for the environmental performance of building materials and products.

A range of voluntary rating tools currently exist to assist in undertaking a life cycle assessment of a building or construction project. However these rating tools generally adopt standard product information for the assessment of the positive and negative impacts of building materials and construction products.

The building materials and product sector believe there is a need for a comprehensive, peer reviewed, database of life cycle information for all building materials available in the Australian market place.

## **2. Relationship to BPIC Objects**

- a) Advancing building technology through regulatory reform by promoting and establishing a council of national industry associations representative of building products manufacturers and suppliers and without limiting the generality of the forgoing to:
  - position BPIC to be recognised by governments and their regulatory agencies as an authoritative group for the building products sector of the building industry on technical matters;
  - coordinate an industry-wide approach and response to codes and standards;
  - facilitate the sourcing of practical industry information to regulators from BPIC member organisations; and
  - encourage investment in skills formation, product development and industry research by removing regulatory impediments to innovation.
- c) To develop policy and make submissions or representations to governments, industry and the community on agreed technical standards, codes and regulatory issues of mutual concern to Members;
- e) To foster industry practices that promote the prosperity of Members and of the Australian community in general;
- i) To be an agent for strategic change to improve the technical standards, codes and regulatory environment in which Members do business in Australia and elsewhere;
- j) To conduct research into any matter of agreed mutual interest in the technical standards, codes and regulatory areas affecting the building industry;

## **3. Policy principles**

- Building and construction materials and products used in Australia should compete on a level playing field in relation to their environmental impacts.

- The building industry should have access to information about the environmental performance of key building and construction materials and products in the form of a life cycle inventory to allow like for like comparisons.

#### **4. Policy statement(s)**

##### **4.1 Level Playing Field**

- The Australian building industry needs a nationally consistent and comprehensive basis for measuring and reporting on the environmental impact of building products, buildings and structures.

##### **4.2 Life cycle approach**

- The assessment and comparison of building and construction materials and products should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent across product categories and based on 'whole of life, whole of building' (cradle to grave) approach.
- The assessment and comparison of building and construction materials and products should be completed using the BPIC Methodology to ensure compatibility and comparability of environmental impacts.
- The development and management of life cycle information for products available for use in Australia should be undertaken by relevant building material industry organisations.
- The life cycle information used to undertake assessment of environmental performance should be current and relevant to the assessment being undertaken and use the BPIC Methodology.
- The life cycle information included in a database of building and construction materials and products should capture the full production process based on the associated boundaries and scope.

##### **4.3 Environmental product declarations**

- To support the use of life cycle information BPIC recognises that other tools, such as environmental product declarations, can assist in providing product specific information for comparison. Environmental product declarations may assist in the procurement process by offering comparative information. However, they should not be used in place of a holistic life cycle assessment for a building or construction project.

#### **5. BPIC Strategy**

##### **Establish an Australian database (life cycle inventory) of key building materials and construction products**

- With the assistance of the Federal Government, BPIC members invested significant time and resources in the establishment of the Building Products Life Cycle Inventory (BP LCI) released to the public in 2011.
- Maintain an effective BP LCI to meet Australian industry needs.
- Maintain an effective communication channel with BP LCI subscribers about information, updates and reviews of the BP LCI.

- Maintain the methodology currency and relevance.
- Work with Standards Australia to develop a set of Australian Standards for Environmental labelling.

**Promotion of life cycle approach to environmental performance**

- BPIC will promote the use of life cycle methodology to describe the environmental performance of building and construction materials and products in the development of life cycle assessments, environmental product declarations and the like.
- BPIC will support the development of relevant Australian schemes to describe the environmental performance of building and construction materials and products.
- BPIC will investigate how environmental product declarations could be used to support the delivery of information to the building industry for ‘whole of life, whole of building’ comparisons.

**Committee(s):**

**BPIC LCI Sub-committee:** Chair: Kristin Brookfield

**Members:** Ross Davies (ASI), Richard Hamber (AWA), Warren South (CCAA), Catherine Wong (Think Brick, CMAA, RTAA), Bill Thompson (GBMA), Dennis D’arcy (ICANZ), TBC (EWPAA)

**6. Relationship to BPIC Strategic Plan:**

**Vision:** To be recognised as a body that is advancing the strategic issues and opportunities effecting the building & products industry

**Result/Outcome:** BP LCI – make “usable” and then “promote” as BPIC initiative.

**7. Version control and change history**

Date	Version	Approved by Board	Status
25/6/14	1		Draft for BPIC LCI Subcommittee discussion
7/8/14	2		Draft for BPIC Board discussion (amended by BPIC LCI Subcommittee)
18/9/14	3		Board Draft for BPIC LCI Subcommittee
20/10/14	4		Final Draft for circular resolution to the Board.
21/11/14	5	Approved	