



Registered Master Builders Association of New Zealand Incorporated

Removing barriers to overseas building products
submission

June 2024

Overview

- Master Builders supports removing barriers to using overseas products.
- As New Zealanders grapple with the cost of living and housing affordability, we support any initiatives that allow builders to deliver affordable housing and increase housing supply.
- Alongside cost of living, housing affordability is one of the most concerning issues for New Zealanders. The cost of building a house has increased by 41 per cent since 2019, which has meant that owning a house is becoming more challenging for New Zealanders, especially younger generations.
- Whilst there are a range of measures that must be implemented to address the rising building costs, the Government's work here is an important step in improving affordability.

Feedback questions

Making it easier to use building products that meet overseas standards

1. What factors should be included in the decision making before recognising building product standard organisations?

Response:

- Master Builders support the factors that are being considered in developing the criteria to inform what overseas organisations and standards are recognised. However, MBIE should also consider in their decision-making:
 - The scope and coverage of standards developed by the organisation should be comprehensive, encompassing aspects like safety, performance, durability, and environmental impact of building products.
 - Innovation and adaptability are essential for addressing technological advancements and sustainability practices in building products. The organisation's ability to update standards to reflect new materials and construction methods ensures relevance and efficacy in a rapidly evolving industry.
 - Alignment with New Zealand building codes and regulations is important to ensure that recognised standards meet local requirements, including climate-specific and seismic considerations.

Streamlining the citing of international standards

2. What types of product standards should MBIE prioritise in its review of international standards?

Response:

- Master Builders do not have a view on which product standards MBIE should prioritise in its review of international standards.

3. What types of products do you consider to be higher risk to their failure or misuse? This may be a risk to life safety or significant economic losses.

Response:

- Master Builders consider any products that relate to “restricted building work” to be higher risk. Namely products related to structural performance, weathertightness, and fire safety.

4. What factors should MBIE consider when evaluating and comparing overseas building product standards?

Response:

- When evaluating and comparing overseas building product standards for adoption in New Zealand, MBIE should ensure that these standards guarantee the safety, quality, reliability, and environmental sustainability of products.
- MBIE should also consider relevance to the NZ Building Code, safety and performance, market acceptance and compatibility (for example, ability to stand up to New Zealand’s unique environment – UV, seismic etc).

Mandating acceptance of products certified overseas

5. What factors should MBIE consider before specifying appropriate product certification schemes?

Response:

- Master Builders supports accepting products certified overseas. However, before specifying appropriate product certification schemes, MBIE should consider factors to ensure that the schemes effectively safeguard public safety, uphold quality standards, and support regulatory compliance.
- While we currently have the MBIE Product certificate register, it does not contain any information around the performance of the product over its lifecycle, for example if there have been any failures.
- MBIE should consider having a product register, which can provide information on whether a product is a success or a failure.
- Consider how will we ensure compliance with NZ’s regulatory environment, and how we will address issues? For example, products that have a manufacturers guarantee makes it easier to address issues.
- Consider the financial stability of an organisation to cover/support failures or be backed by third party insurance. For example: A recent heater product failure saw thousands of wall heaters for bathrooms replaced. There are also products that work for Australia that have been failing in New Zealand – plastic pipeline systems and cladding.

- Need to consider the performance of a product over its lifecycle, including its ability to stand up to New Zealand's environment (for example, the lifecycle of products exposed to our sun (and lack of UV filter) will likely perform worse than overseas examples).
- More broadly it will also be important to consider whether an overseas provider of a certified product from their jurisdiction would realistically export their product into New Zealand. Cost and logistics relating to freight and shipping may well prove prohibitive so it would be prudent to prioritise products from schemes or jurisdictions that have suppliers who are realistically likely to respond to demand and export to New Zealand.