



# BUILDING MONITOR **STRATEGIC PLAN**

 2024-25

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Building Monitor acknowledges Victoria’s First Peoples and their ongoing strength in practising the world’s oldest living culture. The Building Monitor acknowledges the Traditional Owners’ lands, waters, and skies on which we live and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

# ABOUT THE BUILDING MONITOR

The Building Monitor is a dedicated advocate for Victorian domestic building consumers at a systemic level and ensure their voices are heard when decisions are made about the building system. The Building Monitor provides independent expert advice for system improvements to the Minister for Housing and Building (Minister) and to building system stakeholders. As the central point for identification of critical and systemic issues, the Building Monitor will empower domestic building consumers by promoting awareness of systemic issues and will provide a voice for consumers in systemic building matters.

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## STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan sets out the Building Monitor's vision, mission, values and objectives.

### Vision

The Building Monitor's vision is that Victorian domestic building consumers can rely on and have confidence in a building system that provides safe, quality and compliant buildings.

### Mission

The Building Monitor's mission is to monitor and drive continuous improvements to Victoria's building system by championing the voice of consumers.

### Values

Four values guide the Building Monitor's work:

- **Advocacy** – The Building Monitor advocates for the interests of domestic building consumers at a systemic level and ensures their needs and lived experiences are heard when decisions are made about the building system.
- **Leadership** – The Building Monitor identifies systemic issues and risks facing domestic building consumers and influences opportunities for change.
- **Collaboration** – The Building Monitor identifies areas across government where domestic building consumers need better protection by consulting with consumers through a Building Monitor Reference Group and other forums as appropriate. The Building Monitor gathers and analyses data held by government agencies and works collaboratively with government and building system entities to address systemic challenges.
- **Integrity** – The Building Monitor operates with integrity, providing unbiased and independent expert advice underpinned by evidence, to the Minister and relevant stakeholders.



# OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In line with section 208E of the *Building Act 1993* (Vic), the Building Monitor’s work focusses on three objectives:

- **Objective 1** – Drive improvements to the domestic building consumers’ experiences of the building system.
- **Objective 2** – Create a central point to identify critical and systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers.
- **Objective 3** – Empower domestic building consumers.

Strategic initiatives demonstrate how the Building Monitor is working towards achieving the objectives. Some initiatives contribute across multiple objectives and may move across these areas over time.

## Measuring success and reporting performance

The Building Monitor will track progress in meeting the objectives and evaluate the proposed improvements. The Building Monitor will report on the Building Monitor’s performance through the annual Building Monitor Issues Report.

### Objective 1: Drive improvements to the domestic building consumers’ experiences of the building system

Improve domestic building consumers’ experiences of the building system by advocating for their interests at a systemic level and providing independent expert advice to the Minister and building system stakeholders.

## Strategic initiatives

1. Raise awareness of the Building Monitor’s role among domestic building consumers and building system stakeholders and provide advocacy leadership.
2. Contribute to and advise on the building reform program, to ensure the interests of domestic building consumers are considered when key policy and legislative decisions are made.
3. Establish a Building Monitor Reference Group (Reference Group). The purposes of the Reference Group are to:
  - Provide information and advice to the Building Monitor concerning system issues and other matters facing, or experienced by, domestic building consumers; and
  - Discuss and make recommendations on possible solutions to identified systemic issues designed to improve consumer protection.

The information provided by the Reference Group will inform the Building Monitor’s advice to the Minister and building system stakeholders.

The Terms of Reference setting out the Reference Group’s operating procedures and proposed membership is at [Attachment 1A](#).

4. Establish a Government Inter-Agency Reference Group (Government Reference Group) in the interim, while the new Building and Plumbing Commission is being established. The purposes of the Government Reference Group are to:
  - Provide information to the Building Monitor regarding systemic challenges and/or emerging issues facing domestic building consumers;
  - Discuss and make recommendations to resolve identified issues; and

- Facilitate access to and analysis of data held by Government agencies to identify changes needed to improve consumer protection.

The information provided by the Government Reference Group will inform the Building Monitor’s advice to the Minister.

The Terms of Reference setting out the Government Reference Group’s operating procedures and proposed membership is at [Attachment 1B](#).

## Measures of success

- Improved experience of the building system.
- The domestic building consumers’ voices are heard when decisions are made about the building system.
- Increased advocacy for the interests of domestic building consumers leads to improvements in consumer protection.

### Objective 2: Create a central point to identify critical and systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers

Identify and address critical and systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers.

## Strategic initiatives

1. Prepare an annual Building Monitor Issues Report, specifying the systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers and make recommendations to Government on options to address such issues.

Preparation of this report will involve consultation with the Minister, with relevant stakeholders and consumers primarily via the Reference Group, building system stakeholders via the Government Reference Group, as well as with the Plumbing Advisory Council, Building Regulations Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders as appropriate.
2. Collect and analyse information and data on systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers.

## Measures of success

- Greater understanding of systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers results in implementation of recommended improvements.
- Improved coordination of information between building system entities results in existing loopholes in the system (due to fragmentation) being closed off. This leads to increased consumer protection and restoration of confidence in the industry.

### Objective 3: Empower domestic building consumers

Empower domestic building consumers by promoting awareness of systemic issues that relate to the building industry, the plumbing industry and building system regulators and develop options to address such issues.

## Strategic initiatives

1. Establish an Engage Victoria platform to enable domestic building consumers to tell the Building Monitor their stories that have a community-wide impact and raise systemic issues and possible solutions.

This would help the Building Monitor to understand what is happening on the ground, raise awareness of systemic issues and advocate for system changes.
2. Develop and promote clear, accessible and simple educational materials and strategies to inform and reduce negative consequences for domestic building consumers.
3. Report on research conducted on the nature of specific systemic issues that affect domestic building consumers.

## Measures of success

- Improved understanding of systemic issues and implementation of options to address such issues.
- Improved access to information, advice and support.

# ATTACHMENT 1A

## Building Monitor Reference Group Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

The Building Monitor is a dedicated advocate for Victorian domestic building consumers at a systemic level and ensure their voices are heard when decisions are made about the building system. The Building Monitor provides independent expert advice for system improvements to the Minister for Housing and Building (Minister) and to building system stakeholders. As the central point for identification of critical and systemic issues, the Building Monitor will empower domestic building consumers by promoting awareness of systemic issues and will provide a voice for consumers in systemic building matters.

The Building Monitor Reference Group (Reference Group) is established under s 208N of the *Building Act 1993* (Vic). The purposes of the Reference Group are to:

- Provide information and advice to the Building Monitor concerning systemic issues and other matters facing, or experienced by, domestic building consumers; and
- Discuss and make recommendations on possible solutions to identified issues to improve consumer protection.

Smaller working groups comprised of some members of the Reference Group would be formed to discuss specific reform proposals. Information provided by the Reference Group will inform the Building Monitor's advice to the Minister and building system stakeholders.

### 2. Membership

The Reference Group must be comprised of not less than five members, including the Building Monitor.

The Building Monitor is the Chair of the Reference Group.

In addition to the Building Monitor, the Reference Group would consist of the following members:

- Three or four domestic building consumers with lived experience of domestic building issues (experience of class 1 and class 2 buildings);
- One or two legal consumer representatives representing the interests of domestic building consumers; and

- One expert in matters relating to domestic building consumers.

A member of the Reference Group may resign by giving a written notice to the Minister.

Where a member is likely to be absent for an extended period, arrangements should be discussed with the Chair of the Reference Group. A temporary leave of absence may be granted, and the temporary vacancy be filled to ensure the proper functioning of the Group.

Membership may lapse if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without notice.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Chair of the Reference Group will:

- facilitate constructive and respectful discussion between members;
- provide independent advice for system improvements to the Minister and building system stakeholders, informed by information provided by members; and
- ensure meetings function effectively.

Members of the Reference Group will:

- use their experience to identify system-wide issues that affect domestic building consumers;
- provide advice to the Building Monitor on initiatives and reforms to support domestic building consumers; and
- behave in an inclusive manner, being respectful and non-judgmental of other members' opinions and perspectives.

### 4. The Reference Group's operating procedures

#### Term length

Members of the Reference Group are appointed for a term of two years and may be reappointed.

The Minister may remove a member of the Reference Group for any reason that the Minister considers to be appropriate in the circumstances.

### Meetings

The Reference Group will meet a minimum of four times per calendar year. Working Groups will meet in between, as required.

Meetings are expected to be approximately up to two hours in duration.

The Reference Group may also receive updates, provide advice, and make recommendations out of session by email, as required.

The Secretariat will prepare and distribute necessary papers. This includes preparing agendas, meeting minute outcomes and actions, and the distribution of supporting papers at least five business days before meetings, except in unforeseen circumstances.

Members may propose agenda items.

### Quorum

The quorum for the Reference Group is at least half of all members. If at least half of all members advise the Secretariat ahead of the meeting that they cannot attend, the meeting will be scheduled to another time when more members can be present. If this is not possible or practical, the meeting shall go ahead, with any recommendations to be held over until the next meeting where there is a quorum.

### Payment and expenses

Members of the Reference Group are entitled to the remuneration, allowances and any expenses incidental to their appointment, as specified in their Instrument of Appointment.

### Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may be amended in writing after consultation with the Reference Group and with the majority agreement of members.

### Conflicts of interest

All members must avoid conflicts of interest. In addition, members must declare any actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest to the Chair of the Reference Group that arise during their appointment as soon as practical and work with the Chair to manage the conflict.

### 5. Review of the Reference Group

The operation of the Reference Group will be reviewed within three years after it is established to determine whether the purposes of the Group and the criteria for membership of the Group support the Building Monitor in meeting the objectives of the Building Monitor.

### 6. Privacy and confidentiality

The information provided to members and the conversations held at Reference Group meetings are confidential and not to be shared publicly unless expressly authorised.

Reference Group records will be maintained by the Secretariat and may be subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic). Personal information will be treated in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic).

# ATTACHMENT 1B

## Government Inter-Agency Reference Group Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

The Building Monitor is a dedicated advocate for Victorian domestic building consumers at a systemic level and ensure their voices are heard when decisions are made about the building system. The Building Monitor provides independent expert advice for system improvements to the Minister for Housing and Building (Minister) and to building system stakeholders. As the central point for identification of critical and systemic issues, the Building Monitor will empower domestic building consumers by promoting awareness of systemic issues and will provide a voice for consumers in systemic building matters.

While the new Building and Plumbing Commission is being established, it may be useful in the interim to form a Government Inter-Agency Reference Group (Government Reference Group).

The purposes of the Government Reference Group are to:

- Provide information to the Building Monitor regarding systemic challenges and/or emerging issues facing domestic building consumers;
- Discuss and make recommendations to resolve identified issues; and
- Facilitate access to and analysis of data held by Government agencies to identify changes needed to improve consumer protection.

Smaller working groups comprised of some members of the Reference Group would be formed to discuss specific reform proposals. The information provided by the Government Reference Group will inform the Building Monitor's advice to the Minister.

The Government Reference Group would allow the Building Monitor to highlight the issues of concern to consumers and determine whether those issues are systemic in nature. It also provides a forum for the Building Monitor to work with government entity stakeholders, and for stakeholders to work together, to find solutions.

### 2. Membership

The Building Monitor is the Chair of the Government Reference Group.

In addition to the Building Monitor, the Government Reference Group could consist of representatives from any of the following government entities:

- Victorian Building Authority
- The Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria
- Victorian Managed Insurance Authority
- The Building Division of the Department of Transport and Planning
- Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group
- The Building Appeals Board
- Cladding Safety Victoria, and
- Construction Supplier Register.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Chair of the Government Reference Group will:

- facilitate discussion between members;
- draw on the expertise of members; and
- provide independent advice for system improvements to the Minister, informed by information provided by members.

Members of the Government Reference Group will:

- raise issues and exchange views in a confidential setting;
- explore identified issues including the causes and impacts for domestic building consumers; and
- reach mutually agreed views on issues and potential solutions, where possible.

### 4. The Government Reference Group's operating procedures

#### Operating principles

The Government Reference Group's key operating principles are that:

- members attend meetings as expert representatives of their respective organisations; and
- discussions are undertaken in the spirit of professional enquiry and cooperation.

#### Frequency of meetings

The Government Reference Group will meet as needed and at a minimum of four times per calendar year.

The Secretariat will prepare and distribute necessary papers. This includes preparing agendas, meeting minute outcomes and actions, and the distribution of supporting papers at least five business days before meetings, except in unforeseen circumstances.

Members may propose agenda items.

### 5. Review of the Government Reference Group

The operation of the Government Reference Group would be reviewed quarterly to determine whether the purposes of the Group and the criteria for membership of the Group support the Building Monitor in meeting the objectives of the Building Monitor.

### 6. Confidentiality

The information provided to members and the conversations held at Government Reference Group meetings are confidential and not to be shared publicly unless expressly authorised.

