

Plumbing Code of Australia 2025 updates

Plumbing Advisory Note

Issued August 2026

From 1 May 2026, the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) published the 2025 version of the National Constructive Code (NCC) Volume 3, Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA).

Changes made from the PCA 2022 to the revised PCA 2025 are listed within the PCA 2025 preface.

Overall the 2025 PCA:

- does not fundamentally alter the plumbing system objectives
- reorganises, clarifies and tightens requirements
- separates isolation requirements into standalone performance requirements across most water service parts
- updates technical references (notably AS/NZS 3500 to 2025 editions)
- expands verification methods and explanatory material
- introduces stricter testing and certification language, especially for fire and material performance.

In short, it has clearer structure, more explicit compliance pathways and higher evidentiary rigor than the 2022 PCA.

Key changes

Section A - Governing Requirements

Performance Solutions (A2G2)

- New requirement that Performance Solutions must be at least equivalent to DTS outcomes for structural reliability.
- Expert Judgement is restricted for structural and fire
- safety-related Performance Requirements.
- Transitional notes clarify how existing projects move

Legislative requirements

The Plumbing Standard is published by the Technical Regulator pursuant to section 66 of the **Water Industry Act 2012** (the Act).

The Plumbing Standard states that plumbing installations must be installed in compliance with relevant components of the **National Construction Code Volume 3** (Plumbing Code of Australia) (including any standards referred to therein) as amended from time to time.

from 2022 to 2025.

Referenced Documents (A4G1)

Alternative editions of referenced standards may be used if listed on the ABCB register, not only those in Schedule 2.

Fire Hazard Properties (A5G6)

- Minor variations from tested prototypes are allowed, only if they are confirmed by an Accredited Testing Laboratory.
- New explicit methods for determining combustibility.

The key differences are:

- NCC 2022 allowed greater reliance on expert judgement without explicit limits.
- Referenced documents were more rigidly tied to one specific edition.
- Fire testing requirements were less explicit about laboratory accreditation and prototype variance.

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These changes have been introduced to provide:

- less flexibility in fire and structural performance solutions
- stronger emphasis on third party testing and documentary evidence.
- reduced risk of inconsistent approvals across jurisdictions.

Section B - Water Services (B1 to B7)

A major structural refinement of the PCA occurs in this section.

Isolation Requirements Restructured

Across cold water, heated water, non drinking water, fire fighting water, rainwater services, and rainwater storage:

- Isolation requirements were removed from mixed clauses
- Re-established as standalone Performance Requirements (e.g. B1P4, B2P5, B3P5, etc.).

The key differences are:

- 2022: Isolation was embedded within broader clauses.
- 2025: Isolation is consistently treated as a distinct safety and maintenance issue.

This improves clarity for compliance checking and ensures isolation can't be "overlooked" within combined performance criteria.

Changes to verification methods

The new verification method introduced in NCC 2025 is:

- C2V4 – New sanitary drainage design verification method.

The updated verification methods in NCC 2025 are:

- B1V1 – Determination of velocity (cold water),
- C1V2 – New pipe sizing method replaces multiple older verification methods

The differences between NCC 2022 and 2025 are:

- 2022: Multiple overlapping verification methods existed.
- 2025: Fewer, clearer, and more uniform verification pathways.

Fire fighting Water Services (B4)

- New material requirements for above ground pipes and fittings where sprinkler and hydrant systems are combined.
- Plastic pipework restricted in these applications.

The key difference is that the 2022 version did not explicitly prohibit certain pipe materials in combined above ground fire systems.

These changes have been introduced to improve fire performance reliability and consistency with updated AS 2118.6.

Cross Connection Control (B5)

- Specification 41 (2022) has been deleted and relocated into the body of the Code (B5D7).
- Hazard circumstances have been updated.
- Explicit referencing of AS/NZS 3500.1.
- New exemption for independent agricultural non-drinking water systems.

The key differences are:

- 2022: Relied heavily on Specification 41 which was in a separate section of the document .
- 2025: Integrates hazard controls directly into the operative provisions.

These changes have been introduced to ensure:

- easier interpretation while on site
- reduced chance of missing cross-connection obligations embedded in schedules
- reduced unnecessary regulatory burden on rural and off grid developments
- alignment of obligations with real public health risk.

Rainwater Services and Storage (B6 and B7)

- Explicit exemptions where sites are not connected to a Network Utility Operator drinking water supply.
- Clearer separation between:
 - rainwater services, and
 - rainwater storage.
- More refined identification, isolation and discharge provisions.

The key difference is that the 2022 version applied rainwater controls more broadly, often catching remote or off grid sites unintentionally.

These changes reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on rural and off grid developments and aligns obligations with real public health risk.

Section C – Sanitary Plumbing & Drainage

Sanitary Plumbing (C1)

- Updated frequency factors and discharge unit values.
- C1V3, C1V4, C1V5 deleted and replaced with a single new verification method.
- Simplified pipe sizing logic.

Sanitary Drainage (C2)

- Quantified trap seal provisions introduced.

- New verification method for drainage system design.
- Explicit references to AS/NZS 3500.2.

The key differences are:

- 2022 used multiple legacy verification methods, increasing inconsistency.
- 2025 aims for modern hydraulic modelling alignment with updated Australian Standards.

Definitions, Abbreviations & Symbols (Schedule 1)

Notable Additions

New terms such as:

- allotment
- drainage system
- rainwater
- stormwater
- embodied carbon emissions
- water services overflow.

Fire related definitions updated

- Combustible, non combustible, critical radiant flux, etc., must now be determined by Accredited Testing Laboratories.
- Transition periods provided.

The key differences are:

- 2022 definitions allowed broader interpretation and varied testing sources.
- 2025: Moves toward uniform, auditable test evidence

Referenced Documents (Schedule 2)

Significant Updates

- AS/NZS 3500 Parts 1–4 updated to 2025 editions.
- Fire, structural, acoustic, plumbing, and sustainability standards updated across the board.
- Clear transition notes for older test reports.

The key differences are:

- 2022: References mostly 2021 editions.
- 2025: Aligns PCA tightly with the latest national

plumbing framework.

South Australia (Schedule 8)

Water heaters (SA B2D2)

New or replacement water heater selections for class 1 or 10 buildings must comply with the Plumbing Standard Published by the Technical Regulator.

Maximum delivery temperature (SA B2D5)

There is no longer an exemption for temperature delivery control requirements provided in a building constructed prior to 19 October 1995.

Non-drinking water services (SA B5D3)

Cross connection control hazard ratings for interconnections between drinking and non-drinking water services have been specified as high hazard

Rainwater (SA B5D6 and SA B6D2)

The hazard rating classification for rainwater tanks incorporating potable water top up systems has been clarified and simplified for improved understanding.

The requirement for automatic switching between rainwater and drinking water supplies, without the need for manual intervention, remains unchanged.

Overview

NCC 2025 Volume Three is an evolutionary, not revolutionary, update to the PCA:

- it clarifies, tightens, and modernises the 2022 framework
- it reduces interpretive risk while increasing documentation expectations.
- for practitioners familiar with NCC 2022, the learning curve is manageable, but attention to new structure and evidence requirements is essential.

Contact the Office of the Technical Regulator for more information

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