

25 July 2025

## **CCA Submission to the Economic Reform Roundtable**

Please find below a submission by Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia (**CCA**) on the Economic Reform Roundtable process.

CCA is the voice of the heavy construction materials industry in Australia. CCA members produce most of Australia's cement, concrete, and aggregates, which are crucial to Australia's building and construction sectors. These materials support the development of our nation's transport, energy, water, housing, defence, and social infrastructure. The industry generates approximately \$15 Billion in annual revenues and employs approximately 30,000 Australians directly and a further 80,000 indirectly.

### **1. Transition to Performance-Based Specifications**

Current procurement and regulatory standards too often rely on prescriptive requirements that limit innovation and increase infrastructure costs. CCA recommends embedding performance/outcome-based sustainability targets in procurement documentation and regulatory instruments, replacing rigid input-based requirements.

Prescriptive standards can stifle the uptake of innovative solutions and low-carbon technologies. In contrast, performance-based targets enable flexibility and innovation while still achieving safety and sustainability outcomes.

To support this shift, Australian Standards—particularly AS 3972-2010 *General Purpose and Blended Cements*—should be reviewed to allow greater flexibility in binder composition.

Reducing the mandated levels of Portland cement would enable increased use of supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs), such as Fly Ash and Blast Furnace Slag. This reform could reduce embodied carbon in concrete by up to 10 per cent, advancing Australia's Net Zero goals without compromising performance or safety.

### **2. Develop a National Heavy Construction Materials Plan**

Australia's ability to supply cement and aggregates efficiently is under pressure from slow and fragmented planning approvals, urban encroachment, and increasing transport distances. A coordinated, national Heavy Construction Materials Plan would:

- Safeguard access to extractive resources and concrete batch plants.
- Prevent the sterilisation of essential infrastructure due to rezoning and planning decisions.
- Promote proximity of supply to major infrastructure and housing projects, lowering transport-related emissions.
- Improve long-term certainty and investment confidence across the supply chain.

This approach supports both productivity and emissions reduction goals and complements government priorities in housing, transport, energy, and defence.

### **3. Align Competition and Planning Policy with Infrastructure Needs**

Planning policies are increasingly forcing construction material operations away from urban centres—ironically, where demand is highest. This not only inflates costs but also undermines national housing affordability goals.

CCAA urges a review of policies under the Competition Reform Guidelines, especially those targeting zoning liberalisation and planning simplification, to ensure they do not inadvertently restrict access to industrial land critical for materials production. Productivity will be enhanced when planning systems better integrate with national infrastructure and housing agendas.

#### 4. Support for Decarbonisation and Budget Sustainability

The industry is investing heavily in decarbonisation. The industry commissioned VDZ<sup>1</sup>, a world-renowned cement and concrete research centre, to undertake a study titled *Decarbonisation Pathways for the Australian Cement and Concrete Sector*<sup>2</sup>. The study emphasises:

- Revising standards to enable lower-carbon materials.
- Promoting whole-of-life carbon accounting in infrastructure.
- Improving material efficiency and SCM usage.
- Supporting the shift to zero-emission heavy vehicles.

CCAA has subsequently developed a [Decarbonisation Facilitation Plan](#) to assist it to meet its declared ambition to deliver net zero carbon cement and concrete by 2050 which should be used as a guide to advance net zero outcomes<sup>3</sup>.

These issues are discussed in greater depth in the 2025 CCAA *Submission on the [Development of a National Construction Strategy for Transport Infrastructure](#)*<sup>4</sup>.

#### Recommendations:

1. **Mandate performance-based procurement to enable innovative, fit-for-purpose solutions that reduce embodied carbon and are not constrained by outdated material specifications.**
2. **Review and update Australian Standards, starting with AS 3972-2010, to remove barriers to lower-carbon cement blends and accelerate adoption of sustainable construction practices.**
3. **Establish a Heavy Construction Materials Plan to secure reliable local supply for housing and infrastructure while reducing transport emissions and supply chain risks.**
4. **Align planning and competition policy to protect critical industrial land from urban encroachment and ensure policies support efficient material delivery.**
5. **Support industry decarbonisation efforts by using the CCAA's Decarbonisation Facilitation Plan to guide fiscally responsible investments toward net zero outcomes.**

For further information, please contact Michael Kilgariff on [Michael.kilgariff@ccaa.com.au](mailto:Michael.kilgariff@ccaa.com.au) or 0418 627 995.

Yours sincerely

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<sup>1</sup> VDZ is a world-renowned research centre, providing practical and quality-oriented joint research and services in the field of cement and concrete.

<sup>2</sup>[Decarbonisation Pathways for the Australian Cement and Concrete Sector](#)

<sup>3</sup>[Decarbonisation Facilitation Plan](#)

<sup>4</sup>[CCAA Submission on a National Construction Strategy for Transport Infrastructure](#)