

Building (General) (Alternative requirements for unaltered parts) Determination 2026

Disallowable instrument DI2026–43

made under the

Building (General) Regulation 2008, s 24 (Unaltered parts need not comply with building code if alternative requirements met—Act, s 29 (2) (b))

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Building (General) (Alternative requirements for unaltered parts) Determination 2026*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Application

Schedule 1 of this instrument applies to:

- (a) all building approvals determined on or after commencement of this instrument; and
- (b) all building work that does not require a building approval started on or after commencement of this instrument.

4 Alternative requirements

I determine schedule 1 to this instrument to be the alternative requirements for an unaltered part.

Note 1 The Act, s 136, provides that the building code means a document prescribed by regulation, and the Building Code of Australia, prepared and published by the Australian Building Codes Board, as amended from time to time by that Board, and the ACT Appendix to the building code.

Note 2 The Building Code of Australia is contained in Volumes 1 and 2 of the National Construction Code.

5 Disapplication of notification requirement

The *Legislation Act 2001*, section 47 (5), does not apply to this instrument.

Note 1 Australian Standards are available for purchase at www.standards.org.au.

Note 2 Free copies of the National Construction Code are available at www.abcb.gov.au.

6 Revocation

This instrument revokes the *Building (General) (Alternative requirements for unaltered parts) Determination 2024* (DI2024-83).

Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development
15 April 2026

Schedule 1
(see s 4)

Alternative Requirements to the Building Code for Unaltered Parts of Substantially Altered Class 1, 10a or 10b Buildings

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DEFINITIONS

(1) In this determination:

- (a) **R-value** means the thermal resistance (m^2K/W) of a component worked out by dividing its thickness by its thermal conductivity.
- (b) **flight** means part of a stair with a continuous series of risers, including risers of winders, not interrupted by a landing or floor.
- (c) **going** means the horizontal dimension from the front to the back of a tread, less any overhang from the next tread above.
- (d) **riser** means the height between the consecutive treads.
- (e) **tapered tread** means a stair tread with a walking area that becomes smaller towards 1 end of the stair.
- (f) **winders** means treads within a straight flight that are used to change the direction of the stair.
- (g) **glazing** includes frame assemblies and transparent and translucent roof lights.
- (h) **isolated glazing** means glazing in the unaltered part of a building that is thermally isolated from glazing in the altered part of the building by a barrier of—
 - (i) unperforated floors, ceilings or walls; and
 - (ii) doors that are close-fitting (but not necessarily sealed).

Example—par (ii)

internal French doors installed in ordinary door frames and to ordinary construction tolerances, without additional door seals or draft excluders

- (i) **substantially altered building** means a building that is having a substantial alteration as defined in section 23 of the *Building (General) Regulation 2008*
- (j) **unaltered part** means the part of a substantially altered building that is not altered

GLAZING SAFETY

(2) Glazing in the unaltered part must comply with human impact safety requirements—

- (i) the building code, volume 2, cl H1P1(4); or
- (ii) the unaltered part of a substantially altered building complies with the alternative glazing requirements if any intact glazing that would be required to be replaced for the part to comply with the building code,

volume 2, cl H1P1(4) is coated, and permanently bonded, on at least 1 side with a continuous polymeric coating, sheet or film.

BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS

(3) The unaltered part must comply with the building code, volume 2, cl H7P5.

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

(4) The unaltered part must comply with the building code, volume 2, cl H7P1 and cl H7P2.

(5) From 1 May 2028, the unaltered part must comply with Part 5A of the *Building Act 2004*.

(6) Subsection (4) expires on 1 May 2028.

FIRE SAFETY

(7) The unaltered part must comply with the installation of smoke alarms and evacuation lighting as per the building code, volume 2, cl H3D6.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

(8) The *Building (ACT Appendix to the Building Code) Determination* (as amended from time to time) contains alternative provisions for demonstrating thermal energy efficiency for the unaltered part of a substantially altered building. These alternative provisions can be applied to the entire house (altered and unaltered parts). The alternative provisions are:

(a) Passivhaus Certification (see clause ACT H6D10 of the *Building (ACT Appendix to the Building Code) Determination*);

i. If the house is being renovated into a Certified Passivhaus, it does not need to comply with sections 9, 10 (a), 10 (b), 10 (c), 10 (d), 10 (e) and 10 (f) of this instrument; or

(b) Area-weighted NatHERS pathway (see clause ACT H6D10 of the *Building (ACT Appendix to the Building Code) Determination*);

i. If the Area-weighted NatHERS pathway is used, it does not need to comply with sections 10 (a), 10 (b), 10 (c), 10 (d), 10 (e) and 10 (f) of this instrument.

(9) For building sealing, the unaltered part must comply with the building code, volume 2, cl H6D2(1)(b)(iii). If the building's existing evaporative cooler is to be kept, but it cannot comply with H6D2(1)(b)(iii) because it has no self-closing damper or the like, the following alternative requirements must be met:

(a) all outlets serving a heated space or a habitable room must have an automatic means, or a readily accessible manual means, of closing the outlet or the duct serving the outlet, such as a closable baffle or closable louvers on an outlet register. For this provision, an outlet with a manual means of closure is readily accessible if it is mounted in the ceiling of a room, and can be closed by a reasonable person standing on a step ladder and activating a baffle closer or by closing movable louvers or the like, by hand without a tool.

- (10) In addition to the requirements under subsection (9), the unaltered part of a substantially altered building that is a class 1, class 10a or class 10b building need not comply with the building code as a whole if there is compliance with the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.2 and each of the following:
- (a) for the external walls—
 - (i) the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.5; or
 - (ii) if that part cannot be complied with using the most common materials and techniques without damaging part of the building:
 - (A) the external walls in the unaltered part have insulation with an added R-value that complies with the applicable value stated in the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.5(1) or (2) as applicable.
 - (b) the walls in the unaltered part need not comply with (a) if—
 - (i) complying would require the removal of more than 10% of wall linings, or cladding, in the part; or
 - (ii) there is insufficient wall cavity space to accommodate enough thermal insulation material to achieve the R-value mentioned in section 10 (a);
 - (c) for the roof and ceiling—
 - (i) the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.3; or
 - (ii) if that part cannot be complied with using the most common materials and techniques without damaging part of the building:
 - (A) the ceiling in the unaltered part has a minimum added R-value of 5.0;
 - (d) the roof and ceiling in the unaltered part need not comply with part (c) if—
 - (i) complying would require the removal of more than 10% of the part's roofing; or
 - (ii) there is insufficient roof cavity space to accommodate R 5.0 insulation;
 - (iii) to do so would require destruction of the structure;
- Example—par d (iii)**
ceiling insulation is not able to be installed in a required area for structural reasons such as a cathedral ceiling
- (e) for a suspended floor and subfloor wall (excluding an intermediate floor in a building with more than 1 storey)—
 - (i) the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.6; or
 - (ii) if that part cannot be complied with using the most common materials and techniques without damaging part of the building:
 - (A) the unaltered part has an added R-value that complies with the applicable value stated in the ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.2.6(1) or (2) as applicable;

- (f) the thermal insulation of a suspended floor (excluding an intermediate floor in a part with more than 1 storey) in the unaltered part need not comply with (e) if —
 - (i) complying would require the removal of more than 10% of the flooring in the part; or
 - (ii) there is insufficient sub-floor space to accommodate enough thermal insulation material to achieve the R-value mentioned in section 10 (e) while maintaining a gap of not less than 100mm between the insulation material and the ground;
 - (g) for the insulation of any heating water piping or heating or cooling ductwork service, as stated in the building code, volume 2, cl H6P2(2), the unaltered part of the building need not comply if—
 - (i) complying would require the removal of more than 1m² of roofing, ceiling, wall or flooring in the part to gain access to all the inaccessible services; or
 - (ii) there is insufficient work space for a person to install the insulation;
 - (h) the requirements of ABCB Housing Provisions, cl 13.7.5 for electric resistance space heating elements cast into concrete or set under tiles need not be complied with if complying would involve physical changes to the elements or to do so would require destruction of the structure in the unaltered part.
- (11) Isolated glazing in the unaltered part of a class 1 or class 10a building need not comply with the building code, volume 2, cl H6D2(1)(b)(ii) (External glazing and shading).

STAIRS

- (12) The stair construction in the unaltered part must comply with either of the following:
- (a) the building code, volume 2, cl H5D2 (Stairway and ramp construction); or
 - (b) the unaltered part of a substantially altered building complies with the alternative stair requirements if it complies with each of the following:
 - (i) the dimensions of goings and risers (other than winders and tapered treads in a spiral stair) are constant throughout each stair flight;
 - (ii) winder dimensions are constant throughout the stair flight;
 - (iii) for a spiral stair—tapered tread dimensions are constant throughout the flight;
 - (iv) riser dimensions are not taller than 250mm;
 - (v) if the stairway is more than 10m high or connects more than 3 storeys—the treads are of solid construction (for example, not mesh or other perforated material);

- (vi) a 125mm ball cannot pass between the treads of a riser opening;
- (vii) all treads have a slip-resistant finish or a suitable non-skid strip near the edge of the nosings;
- (viii) if the stair flight is more than 1m high and does not comply with the building code, volume 2, cl H5D2, whether or not it is required to comply with the part—
 - (A) the stairway has handrails; and
 - (B) the handrails comply with the building code, volume 1, cl D3D22 (which is about handrails), whether or not they are required to comply with the part.

BARRIERS AND HANDRAILS

- (13) The construction of barriers and handrails in the unaltered part must comply with either of the following:
- (a) the building code, volume 2, cl H5D3; or
 - (b) has a barrier that:
 - (i) previously complied with the building code or relevant requirements; and
 - (ii) is installed so that a person breaching the barrier could not fall more than 4m measured from the lowest part of the barrier at the point where the barrier is breached.