



29 August 2025

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Office of the State Building Surveyor  
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Anna Cronin  
Commissioner  
Building & Plumbing Commission  
By Email: [Anna.Cronin@bpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:Anna.Cronin@bpc.vic.gov.au)

Dear Steven and Anna,

**RE: CONCERNS REGARDING BCA CLASSIFICATION INCONSISTENCIES  
BOARDING, ROOMING AND SHARED ACCOMMODATION HOUSES**

I am writing to highlight concerns regarding inconsistent application of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) classifications by Private and Relevant Building Surveyors. This issue primarily affects boarding houses, rooming houses, and shared accommodation, particularly those constructed for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) residents.

There are considerable differences in how such buildings are classified across jurisdictions. Buildings with Essential Safety Measures aligned with Class 1b or Class 3, including fire detection systems and accessible egress, are sometimes classified as Class 1a. These inconsistencies can undermine regulatory clarity and potentially compromise safety for vulnerable occupants.

The overlap and occasional conflict between building legislation, the BCA, and the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 further complicate classification. The current BCA classification descriptors lack clarity and prescriptive detail, leading to subjective and inconsistent decisions.

For example:

- An NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) home with Class 1b-compliant safety measures was classified as Class 1a.
- A multi-resident supported accommodation facility with features typical of Class 3 was also classified as Class 1a.



These examples demonstrate the need for clearer classification guidance.

**Recommendations:**

- That the Building and Plumbing Commission publish a dedicated Practice Note to provide clear criteria for classifying NDIS and similar residential buildings, acknowledging design intent and operational models.
- Encourage advocacy through the Australian Building Codes Board Victorian representative for improved BCA classification definitions, reducing subjectivity and inconsistency.

Thank you for your attention to this longstanding issue. We welcome further discussion and collaboration to resolve these concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Jolly", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Jolly  
President

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