

Registered Residential Carpenter Pathway

A controlled pilot proposal for residential renovation work in Victoria

Executive Brief - Victoria 2026

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1. The Issue

Modern residential renovation work often sits between minor trade work and full domestic building work. Older homes commonly reveal hidden conditions only after walls, floors, decks, cladding, bathrooms, windows or subfloors are opened. That practical reality can create uncertainty for homeowners, carpenters, builders, insurers and regulators.

2. The Practical Problem

Renovation scope is progressively revealed Termite damage, dry rot, asbestos, non-compliant past work and structural deterioration are often hidden until work begins.	The \$10,000 threshold creates pressure Modern renovation costs can exceed \$10,000 quickly, especially where hidden damage turns a modest repair into a larger safety issue.
Consumers are often unclear Many homeowners do not clearly understand when a carpenter, registered builder, engineer, building surveyor, permit or insurance requirement is triggered.	Duty of care can conflict with rigid thresholds Once unsafe conditions are exposed, stopping work without a clear handover process can leave consumers and practitioners in a difficult position.

3. The Proposal

The Registered Residential Carpenter (RRC) pathway would be a controlled, limited-scope pathway for experienced residential renovation carpenters working in defined renovation and repair contexts. It is not proposed as an unlimited builder licence. It is a role-clarity and consumer-protection reform option for the practical middle ground that already exists in renovation work.

Preferred model: controlled pilot program before any permanent regulatory change.
Core eligibility concept: qualified, experienced renovation carpenters with verified practical experience, insurance, documentation standards and scope limits.
Core purpose: improve clarity, accountability, consumer disclosure and escalation pathways in defined residential renovation work.

4. What This Is Not

Not a builder replacement	Not anti-regulation	Not a shortcut around permits, insurance, engineering or lawful builder responsibility
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This reform strengthens the system - it does not bypass it.

Safeguards, Pilot Model and Next Steps

A practical reform option focused on consumer protection, role clarity and accountable renovation work

5. Core Safeguards

Defined scope	Clear limits on the types of renovation and repair work an RRC may undertake.
Insurance requirements	Mandatory insurance settings appropriate to the approved scope and project value.
Consumer disclosure	Clear written explanation of scope, limits, risks, variation triggers and when other practitioners may be required.
Documentation standards	Photographs, written updates, variation records and decision notes when hidden conditions are discovered.
Permit and engineering triggers	Defined pause/referral points where a building surveyor, engineer or permit process is required.
Builder handover rules	Clear handover triggers where work moves beyond RRC scope and a registered builder must take responsibility.

6. Controlled Pilot Model

The preferred pathway is a controlled pilot program. A pilot would allow government, regulators, insurers, builders, carpenters and consumer representatives to test the model before any permanent reform is considered.

A pilot could measure consumer outcomes, complaint rates, insurance availability, documentation quality, hidden-condition escalation events, builder handover triggers and whether the pathway improves clarity without weakening existing protections.

7. Who This Helps

Consumers Clearer role boundaries, better disclosure, more accountable renovation processes and safer escalation when hidden problems appear.	Regulators A defined pathway to test and monitor a practical grey zone instead of leaving it informal or unclear.
Registered builders Better protection of builder responsibility by defining where RRC scope ends and builder handover begins.	Experienced carpenters A lawful, accountable pathway for defined renovation work that reflects proven experience and modern costs.
Insurers and surveyors Better documentation, clearer trigger points and a more structured record of hidden-condition escalation.	Housing system Improved repair and renovation clarity in ageing housing stock, while preserving higher-risk builder responsibilities.

8. Current Victorian Context

Victorian consumer guidance refers to registration requirements and major domestic building contract obligations for domestic building work above \$10,000, with additional requirements for structural work and permit-related work. The RRC proposal asks whether modern renovation realities justify a controlled, evidence-based pilot pathway for defined residential renovation carpentry work.

Project website	https://www.carpentryreform.com.au
RRC pathway page	https://www.carpentryreform.com.au/rrc.html
Consultation package	https://www.carpentryreform.com.au/RRC_Consultation_Package_Website_V1.pdf

Core position: This reform strengthens the system - it does not bypass it.