

Registered Residential Carpenter (RRC) – Policy Brief

Clearer rules. Clearer roles. Better renovation outcomes. Victoria · Reform Proposal · 2026

Executive Summary

Victoria’s renovation sector is held back by unclear role boundaries, inconsistent capability, and an outdated \$10,000 threshold that no longer reflects the scale or complexity of modern renovation work. The result is predictable: consumer complaints, project failures, and a system that does not match real industry practice.

The Registered Residential Carpenter (RRC) proposal provides a practical, industry-grounded solution. It strengthens—not replaces—builder scope, while creating a clear, accountable pathway for experienced renovation carpenters. This reform improves outcomes for consumers, builders, and government by aligning real capability with a clearer regulatory structure.

This doesn’t create problems — it solves them.

The Problem

Home renovations are one of the most common sources of consumer complaints in Victoria. The causes are well known:

- Unclear role boundaries between carpenters and builders
- No defined standard for residential renovation carpentry
- Consumers unable to verify skills or qualifications
- Inconsistent oversight of renovation work
- An outdated \$10,000 threshold that fails to reflect real renovation costs or risks

With housing affordability under pressure and a growing reliance on upgrading existing homes, Victoria needs a system that supports quality renovation work and protects consumers.

The Proposal: Registered Residential Carpenter (RRC)

A targeted registration category for carpenters who specialise in residential renovation work. The RRC recognises real capability, strengthens accountability, and supports better renovation outcomes.

Scope of Work (Indicative)

Included (Renovation-focused carpentry):

- Structural carpentry within defined limits
- Renovation carpentry
- Decking and pergolas
- Framing and formwork
- Fixing and internal renovation work

Excluded (Builder-level or unrelated work):

- Commercial carpentry
- High-rise construction
- Cabinet making
- Joinery
- Shopfitting

This structure protects builder scope while recognising the capability of experienced renovation carpenters.

Safeguards and Standards

The RRC is built on strong consumer protection and clear accountability.

- **Stringent registration requirements**
- **Evidence-based assessment of skills and knowledge**
- **Minimum 10+ years relevant residential experience**
- **Ongoing professional development**
- **Regular audits and compliance checks**
- **Clear complaint resolution pathways**

These safeguards ensure the RRC strengthens the system rather than diluting it.

Why This Works

For Consumers

- Confidence that renovation carpentry is performed by qualified, accountable professionals
- Reduced risk of defects and project failures
- Clearer understanding of who is responsible for what

For Builders

- Better quality carpentry feeding into builder-managed projects
- Reduced liability for poor workmanship
- A clearer, more reliable renovation workforce

For Carpenters

- Professional recognition for real renovation capability
- A defined pathway that reflects industry practice
- Greater earning potential and career progression

For Government

- Improved building standards
- Fewer consumer complaints
- A more productive renovation sector supporting housing outcomes

This proposal strengthens the system — it does not bypass it.

Conclusion

Victoria's renovation sector needs clearer rules, stronger accountability, and a regulatory structure that reflects real industry capability. The Registered Residential Carpenter (RRC) provides a practical, credible, and industry-supported pathway that improves outcomes for consumers, builders, and government.

A targeted consultation with industry stakeholders is the next step to refine the model and prepare a formal submission for government consideration.

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