

PLAYING BY THE RULES:

COMPLIANCE OF REGULATIONS
AND WHY IT MATTERS



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WHY REGULATE?

With the launch of an online National Construction Product Register database (NCPDR) scheduled next year, the loopholes through which non-conformant and non-compliant materials have been entering into the market will start to shrink.¹ The database will allow construction industry professionals to search for building products that conform to Australian standard. This means that now, more than ever, manufacturers of building materials will have no choice but to play by the extensive – and incredibly necessary – rulebook that applies to the building and the construction industry.

The NCPDR database – developed by the Board of Construction Information Systems Limited (NATSPEC) – will make visible the

companies who are adhering to the stringent regulations of the industry.² Is the database necessary for the industry? In short, the answer is a resounding yes.

The proliferation of substandard building materials is having a huge impact on the building industry. The only ways in which building and construction professionals can tackle this problem is to be aware of the standards put in place by respective governing bodies and strictly adhere to them. Regulations exist to ensure safety and value for money. It is only by respecting these regulations that a new narrative for the building and construction industry in Australia – and worldwide – can be created.



DRAINAGE SYSTEMS: AREAS THAT REQUIRE SPECIFIC ATTENTION

Due to the variety of sectors in the building and construction industry, many different regulations exist. Each industry has areas of conforming and compliance that are particular to them. Plumbing and drainage have a number of important regulations to adhere to, without which, major problems can be caused for the projects they are integrated in.

Minimum size requirement is an important element of plumbing regulations as a drain with too small an outlet for wastewater will not be compliant. Load prescriptions are another vital aspect in construction standards related to drainage. For example, a drain with a pedestrian load classification could not be used for a project where the drain will be put under vehicle access – which varies from light to large vehicles. In such cases, even if the product itself is conforming, used in the wrong application, it will

be deemed non-compliant and has the potential to jeopardise the entire project. Drainage systems should not only be able to withstand frequently occurring actions, but also 'a number of extreme, but expected, events'.³

Access and mobility is also integral to the success of drainage systems. The Australian Standard Design for access and mobility provides building professionals with the 'minimum design requirements for new building work, to enable access for people with disabilities'.⁴ In terms of drainage, this addresses a number of elements such as the angle of ramps and slip resistance. Systems can be designed to make areas completely accessible. For example, a threshold drain will assist in achieving compliance by ensuring there is no step-down, creating a hidden water barrier between interior and exterior living areas.⁵

THE RISK OF IGNORING REGULATIONS

Although products might carry the Watermark and meet the requirements of the standards, employing them in the non-compliant way can cause a breach of contract further down the line. In the healthcare industry where hygiene is paramount, one of the contractual obligations could be that a drain needs to be cleaned regularly and to a high standard. Drainage that is difficult to clean will encourage a lax cleaning approach.⁶ By ensuring that the drainage employed is easy to access and sanitise, healthcare facilities can be confident in the knowledge that the task will not fall down on the cleaning staff's list of priorities.

The issue of non-conforming and non-compliant products affects every stakeholder in the industry. Building professionals endanger, not only their own reputation, but also the status of the entire industry.⁷

DRIVING STANDARDS TO A HIGHER LEVEL

The key to overcoming the issue of non-compliance and non-conformance in the building industry is for professionals in the sector to be aware of, and adhere, to standards of the industry. The first step to achieving this is to work with companies that value the importance of regulations and strive to produce products that follow protocol.

Stormtech drains are fully compliant with a number of building codes, in particular Plumbing Code AS3500. With 25 years experience in architectural drainage, Stormtech have all products certified by Greentag and Level 2 Watermark. The Australian, family-owned business works closely with regulators, legislators, end users, trades and distributors to develop problem-solving products. Their experienced team welcomes any questions about product selection and compliance.



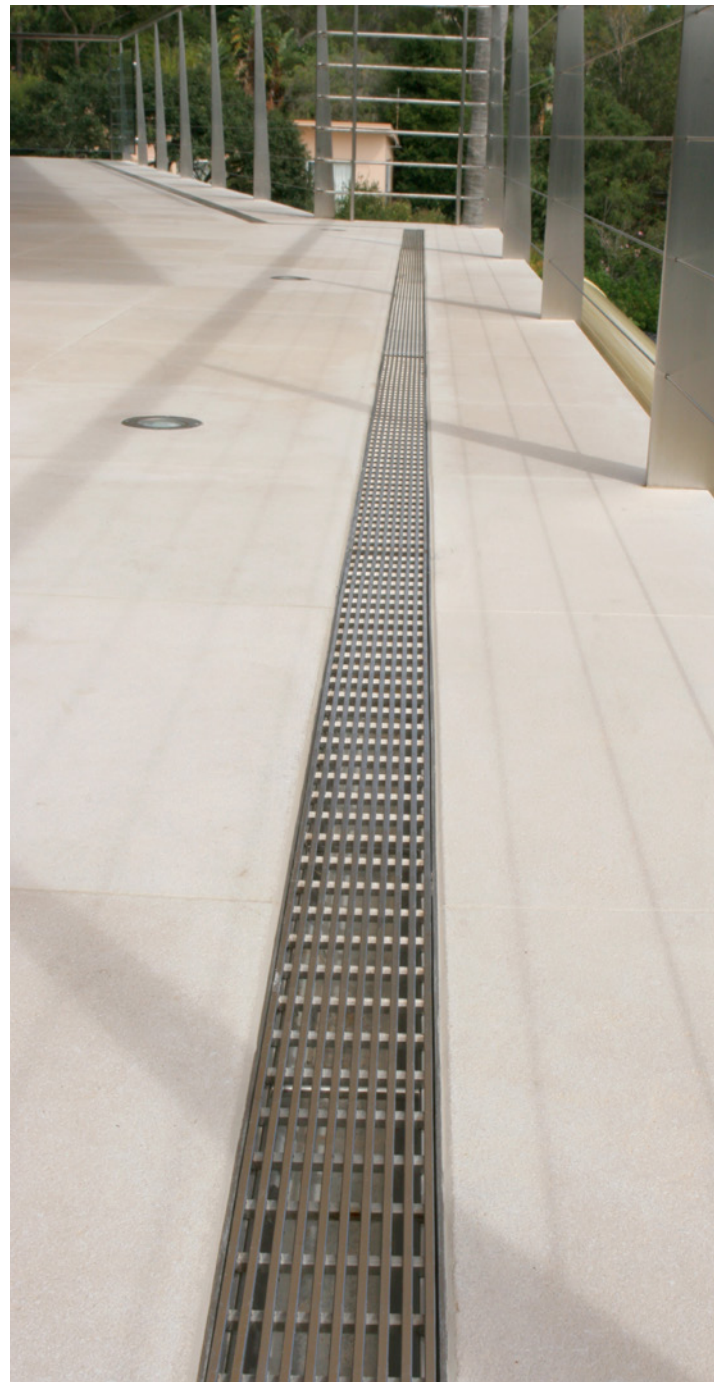
ASPECTS OF REGULATIONS SPECIFIC TO DRAINAGE:

- Minimum size requirement
- Load Prescriptions
- Access and Mobility

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The presence of a cheap price tag means that the likelihood of it being put through extensive and rigorous tests is slim

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REFERENCES

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