

ARBV'S STATEMENT OF APPROACH

Compliance with the architects code of professional conduct

Issued: May 2026

The purpose of this statement is to explain the ARBV's approach regarding compliance with the new Victorian Architects Code of Professional Conduct (2026 Code), which came into effect in April 2026.

The 2026 Code applies to all architects registered by the ARBV. It sets out the minimum standards for architects' conduct and practice. The obligations in the 2026 Code clarify what clients and the public are entitled to expect from architects. Compliance with the 2026 Code also protects architects from challenges and claims that could otherwise be made for unprofessional conduct.

ARBV's approach to compliance and enforcement

Architects are responsible for ensuring that they understand and fully comply with the Architects Act 1991 (**Act**), Architects Regulations 2015 (**Regulations**) and the 2026 Code. As most of the obligations in the 2026 Code were already contained in the previous version of the Code (**2015 Code**), architects should already be very aware of these obligations and have embedded compliance with them in their operating systems, business processes as well as professional practice.

The ARBV, as regulator, is responsible for ensuring compliance with the 2026 Code. Failure to comply with the 2026 Code may constitute unprofessional conduct for the purposes of the Act and could be a ground for disciplinary action (including an inquiry by the Architects Tribunal). As the 2026 Code has given effect to a number of changes to architects' professional obligations, it is very important for architects to take steps to understand and ensure compliance with the changes.

A more favourable view will be taken by the ARBV in the context of its compliance and enforcement activity if an architect can demonstrate that they actively took steps to understand the new and revised obligations in the 2026 Code and to appropriately reflect those obligations in their systems, decision-making processes and current practice.

To assist architects to understand and to comply with changes to the 2026 Code, this statement includes:

- Introduction of new Code
- Summary of 2026 Code changes
- Process leading to the introduction of the 2026 Code

Introduction of new Code

The 2026 Code is a schedule to the Regulations. Like all regulations, the Regulations "sunset" after 10 years and are remade to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

A sunset review was initiated, led and undertaken by the Department of Transport and Planning (**DTP**), which is a separate body to the ARBV.

As a result of the sunset review, the 2026 Code came into effect on 25 April 2026 and applies to conduct and practice occurring from 26 April 2026.

Summary of 2026 Code changes

While the 2026 Code is very similar to the 2015 Code in many respects, some changes have been made.

The limited scope of changes in the 2026 Code compared to the 2015 Code is apparent from a side-by-side comparison of the 2015 Code and the 2026 Code, which is available on the ARBV's website [here](#).

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The 2026 Code consolidates all professional standards obligations from across the Act, Regulations and the Code itself in one place. It also clarifies certain obligations that were ambiguous or lacking in sufficient detail in the 2015 Code. Amendments to the Code are intended to make it easier for architects to understand and comply with their professional standards obligations.

The table below summaries the key changes introduced by the 2026 Code.

Obligation	Intention/Effect
Duty to act in the public interest	Expressly confirms architects' duty to act in the public interest
Duties to clients	More clearly articulates architects' duties owed to clients
Supervision obligations	Clarifies supervision obligations for approved companies and partnerships
Client-architect agreements	Clarifies the terms that must be included in a client-architect agreement
Referrals, recommendations & endorsements	Clarifies obligations regarding referrals, recommendations and endorsements
Business management & processes	Requires architects to have effective systems and resources to support practice administration
Complaint management	Requires architects to have a complaint management framework

The ARBV has developed a more detailed summary of the changes to the Code, which is available on the ARBV's website [here](#).

In addition, the ARBV conducted a webinar the week the 2026 Code came into effect to outline important changes to the regulatory framework for architects, including changes to the Code. The webinar and slides are available on the ARBV's website [here](#).

The ARBV's summaries of Code changes are intended to guide architects to understand the nature of the changes. Architects should read the full Code (accessible on the [ARBV's website](#)) to ensure obligations and duties are well understood and embedded in systems, processes and practice.

Process leading to the introduction of the 2026 Code

As mentioned above, the process to amend and update the Regulations – including the Code – was led by the Department of Planning and Transport (DTP). The process involved consideration of whether and how the Regulations could be remade so that they:

- remain fit for purpose in a changing building and construction environment
- address ongoing risks associated with professional competency, CPD compliance and building quality
- strengthen consumer protection
- are aligned with amendments made to the Act in 2025

Proposed amendments to the Code were released by DTP in December 2025 with the publication of an exposure draft on the [Engage Victoria website](#) for public consultation. Any interested stakeholder had the opportunity to consider and respond to the proposed amendments to the Code through this process.

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Following release of the proposed amendments to the Code, the ARBV alerted the profession about the proposed amendments in an ARBV Update (Edition 24) in [December 2025](#) followed by a Special Update in [January 2026](#).

While the ARBV was a key stakeholder in the sunset review of the Code (along with others), the ARBV did not have control of consultation processes, legislative drafting, or approval timeframes. Along with others who made submissions through Engage Victoria, the ARBV was notified that the making of the new Regulations had been finalised on 24 April 2026.

The new Regulations, including the new Code, were officially published on the Parliament of Victoria website on Saturday, 25 April 2026, when they came into effect.

Two working days later after the 2026 Code came into effect, the ARBV held a webinar to provide information about the Code changes and published a [revised Client Agreement Guideline](#) on our website to assist architects to understand what is expected of them. We are continuing to develop additional guidance materials to serve this purpose.