Simplifying Thermal Bridging Calculation:
Improving Energy Efficiency
Introduction

This paper is about meeting the Australian Building Construction Board (ABCB) National Construction Code (NCC) Section J and equivalent New Zealand requirements, performance verification methods, energy efficiency design standards, and environmental certification criteria relating to thermal bridging calculation. It addresses architects, specifiers and energy consultants.

It is known that uncontrolled air leakage and lack of moisture management in buildings leads to building energy inefficiency and other problems worldwide. The need for real solutions to counter this is clear. Progress in this area to date in Australia and New Zealand includes the following:

In Australia the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council supports stronger energy standards leading to higher performing buildings. Their 2015-2030 National Energy Productivity Plan, sets out to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy productivity by 40% by 2030. The 2018 work programme A Trajectory for Low Energy Buildings by COAG proposed a route to ‘zero energy and carbon ready buildings’ through increases to the energy efficiency provisions in NCC 2019. The Australian federal government’s Commercial Building Disclosure Programme (CBD) also now requires ‘mandatory disclosure’ of energy efficiency information when commercial office space of 1000sqm is sold or leased and this is being reviewed for other building sectors. The information to be disclosed includes that on energy efficient construction features, such as insulation, that form part of the federal government’s National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS).

There has been a similar increased focus on energy efficiency in New Zealand. The most recent 2017-2022 New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NZEECS) is a key part of the government’s response to meeting its energy, climate change, sustainability and economic transformation goals and relates to the New Zealand Energy Strategy (NZES) 2011-2021.

Minimum Energy Performance standards and energy rating labels are developed jointly with Australia under the Trans-Tasman Equipment Energy Efficiency programme and there are government incentives for carrying out energy efficiency measures as well as related environmental certification routes in both countries.

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