

KO & Co ARCHITECTURE

Sustainability Action Plan 2026-2027

KO & Co Architecture
revision B – 01st June 2026



“Everyone deserves good design’
- Karen Ognibene, Director, Architect, FRAIA

Sustainability Action Plan

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we practice and pay our respects to the ancestors and descendants for their continual cultural and spiritual connections to country. We are committed to actively contributing to reconciliation by listening, learning, and recognising the valuable contributions of First Nations’ stories and insights.

01

Introduction



Introduction

KO & Co Architecture

KO & Co Architecture is a dynamic, design and functionality focused practice based in Brisbane, QLD with extensive experience shaping thoughtful and enduring spaces. Based on a collaborative approach, our work spans a range of scales within the residential sector, from bespoke single-dwelling renovations to large scale social and affordable housing developments. Our portfolio also includes, education, aged care and public architecture, reflecting our adaptability and commitment to meaningful design outcomes.

Our small yet dedicated team bring together a wide range of skills, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds, enriching the creative process and strengthening our collective expertise. At KO & Co, we recognise the critical role the built environment plays in addressing climate change. We are committed to continually educating ourselves and embedding sustainable thinking into our studio culture and every project we undertake.



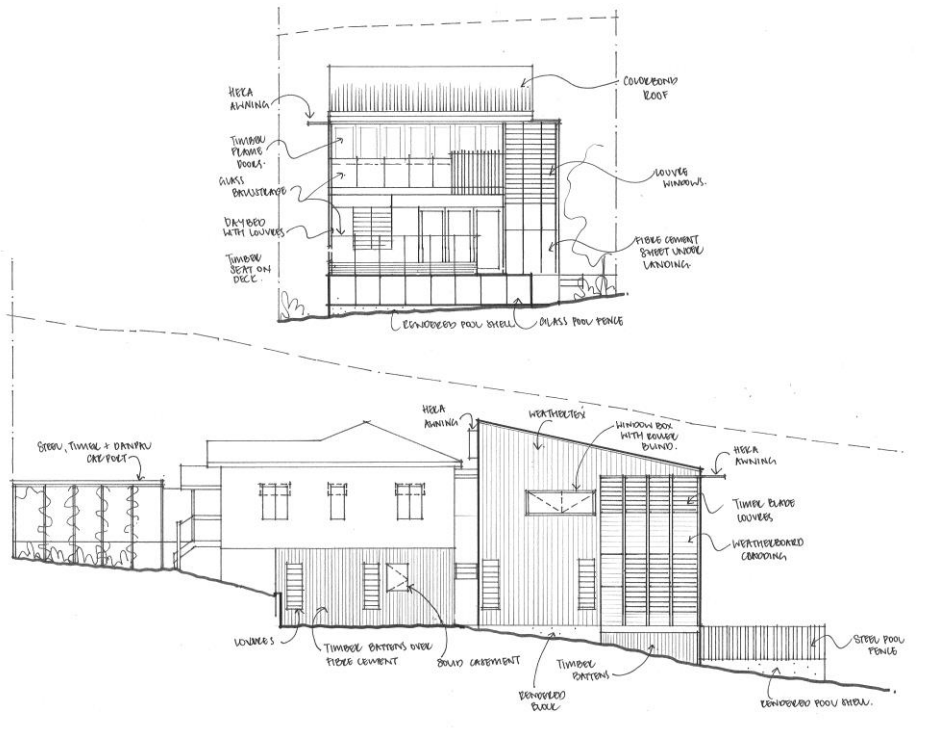
SAP Purpose

This Sustainability Action Plan establishes an evolving framework that guides our architectural practice toward a more responsible, ethical, and resilient future. It outlines the key areas of focus that shape our approach, including: environmental responsibility and carbon reduction, efficient use of resources, positive social and community impact, compliance with relevant regulations, and an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

This document aims to define our current sustainable practices, identifies future targets and commitments, and sets clear goals for measurable progress. It also details the ethical standards and key certifications we aim to uphold, ensuring transparency and accountability across all aspects of our work. Through this policy, we seek to embed sustainability into every stage of our design and operational process, fostering a built environment that is thoughtful, efficient, and enduring.

Architects Role

Architecture plays a critical role in addressing climate change, with building materials and construction responsible for approximately 11% of global carbon emissions, and building operations contributing a further 28%. As the designers of the built environment, architects are uniquely positioned to influence how spaces are conceived, constructed, and operated. Through thoughtful design, material selection, and energy-efficient strategies, architects can significantly reduce a building's environmental footprint. The responsibility to lead this change is more important than ever, guiding the industry toward a more sustainable, resilient, and low-carbon future



02

First Principles



First Principles

First Principles

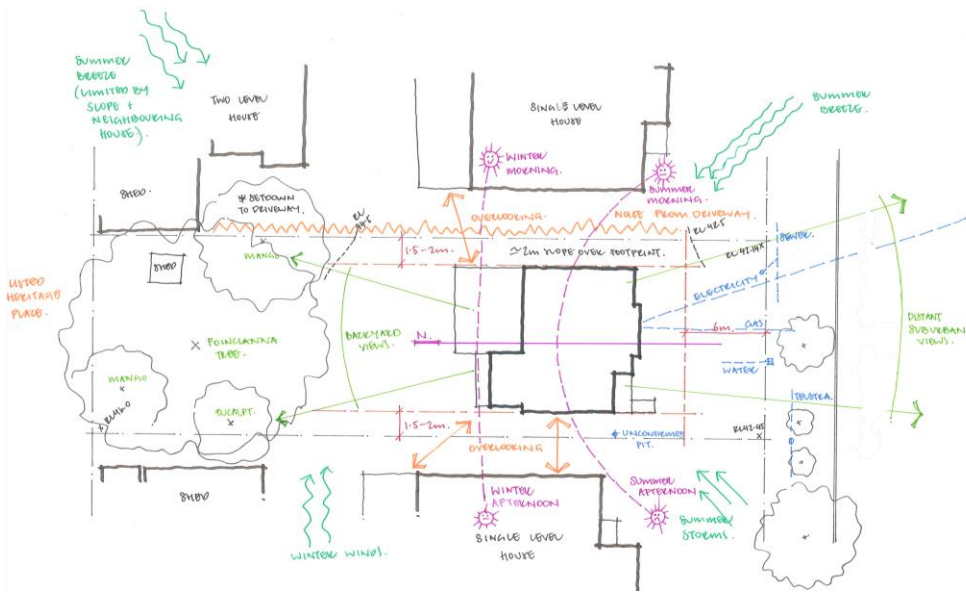
In the concept phase of architectural design, first principles thinking encourages architects to strip a project back to its core purpose, context, and human needs, analysing a site from the ground up. This approach naturally aligns with sustainable practices by prioritizing efficiency, adaptability, and harmony with the environment from the outset. By examining fundamental elements such as **orientation**, **material use**, **climate response**, and **spatial necessity**, architects create solutions that minimize waste and maximize long-term value. Instead of applying sustainability as an afterthought or checklist, first principles design embeds sustainability into the core of a project. Ensuring that every decision, from site placement to structural form, contributes to environmental resilience. In essence, both sustainability and first principles share a common foundation: where form and function evolve in response to context, not in opposition to it.

Site Analysis

When we initially assess a site, we always consider the following:

- Orientation
 - Where do we get to capture or exclude sunlight and heat? Which areas of the site do we need to direct warmth or coolth to? Are there any views we should capture? Where should we offer passive surveillance or privacy?
- Sun
 - Where should we invite sun into the building during winter and keep it out during summer? What existing elements will provide shade?
- Wind
 - Where does the wind come from, and where do we want it to go?
- Material use
 - What existing materials and building fabric can be retained or recycled?
- Vegetation
 - Are there any existing trees, and how viable is it for them to be retained? What kind of endemic vegetation can we reintroduce to the site, and how can we position it to cool the project?
- Context
 - Are there large slopes around the site? Does this mean your neighbours can see right into your house, or can you see into theirs? Is there an obstruction that causes a lot of shade? Is there a lot of noise coming from the surrounding area? Is there a nearby body of water? Is it saltwater or freshwater? How safe is your road access?

This information will dictate every decision we make throughout the project, so that the building works hard, rather than the people in it. Site analysis supports passive design, and reduces the need to run a comfortable building with energy, rather than intentional decision-making.



Incorporating first principles of architectural design fosters sustainability by addressing environmental performance at its core. By questioning fundamental needs; how a building breathes, captures light, and responds to climate. Architects can design spaces that work with nature rather than against it. Orienting buildings for optimal natural ventilation reduces dependence on mechanical cooling, while thoughtful placement of openings and shading devices balances daylight and heat gain. Similarly, harnessing passive solar design principles allows spaces to warm naturally in winter and remain cool in summer, minimizing reliance on artificial heating and cooling systems. Through careful material selection, thermal massing, and spatial planning, energy use can be drastically reduced without compromising comfort. Applying first principles ensures sustainability is not an add-on but an inherent outcome. Creating buildings that are efficient, resilient, and in tune with their environment.

03

Current Practices



Current Sustainable Practices

Office Practices

Projects are where architects can make the most significant impact in reducing carbon emissions, through design decisions, material choices, and sustainable practices. However, at KO & Co Architecture, we believe that meaningful change begins with individual action. While one person’s efforts may seem small, the collective impact of many creates real and lasting progress. By fostering a culture of responsibility and awareness within our team, client base and our collaborators, we aim to ensure that sustainability is not just embedded in our projects, but reflected in the everyday choices that shape how we work and live.

The office as a collective have taken steps to improve our sustainable practices. These include:

- Exclusively using recycled paper
- Ensuring all PCs are turned off at night
- Reducing our use of air conditioning through opening windows and doors
- Limiting food waste
- Supporting our vibrant garden
- Encouraging staff to walk or take public transport to work
- Installing solar panels on our roof
- Engaging in tertiary research to understand the impact of our projects
- Discussing sustainability and materials recycling with our clients



Solar panels have been added here since these photos were taken.

Our beloved garden is filled with native flora, having been designed by our good friends at Jeremy Ferrier Landscape Architects. It has great access to sun in the morning, and effortlessly cools the air in the warm afternoons with a deciduous feature tree, maximizing solar penetration in winter and shade in summer. The courtyard is connected to the internal by doors and windows that our visitors regularly find open, allowing the breeze to drift through to cool the space.

Furthermore, we have installed solar panels on the roof of our building, and regularly track our power use. This data has been a key piece of information to guide our response to our energy use. On average, our reliance on the power grid is around 60% of daily usagee.

KO&Co staff are also able to leave their bikes on the balcony in the courtyard, and are supported with end of trip facilities to make sustainable travel more approachable. Similarly, our practice is no more than 50 metres from a bus stop that can take our staff to and from Roma Street in less than five minutes.

Project Practices

KO&Co have been fortunate enough to work with the University of Queensland to investigate our BHC Curwen Terrace project’s carbon impact. Since the conclusion of that research, we have analysed the findings & aim to further expand this in the efforts to construct a standard for our multi-residential projects. What this means is that this is our benchmark for a project, the bare minimum best practice. Moving forwards, we will use this to inform other multi-residential projects, and each will be measurably better than the last. Moreover, we aim to create a benchmark for all of our main project typologies, including education and private residential.

Similarly, our private residential work consists primarily of alterations and additions. Within that, our clients are encouraged to reduce their footprint and reuse what they can. When clients make the decision to repurpose an existing space, or to design for adaptation, they are making a conscious decision to maintain a smaller footprint on the planet. Ultimately, less is always more.

Our office is a great example of our commitment to adaptive reuse. The building is a commercial character structure, built in 1876, with a prior life as a shopfront and residence. The building has survived decades of climate change and a variety of retail functions. With care and consideration to the existing bones, the building has been subtly & respectfully updated for use as the studio’s design practice.



04

Targets, Commitments & Goals



Goals

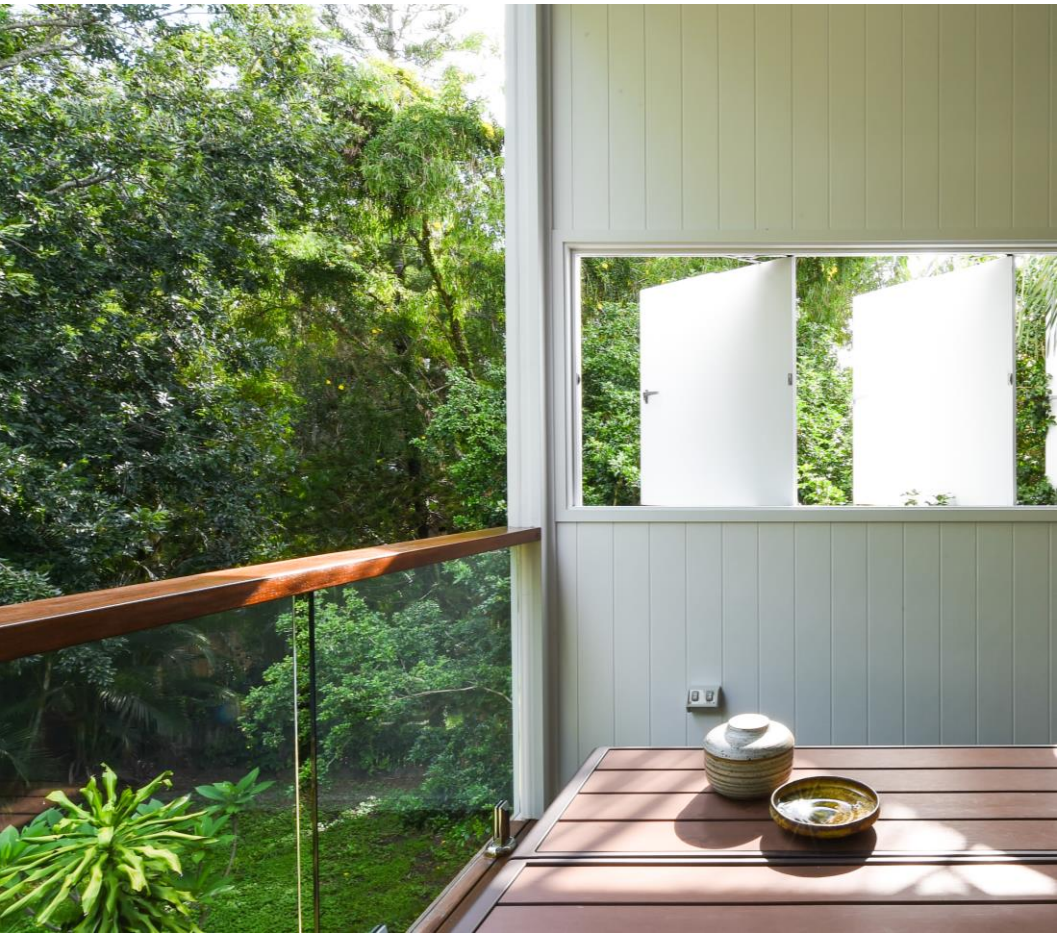
Commitment to Setting and Maintaining Sustainable Goals

Establishing sustainability goals, both short and long term provides our studio with a clear and actionable roadmap to guide us toward a more environmentally conscious future. These goals serve as both a benchmark and a source of accountability, allowing us to measure our progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensuring that sustainability remains an integral part of our design process.

Maintaining and regularly reviewing these goals ensures that our approach evolves alongside emerging technologies, materials, and environmental standards. This reflective process helps us stay aligned with our values & respond to industry change.

Evaluating and reporting our progress allows us to translate insight into action. By tracking performance data, reflecting on completed projects, and sharing lessons learned within the practice, we can refine our methods while setting new benchmarks for improvement.

Through this structured and evolving approach, KO & Co Architecture aims to ensure that sustainability is not an isolated consideration, but a defining characteristic of how we design, collaborate, and contribute to the built environment with out projects moving forward.



Architects Declare

KO & Co Architecture utilised the resources provided by **Architects Declare** as a foundation for developing our Practice and Project Goals List. These resources guide our approach to embedding sustainability principles across all aspects of our work, ensuring our goals align with industry standards and our architectural peers.

Goals List

- 1 Raise awareness of the climate and biodiversity emergencies and the urgent need for action amongst our clients and supply chains.
- 2 Advocate for faster change in our industry towards regenerative design practices and a higher Governmental funding priority to support this.
- 3 Establish climate and biodiversity mitigation principles as the key measure of our industry’s success: demonstrated through awards, prizes and listings.
- 4 Share knowledge and research to that end on an open source basis.
- 5 Evaluate all new projects against the aspiration to contribute positively to mitigating climate breakdown, and encourage our clients to adopt this approach.
- 6 Upgrade existing buildings for extended use as a more carbon efficient alternative to demolition and new build whenever there is a viable choice.
- 7 Include life cycle costing, whole life carbon modelling and post occupancy evaluation as part of our basic scope of work, to reduce both embodied and operational resource use.
- 8 Adopt more regenerative design principles in our studios, with the aim of designing architecture and urbanism that goes beyond the standard of net zero carbon in use.
- 9 Collaborate with engineers, contractors and clients to further reduce construction waste.
- 10 Accelerate the shift to low embodied carbon materials in all our work. Minimise wasteful use of resources in architecture and urban planning, both in quantum and in detail.



Office Goals

- 1
- Raise awareness
- 2
- Advocate
- 3
- Mitigation principles
- 4
- Share knowledge and research
- 5
- Client adoption
- 6
- Adaptive reuse
- 7
- Life cycle costing, whole life carbon modelling and post occupancy evaluation
- 8
- Regenerative design principles
- 9
- Collaborate
- 10
- Low embodied carbon materials

Objective	Status	Plan	Actions
Office education 3	Registered architects within the office attend regular CPD presentations to maintain their registration. These sessions serve as a consistent commitment to education.	Short term	KO & Co commits to a minimum of 2 CPD presentations per year to be centered around sustainability.
Solar power	KO & Co's office utilises solar power through the installation of solar panels in 2022. Supplying 60% of the office's operational energy use.	Long term	Due to the ever improving technology in renewable energy KO & Co commit to replacing the office solar panels every 10 years to ensure that optimal energy output is achieved.
Energy saving – energy use 6	Further energy saving practices will be implemented into the day to day running of the office.	Short term	The KO & Co team commit to energy saving practices through a few key areas: - Turning computers off at the end of everyday to save energy outside of operating hours, as well as restricting usage of air conditioning.
Energy saving – air conditioning 6	The KO & Co office is located in an existing commercial character shopfront, with access to natural ventilation.	Short term – long term	The KO & Co office commits to the purchase of an energy usage tracker to help monitor and report energy consumption. Currently air-conditioning usage contributes to 40% of the annual energy consumption. Where practical the team commits to reducing air-conditioning usage further through the use of natural ventilation where the temperature sits below 28 degrees Celsius.
Transportation – car 6	The KO & CO team utilise a shared office car for transport to and from site visits. While the current car is fairly fuel efficient petrol model, transportation globally makes up roughly 23% of carbon emissions. When ride share services are used, the green option is selected.	Short term	In early 2026 the office will be purchasing a small fuel efficient car. Moving forward when utilising ride share services the green option will be selected.
Transportation – aeroplane	KO & Co mainly operate within South – East Queensland, restricting travel primarily to the office car. Where interstate or remote travel, commercial aeroplane travel is required.	Long term	KO & Co commit to offsetting areoplane travel for all flights moving forward from 2026.
Recycling - paper 6	Architecture offices can be fairly waste heavy due to the constant need to print and review drawings for quality control purposes.	Short term	KO & Co aims to reduce printing by implementing new standards for our review process. - Restricting drawing pack prints to project milestones. - On screen PDF reviews / ipad digital reviews will be the new standard for non milestone drawing reviews.
Recycling – office supplies	KO & Co uses primarily recycled paper products and will make steps to recycle or reuse other office supplies and products.	Short term	We will: - Use recycled toilet paper & hand towels.
Lighting 9	The shopfront lights remain on throughout the night, however the office lights operate throughout the day, drawing from our solar panels.	Long term	We will set timers or sensors for the lights
Bike to work / public transport program	Our office is less than 50 metres from a bus stop, however the transport is unreliable. End of Trip facilities have also been provided for cyclists.	Long term	We will - Set incentives to bike to work - Set incentives to catch public transportation
Signing Architects Declare	KO & Co have not signed Architects Declare. We feel we should be further along in our sustainability journey before we do so.	Short term	KO & Co will sign Architects Declare once we implement the Sustainability Action Plan

Project Goals

- 1

Raise awareness
- 2

Advocate
- 3

Mitigation principles
- 4

Share knowledge and research
- 5

Client adoption
- 6

Adaptive reuse
- 7

Life cycle costing, whole life carbon modelling and post occupancy evaluation
- 8

Regenerative design principles
- 9

Collaborate
- 10

Low embodied carbon materials

Objective	Status	Plan	Actions
Project start up 1 2 3 4	First principals are always utilised to analyse a site during the initial stages of the project. Further emphasis is required to highlight other sustainability opportunities for projects, earlier on.	Short – long term	Advocate & raise awareness of sustainable & regenerative design within the industry and especially with our clients, by including in our project start up process the discussion around sustainable practices. Provide information on our processes and their participation which will be reflected in our fee proposals.
Embodied carbon analysis 6	Curwen Terrace (social and affordable housing) is our first project analysed for its embodied carbon content. Through collaboration with the University of Queensland (UQ), student investigation data provides a basis for how to internally review the embodied carbon in our projects.	Long term	KO & Co aim to continue working with UQ to both provide a basis for students to learn from & for ourselves to learn as a practice. We aim to analyse the embodied carbon of each of our project typologies to provide a baseline embodied impact study. This study can then be used to inform our future projects.
Consultant selection & operational carbon analysis 1 2 8	Discussions with current consultants to understand their sustainability knowledge and commitments to sustainable practices within their organisations, as well as commitment to sustainability on projects	Short to long term	We aim to compile a set list of project requirements, focusing on reducing operational carbon in each of our project typologies, In partnership with our consultants. In the aim to reduce energy & water consumption & rely on sustainable energy sources.
Product specification 7 9 10	Currently in progress. Internal supplier product list is being reviewed and updated based on relevant sustainable & ethical standards	Long term	KO & Co records a list of frequent suppliers used for our projects, ranging from external to internal building materials & finishes. We aim to expand this schedule to include information on supplier sustainability standards to ensure that we specify ethically and sustainably moving forward on every project.
Integrating sustainability within our current quality assurance systems 3	Currently in progress. Internal discussions with QA team being undertaken	Short to long term	To ensure that sustainable thinking is embedded in our projects we need to include tangible actions within our current systems. In the aim to ensure these actions are taken we are in the process of reviewing our QA systems, which are a crucial part of our day to day management of projects.
Future proofing our projects towards adaptability 5	KO & Co aim to better understand how our new build projects can be better equipped for adaptive reuse in the future. Providing a basis for us to guide clients on where we can improve building design to ensure that it can be modified & updated for future uses.	Long term	We aim to do further research at the beginning of the project to better understand the site, area & legislation that may impact the local area. Doing so in the effort to identify future uses & allow for us to design the building with adaptability in mind.
Post occupancy evaluation 6 7	POE's are undertaken for residential clients approximately six months post completion. Some of our community housing providers undertake POE's which we are privy to. However we should encourage all long-term building owners to do the same, in the effort to better understand how the building is used, which will inform future projects.	Short to long term	Better understanding a clients use of our buildings. Understanding the day to day operations, including; AC usage, and mechanical systems reliance. Better understanding where improvements can be made moving forward, both in terms of design & operation. As well as keeping records of this information to inform future projects.

KO & Co Architecture acknowledges that our sustainability goals represent a living framework, one that will continue to evolve as our knowledge, practices, and industry standards progress. All identified actions, targets, and commitments are intended to be actively tracked, reviewed, and refined over time to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness. This document reflects our current understanding and aspirations, and will be updated as we continue to learn, grow, and strengthen our approach to sustainable design.

05

Ethical Practices



Ethical Practices

Designing with Country

KO & Co Architecture is committed to continually educating ourselves on designing with Country in mind. We seek to deepen our understanding of First Nations knowledge, respecting Country’s, stories, materials, ecology and climates to create architecture that responds meaningfully to culture & place.

In 2025 KO & Co Architecture worked alongside Blaklash to collaborate on the development of a culturally significant project. We aim to continue working alongside consultants, collaborators & elders to deliver projects of this nature. As well as incorporating this learned knowledge into the practice's projects more broadly.

Commitment to Social Housing

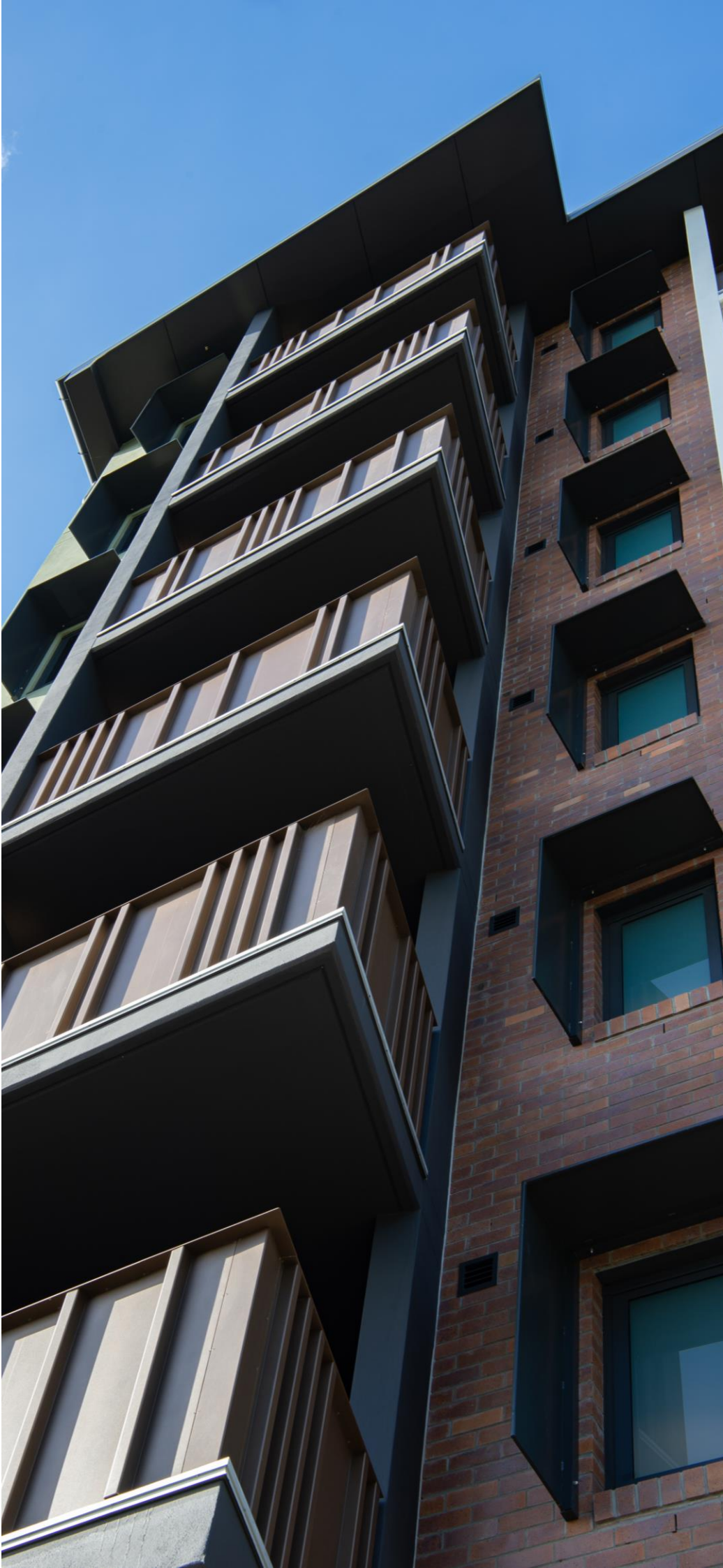
KO & Co Architecture is deeply committed to contributing to the delivery of high-quality social housing. We believe that everyone deserves access to good design, with a focus on creating inviting spaces that foster dignity, wellbeing, and community.

Our approach places equal emphasis on care, understanding, and practicality, ensuring that every project responds sensitively to the needs of residents while maintaining long-term functionality and durability. Through thoughtful planning, robust material selection, and a commitment to sustainability, we aim to create housing that enhances lives and upholds the value that good design should be accessible to all.

Socially Sustainable Operations

KO & Co Architecture operates with a strong commitment to social sustainability, both within our practice and through the projects we deliver. We value inclusivity, collaboration, and equity as core to our identity.

Our small but diverse team spanning varying ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds, bring a wealth of perspectives that enrich our workplace and design processes. This diversity fosters creativity, empathy, and balanced decision-making. By embedding these values into our daily operations, we cultivate a respectful, supportive environment that reflects the socially sustainable principles we strive to promote through our architectural work.



06

Standards & Certification



Standards & Certification

KO & Co Architecture is committed to deepening our understanding of sustainability standards, certifications and assessment frameworks to strengthen the way we design and document our projects. As our industry evolves, so too does our responsibility to engage with the most current and credible guidelines that shape environmentally conscious practice. By actively integrating a wide range of certification systems, rating tools and regulatory requirements, we ensure our work reflects both continual improvement & best practice.

This commitment extends beyond compliance, it is a proactive effort to refine our processes, broaden our knowledge base and embed sustainability into each stage of our projects. Through ongoing research and team development, we aim to make more informed decisions around materials, construction methodologies, environmental performance and long-term lifecycle outcomes.

The below resources and governing bodies are providing the basis for our research for 2026.



Australia Institute of Architects
Advocacy for regulatory requirements buildings to achieve Net Zero by 2030.
CAST (Climate Action and Sustainability Taskforce)
• Proposed competency standards for architects to require net zero carbon training as mandatory part of CDD



National Construction Code
NCC 2022 requires Nabers 7 Star minimum.
Future Editions expected to include Zero Energy Ready Buildings by 2030.
Australian Standards
New Australian Standard for Carbon Neutral Buildings are being developed.



Governments
City of Brisbane
Net Zero Emissions by 2050
Victoria and Australia – Net Zero by 2050.
City of Sydney
Net Zero Emissions by 2035.
City of Melbourne
Targeting Zero Emissions by 2040.



Association of Consulting Architects Australia
Offers CPDs and resources to guide practices towards more sustainable outcomes, as well as supporting Architect's Declare – a movement where architect's take steps to defend the environment.



Good Environmental Choice Australia
A not-for-profit ecolabelling program based on ISO 14024 principles.
Assesses:
• Environment
• Human health
• Social responsibility
• Lifecycle performance



Red List Free – Living Future
An identification that a product does not contain materials associated with the 'Red List.'
The 'Red List' describes chemicals and substances that post a serious risk to human health and the environment.



Urban Design Institute of Australia - EnviroDevelopment
An Institute initiative designed to promote and certify environmentally sustainable development across Australia.
Assesses:
• Ecosystems • Materials
• Waste • Water
• Energy • Community



