

Building Professionals Board

The Building Professionals Board works to improve the quality of building construction and subdivision in NSW by regulating and educating building and subdivision certifiers across NSW.



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What is the Building Professionals Board?

The New South Wales planning and development process is designed to ensure building and construction of the highest standard.

This means that any building or subdivision work may require approvals in the form of certificates under various pieces of environmental planning legislation.

It also means building or subdivision work should meet certain national standards.

Certification is a vital step in the development process and the group of professionals who deliver this certification are accredited by the Building Professionals Board.

The Board ensures that accredited certifiers who provide approvals via certificates are operating in the most professional manner with the most up to date knowledge.

The Board works with certifiers to provide education upfront, so as to avoid complex problems at a later stage of development and to help ensure any development approved is of the highest standard.

The Building Professionals Board sets the rules of certification so that the buildings in which people live and work will be constructed to the very best standards. Its activities have impacted the market by increasing competition for certification services - leading to better service for consumers and faster approvals.

What are the Board's key roles?

The Board

- **accredits certifiers** to issue construction, occupation, subdivision, strata, compliance and complying development certificates under relevant NSW legislation
- **promotes and maintains standards of building and subdivision certification** in NSW
- **facilitates education and training** for accredited certifiers
- **provides information to the public** about how projects are certified and assists consumers in locating a certifier
- **investigates complaints** and **audits** accredited certifiers and councils in their certification role to help improve the system and assist the efficiency of certifiers' processes
- **advises the Minister for Planning** on policy development and review matters relating to the *Building Professionals Act 2005*.

The Board accredits over 400 certifiers from the private sector and, since establishing a framework for the accreditation of council employees in March 2010, it expects to accredit over 700 council accredited certifiers.

What advantages does the Board bring?

The Building Professionals Board brings about greater choice for consumers and ensures better certification practices by accredited certifiers.

It has established high standards for accredited certifiers and provides guidance to councils and certifiers regarding the interpretation of the certification provisions under the relevant planning legislation.

Consumers

- Consumers have greater confidence that accredited certifiers will act professionally, impartially and with regard to environmental planning legislation.
- Consumers know the work of accredited certifiers is overseen by a Board that they can contact if any issues arise.
- Consumers now also benefit from a scheme to accredit council certifiers to ensure minimum standards of competence for all certifiers. This is being rolled out throughout 2010.
- Consumers and the wider community will benefit from safer buildings delivered via a faster approval system.

Certifiers

- Certifiers are part of an accreditation scheme which is relevant to the needs of the community, industry and government.
- Certifiers benefit from a Continuing Professional Development program which includes regular sessions to help improve skills and gain wider industry and business insights.
- Certifiers are kept up to date on the Board's activities to monitor the implementation of relevant environmental planning instruments.
- Certifiers benefit from the results of the Board's detailed complaints and auditing program - learning from cases involving fellow accredited certifiers.

What is accreditation?

Accredited certifiers are accredited under a scheme administered by the Building Professionals Board. The Accreditation Scheme specifies the skills and knowledge certifiers must have and sets a Code of Conduct that certifiers must work to.

A good accreditation scheme is fundamental to a system of certification that has the community's faith and trust. It is vital that people with the right skills, experience and probity are responsible for the certification of building and subdivision work.

Accreditation is based on the individual's experience and qualifications and is dependent on the individual undertaking continual professional development and holding the required insurance.

Around 30 per cent of certification work is undertaken by private certifiers and 70 per cent by council certifiers in NSW.

How does certification work?

Certificates are approvals provided from either a council or accredited certifier to confirm that development complies with relevant legislation and environmental planning instruments.

It is up to the person who is building or developing to decide whether to use their council or an accredited certifier.

From late 2010, council building surveyors will be subject to a similar accreditation scheme as certifiers from the private sector.

Either a council or accredited certifier can

- issue complying development certificates
- issue construction certificates
- issue compliance certificates
- issue strata certificates
- conduct inspections of building works during their construction
- act as a principal certifying authority (PCA) responsible for issuing occupation certificates for building work. *(Usually only the council can act as PCA for subdivision work and issue subdivision certificates (unless the local planning instrument says otherwise)).*

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May 2010
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