

Commercial building

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The **Certification Process** in Commercial Building Work

Most developers and builders involved in commercial building work know the processes required for a building project to be successful from concept to completion.

The process will involve a number of consultants including engineers, architects and town planners.

One consultant who will play a significant role in the success of the project will be the building certifier. Building certifiers may be private building certifiers in their own practices or building certifiers who work for local governments. Some building certifiers who work for local governments may also hold private certifier endorsement which allows them to certify throughout the State.

The difference between a private certifier and a local government building certifier is the private certifier is legally required to hold professional indemnity insurance and to have successfully completed a course in issuing development permits. This course focuses very heavily on town planning and its impact on the building certification process.

Both private and local government certifiers must hold a BSA licence. Building certifiers are licensed at various levels depending on their qualifications and experience. These levels specify the size of the projects they are allowed to certify. The current levels are:

- Building Surveyor Technician (certain local governments only)
- Assistant Building Surveyors
- Building Surveyors

In addition to being licensed, building certifiers must adhere to a strict Code of Conduct and meet the requirements of the *Building Act*, regardless of who may be engaging them. BSA investigates allegations of certifiers not meeting these obligations.

What is the Building Certifier Role?

In simple terms the process goes from the preliminary design through to assessment and then final inspection. Let's examine each of these stages.

Preliminary Project Team

Building certifiers may form part of the initial project team during concept stage and may give

preliminary advice on potential problems. This needs to be carefully managed by the project team as it's against the building surveyors' Code of Conduct to actually be involved in the design process for the building.

Assessment Stage

Once the plans are completed building certifiers will assess the plans for compliance with various standards and codes, including the requirements of the Building Code of Australia. They may require supporting documentation and certificates (Form 15) from various consultants to assist them in ensuring the proposed works meet various standards. These consultants are referred to under the Building Act as "competent persons" and must be approved by the building certifier prior to supplying the certifications.

It is critically important for the building certifier to ensure the proposed plans are consistent with the town planning permit and meet any relevant conditions from the local authority which impact on the building certification process.

Construction Stage

After a permit has been issued a building certifier may carry out certain inspections during construction. These inspections are mandatory and are imposed as part of the permit decision notice and any attached conditions.

Prior to the building being occupied a building certifier must issue a Certificate of Classification. This certificate is issued when the building certifier deems the building has been constructed in accordance with the original permit and various supporting documentation including any certificates of inspections obtained from the competent persons. Any changes to the original permit must be approved by the building certifier.

As with all consultants the building certifier is an integral part of the project team.

If you have any questions about the certification process in commercial building work please contact BSA.