

# MEDIA STATEMENT

18 December, 2014

## Building Commission hands out the gifts on its first birthday

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) has marked its first anniversary by highlighting the extensive list of reforms and improvements it has achieved for home owners and contractors in its first year.

QBCC Commissioner, Steve Griffin, said the reform program implemented by the Commission since its inception on 1 December 2013 had produced a much better industry for the benefit of home owners and contractors.

“Our reforms have enormously reduced the stress, money and time involved in dispute resolution for everyone involved in the Queensland building and construction industry and we will be building on that good work in 2015,” Mr Griffin said.

The reforms include a free early dispute resolution (EDR) service, a free, independent Internal Review Unit to examine QBCC decisions, a 24/7 phone service, a customer-friendly website and a variety of social media accounts.

The EDR aims to resolve building disputes which arise during construction, rather than the previous system, where the QBCC was unable to become involved while a contract was still in place.

“It aims to resolve up to 90 per cent of complaints within 28 working days, and between 1 July and 4 December, EDR saved 304 families and contractors from the need to use litigation,” Mr Griffin said.

The new Minimum Financial Requirements for Licensing policy has seen the QBCC secure more than \$2.5 million in monies owed to contractors and suppliers since October 1. The policy has also reduced the regulatory burden and costs placed on licensed contractors. Most licensees no longer have to submit financial statements when renewing their licence, saving \$2,000-\$5,000 a year.

The policy also provides the Commission with the power to suspend and cancel licences if monies owed as stipulated in contracts are not repaid without a legitimate reason.

QBCC internal review decisions are being made within 28 calendar days and have reduced the number of reviews in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

“As of 4 December, the Internal Review Unit had finalised 60 reviews, with only two of these then seeking a review in QCAT, removing the need for 58 cases to go to QCAT,” Mr Griffin said.

He said the QBCC reforms would continue to roll out in 2015, adding to the many industry and business improvements implemented in the Commission’s highly successful first year of operation.

Other QBCC reforms in 2014 include:

Contact: Brian Bolton  
Manager, Communications  
Queensland Building and Construction Commission  
[brian.bolton@qbcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:brian.bolton@qbcc.qld.gov.au)  
Phone (07) 3225 2996

- A new approach to home owner education with a series of YouTube videos featuring media personalities Tom Williams and Liz Cantor.
- The QBCC website has 100% of content available within 3 clicks. We have also introduced digital self-service terminals in all regional offices and we aim to consistently exceed our customer satisfaction rating of 85% every month and answer 80% of calls within 60 seconds.
- The release of a Guide to Standards and Tolerances as a quick and easy reference source to identify general standards and tolerances for domestic building work in Queensland.
- From 15 December, amendments to the *Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2014* will create a one-stop shop in the QBCC for payment disputes, with adjudicators appointed by an impartial registrar and providing a fairer, more equitable system.
- An improved regulatory regime for the plumbing and drainage industry has the Commission as the single regulator for plumbers and drainers, reducing red tape and the costs of operating a business, including a saving of \$123.10 for licensees who pay their occupational licence annually. This will simplify arrangements for approximately 43% of plumbers who currently hold contractor licences.
- Outsourcing of insurance claims which has resulted in faster processing times and provided building inspectors with more time to focus on proactive programs and early dispute resolution.
- The release of a new rectification of building work policy. A home owner now has 12 months to give notice and lodge a complaint for non-structural defects. The time frame for structural defects is 6 years 3 months, however home owners now have 12 months from when they notice the defect to lodge a complaint.
- The review of building certification to address concerns raised about the appointment, role and responsibilities of building certifiers in Queensland. The review is also examining potential improvements to the *Building Act 1975* that will further cut costs and reduce delays.
- A high-visibility branding strategy for all Commission offices and vehicles and front-line staff.

ENDS

Connect with us:



Contact: Brian Bolton  
Manager, Communications  
Queensland Building and Construction Commission  
[brian.bolton@qbcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:brian.bolton@qbcc.qld.gov.au)  
Phone (07) 3225 2996