
From:
Sent: Thursday, 25 July 2019 9:42 PM
To: Building Confidence Response
Cc:
Subject: FW: Re submissions into the "Building Stronger Foundations" discussion paper.
Categories: Green Category

24th July 2019.

Re submissions into the "Building Stronger Foundations" discussion paper.

I would appreciate an opportunity to make a recorded submission into the subjects of the discussion paper and I'm prepared to undergo a personal interview..

For a brief detail of what I can offer please consider the following;

I am 65 years of age and have some 47 years in the construction industry in numerous capacities.
I have or do hold building , designer and contractor licenses in NSW, Qld, Sth Aust' and Victoria.
I am currently licensed as a building contractor in Qld & NSW
I currently hold a "Building Designer License" issued in Queensland.
I am a trade qualified carpenter.
I am a trade qualified shipwright.

My construction experience includes but is not limited to Civil Construction, Commercial Construction, Residential Construction and Waterside Construction.

I have been involved in building many single & two story residences across Australia throughout my career, including with one of the first "Project Builders" being Dickson Homes over 45 years ago.

I have built; commercial factories, medium rise unit blocks, road & rail bridges, pumping stations to supply cities with water, dams, coal loading wharves, refurbished historic hotels and renovated resorts..

I have done years of renovation and repairs to homes.

I have designed by CAD hundreds of homes to be built for specific clients in NSW & Qld.

I am currently attempting to wind down into semi-retirement although this does not seem possible as I'm enjoying working with my younger son building and renovating around Lake Macquarie NSW, although while I write this it's 6:00am and I'm in a site office on the Darling Downs doing a house build for one of my sons.

I have been fascinated since moving to NSW some five years ago at the dysfunctional and backward Construction Licensing procedure in NSW.

BUILDING DESIGN.

I assumed when I moved to NSW it was my intention to just keep performing in the Building Design industry doing custom residential design work. When I started marketing I realized that I was competing against kids who had recently left school after learning some six months of CAD and no knowledge of the construction industry, It should be noted that in most states especially Qld "doing building design is recognized as building work and the person doing the work must be qualified and licensed if the total build project value is to exceed any value. Any other building work in Qld requires a license if the work value exceeds \$3,000. I find that most other designers in NSW do not have any formal qualifications or insurances.

BUILDING APPROVAL DELAYS.

In regards to delays to building work, I find the delays in approvals to build under the archaic system of NSW where everything is so delayed by Councils is outrageous.

It appears that council / local government administrators are following an archaic system of ticking boxes with no real understanding of what real compliance is all about.

Once again I refer to Qld where a person can sign a contract on a parcel of land, commission a licensed building designer to design their home including structural construction plans, settle on the purchase contract then submit a plumbing application, purchase home warranty insurance, after getting their sewer drainage approval submit the plans to a Private Building Certifier and get the plans back stamped and ready to start building after a week. Quite often the time between purchase contract finalisation and commencement to build can be as short as three weeks or less.

ILLEGAL BUILDING WORK & HANDY-MEN.

I have been astounded at the frequency of illegal building work in NSW in regards to both structural compliance to the NCC (National Construction Code), AS1684 Timber Framing Standards and unlicensed building work. I have questioned "Handy men" where I've seen them performing substantial renovations and extensions including substantive deck rebuilds, room additions and roof replacements, any of these tasks would be above the financial limit for license requirement. I have questioned Handymen about this on sites where they claim they are operating under "The Handyman Banner with Handyman Insurance". This is ludicrous to say the least because my understanding is that illegal work negates any insurance whether the insurance of the contractor or the home owner client.

ILLEGAL BUILDING WORK & CARPENTERS.

It is also interesting to note that in NSW there is a grey area between the duties a builder can contract as opposed to a carpenter. Carpenters in NSW seem to have no issue calling themselves builders, bringing in other trades and coordinating the other trades within their own work but not legally able to take responsibility for the works performed.

SUB-STANDARD RESIDENTIAL WORKS.

In the recent six years of working mostly in NSW I've noticed an incredible amount of sub-standard works, especially renovations and extensions plus older works. The most dangerous works I see regularly around Lake Macquarie where there is a lot of steep blocks with decks facing the water, many of these decks are in excess of 5 or 6 metres above ground and the railings are built of undersized, under height rubbish pine. Illegal horizontal stainless steel balustrade wire is still very common as new works or simple horizontal timbers ready for children to climb. I'm astounded we don't hear of more deaths due to this situation alone although I assume most wouldn't be reported. The current screaming of the media and councillors is focused on blaming the standards and codes.

Any person with a good understanding of the Australian Standards in all aspects of the Construction Industry coupled with the National Construction Code (previously the BCA) can build a functional building which will be safe to use, maintain, live in or work in.

In actual fact the Codes & Standards developed and used in Australia have become the blue print for many countries around the globe.

I should mention that, in my opinion, the current standards for tolerances developed in Victoria and now being adopted around the country by other states is laughable as any builder leaning towards the upper end of these standards should not be in the industry.

It should be remembered that we have in this country under the NCC banner a method of approval of building materials which is still in its infancy but is developing well. Greater education of builders and designers would be of assistance.

REPORTING ISSUES TO THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF FAIR TRADE.

I have attempted on numerous occasions to report issues of unlicensed building work, dangerous work, non-compliant work etc to the NSW Dep't Fair Trade, on all of these occasions I have been stonewalled by receptionists or call centre operators, the lack of interest or appetite for reporting, following up or any policing of any reported issues appears to be a cultural problem within the department.

CONCLUSION.

Registration of engineers under a State Government system as per Qld would be a good start.
Licensing for Commercial Building Works of suitably qualified persons.
Licensing of Building Designers when suitable formal qualifications can be proven, including mutual recognition of interstate licenses. Design is part of the building process. The Qld system works well under the QBCC.
Policing of illegal building works with severe fines to bring about compliance.
A serious education campaign of the consumer public.
More serious scrutiny of all Certifiers.
A state wide Town Planning template to eliminate the parochial interference of out of control, power wielding Local Governments.

Please feel welcome to contact me any time for further discussion.

Kind Regards, Steve Boughton.



Steve Boughton
Director

www.lake2country.com

Qualifications of Steve Boughton.

Building Designer Qld

Building Contractor, Residential-Commercial-Industrial:

SA Contractor Qld Building Contractor Low Rise

NSW Contractor

Civil Construction, Carpenter, Joiner, Steel-fixer, Rigger, Form-setter.

Yachting; Offshore Yachtmaster Instructor TL4/TL6, Shipwright, Yacht Rigger,

Sailmaker, Instrument Technician.