

# Finalisation of a residential building approval

## ***Do I need a final certificate if I'm selling my home?***

Under the Building Act 1975, there is no requirement in Queensland for a final inspection certificate to be issued prior to moving into a home, and it is not required to sell a home.

Property owners may not be aware that their home has not had a final inspection. It is often only at the point of selling their property that this information comes to light.

Although it is not unlawful to occupy a dwelling without a final inspection, it may be a deterrent to purchasers.

## ***When can Councils issue a final inspection certificate?***

Before the introduction of private certification in April 1998, Councils granted building approvals. The responsibility to issue approvals since April 1998 belongs with private building certifiers.

Council may be able to finalise a building approval issued between 1983 and April 1998, however this is a complex and time consuming process, dependant on many factors.

Firstly, it is important that the structure has not been altered from the original approval. Any changes (including structural) will need a new building approval.

If Council does not have plans, inspection records, documentation, or relevant certificates then a final certificate will not be able to be issued, and a Private Certifier may be required.

Property owners will need to give these documents and certificates to Council for a final inspection to take place. This is to ensure any occupants of the building or structure will be safe.

The following aspects may present a danger to the occupants of a dwelling, and need certification by a licensed person:

- Water proofing of bathrooms and wet areas;
- Termite protection;
- Hard-wired smoke detectors;
- Glazing certificates for windows and shower screens to ensure they meet the required standards;
- Framing inspections.

## **Other certificates will be required if there are outstanding inspections. These may include:**

- Plumbing and Drainage Final Certificates, Engineering Certificates from a Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ Engineer) for the footings, slab, frame and retaining walls.

## ***How do changes to plumbing laws impact on the issuing of a final inspection certificate?***

Under new plumbing laws that took effect on 1 July 2019, a person must not use plumbing or drainage that is the result of permit work, unless an inspection certificate or final inspection certificate has been issued stating the work is operational and fit for use.

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### ***Plumbing final inspection:***

Prior to 2019 plumbing permits did not lapse if works had been undertaken within two years of the approval date. Arrangements can be made to finalise plumbing approvals by contacting council.

From 1 July 2019, plumbing permits lapse two years from the approval date regardless of works undertaken. An application can be made to extend the permit for a maximum of two additional years.

If a permit lapses, a new application is required so a final inspection can be carried out.

### ***When can I make an application for a final inspection?***

For existing, pre-April 1998 Council approvals, applications can be made for a building and/or plumbing and drainage final inspection with Council.

Before Council inspects the property, written authority from the current property owner is needed.

When all relevant information is received, Council officers will assess and if satisfactory,

they can inspect to make sure the completed building and structure meets the existing approval requirements.

Private certifiers are generally responsible for finalising building approvals post-April 1998. Council keeps records of building approvals which may be accessed via a paid search process.

If the building and plumbing inspections are passed and we have received all the relevant paperwork including certificates, we can issue a certificate of final inspection for a residential (class 1 and class 10) building.

### ***How do I find out more?***

Council has a range of useful online tools and information sheets at [frasercoast.qld.gov.au/fact-sheets](http://frasercoast.qld.gov.au/fact-sheets) or [frasercoast.qld.gov.au/planning-information-and-tools](http://frasercoast.qld.gov.au/planning-information-and-tools)

You can talk to an officer by calling **1300 79 49 29** or emailing [enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au)

Council's Customer Service Centres are open week days from 8.15am to 4.30pm at 77 Tavistock Street in Hervey Bay and 211 – 213 Adelaide Street in Maryborough.