

Owner builder regulations...

Northern Territory

The legislation surrounding owner builders differs from state to state, and has changed a number of times over the last few years. We will attempt to cover some of the main points, state by state, over the next few issues.

Owner builder certificate

As of 3 July 2006, the Northern Territory of Australia Building Act prescribes that you must hold an **owner builder certificate** in order to carry on building work of a single dwelling on your own property.

An owner builder certificate is valid for three years, and may be renewed for a further period up to three years.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI)

08 8999 5511, www.dpi.nt.gov.au
Select >Building under Planning, building and land management. Building Advisory Services Branch administers the Building Act and associated Building Regulations. Three statutory bodies assist in administration:

- **Building Practitioners Board**
08 8999 5325
DPI website – select > Building > Building Practitioners Board
Both the **Owner Builder Manual** and the **Application for Owner Builder Certificate** are available as downloads.

- **Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Board**
08 8981 5435; DPI website – select > Electrical licences.

- **Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board**
08 8999 8964; DPI website – select > Plumbers licences.

WorkSafe

1800 019 115, www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

The Owner Builder

Owner building regulations for other states:

#131 NSW, #132 Vic, #133 Qld,
#134 WA, #135 SA, #136 Tas.

To apply for an owner builder certificate, you must provide the following to the Building Practitioners Board:

- A completed declaration stating that you have read and understood the Owner Builder Manual
- A copy of a Land Title Office search
- A completed owner builder certificate application form
- \$200

Building Permit

A **Building Permit** is required before you carry out any construction, renovation or demolition. These are issued by private building certifiers and are valid for two years. You will need to provide them with:

- Owner builder certificate
- Details of the proposed development (including drawings)
- Structural engineer's certification for the structural design
- Certified plumbing design.

The building certifier assesses the application for compliance with the building regulations. They may request modifications and waivers if required.

During construction, the certifier will inspect progress at predetermined Mandatory Notification Stages. The 'Guidelines for Inspections' can be found on the DPI website listed below, under *Building Policies and Guidelines*.

Occupancy Permit

On completion, you will need to sign a declaration stating that the building works have been carried out in accordance with the Building Permit. You can then request an Occupancy Permit from the building certifier, who will only issue the permit if he is satisfied that it is constructed suitable for the use intended.

First Home Owners Grant

If you are an owner builder, the grant will only be paid on completion and you will need to provide the Occupancy Permit.

Tradespersons

There is no occupational licensing of tradespeople in the building industry (except electricians and plumbers) in the Northern Territory. It would be a good idea to obtain references, and to ask whether they belong to any associations or have any qualifications.

Insurance

The current Home Building Certification Fund provides indemnity for most residential building works, for a period of ten years from the date of the Occupancy Permit. This scheme will be replaced by mandatory Home Warranty Insurance towards the end of 2006.

No building work may commence until an **Home Building Certification Fund Owner Builder policy of insurance** is obtained, protecting future owners of the property should the owner builder fail to rectify non-compliant building work. You cannot personally make a claim on this insurance policy.

OH&S

Refer to the Work Health (Occupational Health and Safety) Regulations, in particular Part 11 – Construction Work. You become the accountable person and as such you are responsible for ensuring your sub-contractors comply with minimum safety standards.

You should ensure that you have appropriate workplace and public safety insurance policies in place. ■