



Australian Institute of Building
Submission to the
WA Building Commission –
*Response to the Compliance Report for
General Inspection into Roof Construction in
Western Australia*

Introduction

The Australian Institute of Building (AIB) welcomes the opportunity to lodge a submission to the *Compliance Report to General Inspection into Roof Construction in Western Australia*.

The correct construction of roofs in the residential building sector is a very important component of a residential building project. A strong understanding of the relevant Australian Standards along with competent trade skills to construct a roof is critical to provide consumer confidence in the building industry. Complimentary to this is the need for the roof structure to be inspected and signed off for compliance by a suitably qualified and experienced building professional.

The AIB advocates research into this issue, product conformity of the building process and a thorough and cost-effective inspection and education regime.

Founded in 1951 and granted a Royal Charter in 1969, the Australian Institute of Building (AIB) concerns itself with increasing the professionalism amongst builders. The AIB is the voice of professionally trained and experienced construction managers who number more than 80,000, according to the 2011 census. AIB members hold degree qualifications in building and construction management and work as project managers and in senior levels within construction companies. With a focus on supporting the next generation of building professionals, AIB cooperates with universities to ensure the relevance of undergraduate programs in building disciplines, and assists in improving course curriculums. AIB accredits only the courses of the highest standards.

AIB Objectives

The objectives of the AIB are:

- To promote excellence in the construction of buildings and just and honourable practices in the conduct of business.
- To advance the study of Building and all kindred matters, arts and sciences.
- To encourage the friendly exchange between members of knowledge in practical, technical and ethical subjects.
- To uphold the dignity of the profession of Building and status of the Institute.

Terms of Reference

Building Commission General Inspection Report into the compliance with the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of the Building Code of Australia for sheet metal – clad timber framed roofing in the Perth Metropolitan and South West Regions, with particular reference to:

- a. Roof construction in the residential building industry;
- b. Complaints process to the Building Commission.
- c. Builders.
- d. Other jurisdictions.
- e. Product conformity and suitability to Australian Standards, with particular reference to the effectiveness of:
 - i. policing and enforcement of existing regulations,
 - ii. independent verification and assessment systems,
- f. Any other related matters.

The Key Findings;

The AIB fully acknowledges the Key Findings and supports the findings as noted in points 1 to 7 on page 5 of the Report.

The Recommendations;

The AIB fully endorses the Key Recommendations and supports the recommendations as noted in points 1 to 9 including the relevant sub clauses of the Report.

The AIB has particular concerns over the impact of non-conforming building structures on;

- i. Consumer satisfaction of the industry constructors, fabricators, trades and professional practitioners.**
- ii. Costs passed on to customers, including any insurance and compliance costs.**
- iii. The overall quality of Australian buildings with particular focus on residential buildings.**
- iv. Poorly Trained and Educated Trades and Professionals**
 - The consumer is in many cases encumbered with the pitfalls of poor building practitioner performance.
 - These incidents highlight the need for greater emphasis on education and the need for building inspections at the appropriate time in the building process prior to roof cover.
 - There are a number of reasons why construction quality is an issue, and also product conformity;

These include:

- Poorly trained trades, supervisors, and professional practitioners.
- Poor understanding of the applicable Australian Standards and Codes of Practices
- Time and cost are key drivers in the construction process, and quality often comes third behind these two drivers;
- There is a perception that the cost paid for higher-priced products will not bring value for money;
- There has been a loss of technical resources, as well as delegated responsibility;

The AIB strongly believes that there is a need to provide suitably qualified and experienced trades and building professionals to carry out the required construction and inspections to achieve compliant roof structures is lacking and suitable resources need to be given with a strong focus on education and training sound construction methods.

Licensing & Registration

Persons constructing the construction of residential roofs must have the following minimum requirements;

- Trade Certificate in carpentry & joinery
- Be suitably experienced

Persons supervising the construction of residential roofs must have the following minimum requirements;

- Trade Certificate in carpentry & joinery or
- Min 5 years Trade experience
- Be a Registered Building Practitioner or
- A Registered Builder or
- Be a registered Building Practitioner on the National Building Practitioners Register

Persons inspecting and signing off the construction of residential roofs must have the following minimum requirements;

- Any of those points listed above or
- A degree qualified Chartered Building Professional or
- A degree qualified Building or Design Professional such as
- A Chartered Structural Engineer or
- A Registered Building Inspector

Education

The need for having suitably trained trades and practitioners must be enhanced by mandatory CPD for all licenced and registered practitioner professionals. An annual CPD undertaking is one method to achieve compliance.

Supervisor Work Load

Currently it is an industry norm for supervisors having to supervise up to 30 residential projects at one time these can be up 100 kilometres distant between some projects. The AIB would expect to maintain a reasonable level of management control and compliance each supervisor controls a maximum of 12 residential projects at one time. A suitably documented site diary be maintained at all times which is completed each day the project is inspected.

There is clear evidence that poorly supervised and managed residential projects will have a poor level of acceptable finish and compliance.

Additional Comments

The AIB is also of the view that Australia needs a national building compliance office, similar to CASA for aircraft. The governing body overseeing the new office should have representatives from industry, the professions, and regulators. A program should be established that establishes an office for construction compliance, perhaps called the 'Australian Building & Construction Compliance Office' (ABCCO), which would aim to ensure compliance of, and improve standards of, both workmanship and products. The ABCCO would be representative of the industry, profession and regulators and funded to develop and manage a compliance testing process to ensure building materials of consequence, assessed by an agreed risk assessment, are compliant with Australian Standards. AIB advocates that significant funding in the order of \$10 million of federal funding over three years would be required to commence a program that establishes an office for construction compliance, to be known as the Australian Building and Construction Compliance Office.

The AIB's position is that greater professionalism is critical in reducing the use of non-conforming building products in the building and construction industry. In terms of the education levels of construction managers, federal and state governments need to legislate higher educational standards to ensure that they have the necessary skills to manage large scale projects, and the associated quality control aspects. Higher educational standards and quality control skills are also important for tradespersons working in the building and construction industry.

The AIB administers the National Building Professionals Register (NBPR), which allows those registered to use the title 'Chartered Builder' after their name. AIB full members can use the title 'Chartered Building Professional'. AIB requires its members to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to retain AIB membership, and the ability to use these titles, with those on the NBPR also required demonstrate the requisite insurances and financial position.

AIB emphasises that federal and state governments should legislate that only suitably qualified and experienced construction managers, as assessed by the professional association, should be allowed to manage large scale commercial, infrastructure and residential projects, and that only those that are tertiary-qualified in a construction management degree should be allowed by law to refer to themselves as a 'construction manager', just as 'engineer' and 'architect' are protected professional titles in most states. This would curtail the situation of many construction companies growing exponentially with directors lacking quality control skills or simply the education, and

allowed, unchecked to manage large scale projects to their own, the profession's and the public's detriment.

End of Submission

Further Information

For further information, please contact the AIB Chief Executive Officer, Mr Robert Hunt (02) 6247 7433 or ceo@aib.or.au

Submission lodged on 19 August 2015.

Appendix 1

Further information about the AIB

Founded in 1951, the Australian Institute of Building (AIB) is the peak body for building and construction professionals in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, acknowledged for its ability to bring individuals together who share a common interest in improving the standing of the building profession and their career within Australia and overseas.

The AIB was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1969, and as such members who meet the requirements are entitled to be referred to as 'Chartered Builder'.

Recognised as the accrediting body for building and construction degrees at educational institutions, the AIB has a long and proud history of supporting and servicing the building profession. For more than sixty years, the Institute has worked with the building and construction industry, government, universities and allied stakeholders to promote the building profession, support the development of university courses in building and construction whilst promoting the use of innovative building techniques and a best-practice regulatory environment.

The AIB's membership comprises some 2500 professional qualified and experience construction managers employed at senior levels by all major construction companies in Australia. The AIB represents the interest of some 85,000 qualified construction managers in Australian (2011 Census).

AIB is proud of its role in promoting the exchange of information amongst individuals and accomplishes this through publications including the *Construct* magazine and the Australasian Journal of Construction Economics & Building (AJCEB).

The AIB also has an extensive continuing professional development program in Australia and overseas and facilitates the annual AIB Professional Excellence in Building Awards Program.

For further information please go to www.aib.org.au