

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Maley to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics:

Building Reform and Planning Matters

Questions:

- 1. How will the proposed Building Reforms 2021 protect Territorians from construction defects such as those seen in recent years, in a number of Darwin apartment buildings?**

The NTG is progressing priority building reforms to restore confidence in the local building industry whilst ensuring safety and amenity meets community expectations.

Priority key reform areas in the NT are:

- Establishing a framework for continuing professional development for building practitioners

The proposal is to establish a mandatory scheme that will include delivery of professional development on National Construction Code requirements and Territory building regulations for registered building practitioners. The scheme would ensure that those practitioners undertake the required level of professional development prior to the renewal of their two yearly registration. Through this reform, the public and industry would have confidence that registered practitioners are continually expanding their knowledge and skills, staying up to date with building standards and regulation, and meeting community expectations of safety and amenity.

- Creating a new category of registration for commercial builders

A new category of registration will ensure commercial builders have the appropriate qualifications and experience to build specific buildings, giving confidence to consumers and the reinforcing trust in the local building industry.

- Establishing a third-party peer review of the structural design of complex buildings – including buildings above three storeys

Introducing third party reviews for the structural design of complex buildings would mean that any proposed building of medium building complexity or higher (e.g. a residential building of three or more storeys) would be required to have its structural design reviewed by a qualified independent reviewer before a building permit can be issued by a building certifier.

Under this reform any design issues would be identified and rectified earlier in the process, resulting in more robust, transparent and independent reviews of building designs, enhancing public confidence in the building industry and the resulting building.

Other reforms the NT Government is implementing are:

- Increasing the capacity to undertake physical audits on residential and non-residential buildings. Site inspections and spot audits will increase compliance with the relevant codes and standards.
- Increasing civil penalties for disciplinary action taken by the Building Practitioners Board to encourage practitioners to design and build to the relevant codes and standards.

**2. What is the timeline for the Mandorah Marine Facility tender and expected date for construction to commence?
What is the budget for this project?**

It is anticipated a design and construct tender will be released in late 2021, with an anticipated 2022 dry season commencement. The budget is \$50 million.

3. When will plans for the Katherine Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route come off the shelf?

The Katherine Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route planning project aimed to identify a corridor for the future management of heavy vehicles in the longer term (20+ years) around Katherine.

The preferred route has been identified and the decision was reached by rigorous assessment against the objectives of the project, feedback obtained from the Katherine community and key stakeholders, as well as technical and financial data.

DIPL released the preferred route to the Katherine community in December 2016 and held information sessions as part of the third round of consultation, which closed on 3 March 2017 and the report was finalised in April 2019.

The need to construct the Katherine Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route alignment depends on a number of factors including industrial and mining development in the region, corresponding increase in heavy vehicle traffic growth, and vulnerability of the existing Katherine River Bridge in terms of flood immunity and load bearing capacity. Based on this, the current time for construction is long term (20+ years) and can change if any of the dependent factors change.

The full project can also be delivered in stages, where each stage will enhance transport and safety benefits to the Katherine community.

4. Please provide an update on the work undertaken to secure land for the alternate Katherine Heavy Vehicle route.

The next step to secure the land is to include the preferred route corridor in the Katherine Land Use Plan for future preservation and construction. This is vital from long term planning perspective as this gives certainty to landowners to plan their development. This is expected to occur in 2021. There are no plans to acquire any land at this point in time.