

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

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

Changes to Builders Registration

Earlier this year, your Government announced its intention to make university qualifications a condition of obtaining commercial building registration.

Questions:

1. Why has this change been included in the proposed building reform?
2. Do you accept that this proposal will exclude builders with many years of experience?
3. Industry is critical of these changes and your poor consultation. Have you already made up your mind despite these concerns?
4. Why wouldn't your government recognize the more traditional apprenticeship training model rather than the select few who have a university degree?
5. What evidence does government have that a university degree should be required for those who want to register a commercial building business?
6. When do you intend enforcing this new requirement on industry?

Response to Questions 1 – 6:

The Territory Government is prioritising reforms to building regulations to give our community even greater confidence in the local building industry.

One of the key changes within the building reform agenda is creating new categories of registration for commercial builders.

Under this reform, builders who construct buildings such as offices, shops, warehouses and car parks in the Northern Territory will need to be registered. These buildings often attract a higher level of risk. Currently builders who construct high rise residential apartments require registration but builders who construct office towers and/or shopping centres do not.

Registration ensures builders have the appropriate qualifications and experience to build specific buildings, giving confidence to consumers and reinforcing trust in the local building industry.

Feedback received from industry consultation in March 2021 was reviewed by the Building Advisory Committee and considered in developing the two models presented by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for further consultation. The Committee is made up of representatives from industry groups including Master Builders Northern Territory.

Forums were held in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek to provide an overview on the two registration options. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Logistics wrote to all industry groups and registered builders with the details of the consultation and held briefings with interested groups.

A total of 28 written submissions were received during consultation.

Key points of the two options for building contractor registration are:

- categories for commercial contractors will complement registration that is already required for residential contractors;
- registration options allow for trades to contribute to the building industry;
- existing builders will be able to transition into registration through 'grandfathering' based on their building experience and will not be required to obtain a qualification; and
- the introduction of registration for commercial builders will bring the Territory in line with other states and territories as part of the National Registration Framework for Building Practitioners and will facilitate automatic mutual recognition across Australia.

For Option 1 the qualification requirements for registration are:

- residential - Certificate IV in Building and Construction;
- levels 2 and 3 Commercial - Diploma of Building and Construction (Building); and
- level 1 Commercial – Diploma of Building and Construction (Building) and Advanced Diploma of Building and Construction Management, or Bachelor of Construction management or equivalent.

For Option 2 the qualification requirements for registration are:

- residential - Certificate IV in Building and Construction;
- levels 2 Commercial – Certificate IV in Building and Construction; and

- level 1 Commercial – Diploma of Building and Construction (Building).

Hence, a university degree is not required under any option.

The Territory Government values our experienced and qualified commercial builders and we need them to keep building the Territory and driving our comeback.

Under the proposed reform options, existing qualified builders will NOT need to gain additional qualifications and will simply need to transition their registration – this won't be difficult and will underpin confidence in the industry.

Submissions received during consultation are being considered and I look forward to making some announcements in the near future.