

About Accredited Certifiers

What does an Accredited Certifier do?

An Accredited Certifier is a building professional, who, depending on their type of accreditation, can act as a Principal Certifying Authority (building inspection role) and/or can issue Part 4 and 4A certificates under the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979 (issue Complying Development Certificates, Construction Certificates, Strata Certificates and Occupation Certificates for projects).

If you are planning to carry out building work or subdivide land you may be required, under state legislation, to obtain approvals and be issued with particular certificates.

To obtain approvals and receive the appropriate certificates you can choose to appoint either an Accredited Certifier working in private practice or an Accredited Certifier working in the local council.

The range of certificates includes:

- Complying development certificates - authorising building or subdivision work where a Development Consent is not required
- Construction certificates - authorising building or subdivision work where a Development Consent is required
- Occupation certificates - permitting the occupation or use of a building
- Subdivision certificates - allowing a strata subdivision to be registered by the Department of Lands
- Strata certificates - allowing a subdivision to be registered by the Department of Lands

Not all Accredited Certifiers can issue all of these certificates. Depending on their qualifications and level of accreditation, some Accredited Certifiers can only issue certain certificates.

When appointing an Accredited Certifier it is important that you check that they can issue the type of certificate you need.

What an Accredited Certifier doesn't do

What an Accredited Certifier is permitted and required to do is legislated by government. It is important that the distinction between the role and responsibility of the Accredited Certifier and the builder are understood. An Accredited Certifier does not do the following:

- Supervise the building work
- Attend site all the time, (In fact an Accredited Certifier acting as a Principal Certifying Authority is generally only on site for less than 0.5% of the total building time).
- Act as a clerk of works on the project
- Carry out the quality control function for the project.
- Draw the plans or write the specifications for any part of the project

It is not the Accredited Certifier's role to check that the builder or developer has complied with every aspect of the project. Building construction and the quality of the work is the responsibility of the project manager or the builder and it is best managed by these people.

Who appoints an Accredited Certifier?

According to the legislation, Accredited Certifiers are contracted and engaged only by the person with the benefit of development consent (ie the Owner).

Furthermore:

- It is the Owner's choice who they engage as a certifier.
- The builder is not allowed to appoint the Accredited Certifier nor the Principal Certifying Authority.
- The builder cannot do this for the owner,
- The owner is not obliged to engage a certifier suggested by the builder.

It's important to note that the same rules apply to all Accredited Certifiers, whether they are employed in a Council or by a private company.

Accredited Certifier contracts and fees

Before the Accredited Certifier does any certification work for a person, the Accredited Certifier must have a written and signed contract with the person. As detailed in the Building Professionals Regulation 2007, the contract must specify the scope of work and the payment, which must be paid on or before the lodgement of the application for building approval. This upfront payment ensures the Accredited Certifier or Principal Certifying Authority cannot be pressured to issue approvals or certificates by a certain date, nor issue without the requisite information.

Members of the Association of Accredited Certifiers (AAC) commit to abide by the AAC's code of conduct and demonstrate the AAC's values, providing clients with a high level of service and professional standards.