

## FACT SHEET

# NT Government Taskforce Report on Outstanding Building Permits for Government Owned and Leased Buildings

### Background

- An NT Government Taskforce was formed in March 2009 to audit government owned and leased buildings to identify outstanding building permits and commence a program to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy (CoOC) for each identified property.
- The Taskforce has now provided the report and will regularly report to government on the strategic program of rectification works to be undertaken.
- The Taskforce will ensure all government owned and leased assets have processes in place to comply with the *Building Act*.

### Taskforce Report on Government Building Certification

- The Taskforce has delivered its first report outlining what work needs to be done to finalise certification for government buildings. Action has begun to ensure all government owned and leased buildings across the Territory are certified by mid 2010.
- At the time of compiling this Taskforce report the number of outstanding CoOCs for the public sector since 1964 was 2,074, with approximately 75% occurring prior to 2001.
- Work undertaken as part of Phase 2 since compiling this Taskforce report has resulted in further CoOCs finalised or resolved , bringing the total number outstanding as at 26 August 2009 to 2,015.
- The Taskforce report found that 28% of government buildings require some form of certification work and this is consistent and comparable to that of the private sector.
- Historically this level is not high and this has been a longstanding issue in the Territory with some outstanding CoOC dating back to the 1960's with 75% of these of these outstanding CoOC were for the period prior to 2001 and 38 % occurred during the 1980's when there were high levels of building activity.
- Over half of the outstanding certifications relate to non-habitable buildings/ structures such as sheds, carports and fences, and office building fit-outs and alterations.
- This long term problem has been recognised and is being resolved through measures undertaken by the agencies represented on the Taskforce.

## Certificate of Occupancy

- A CoOC is issued by a registered building certifier in respect to building work which has been carried out in accordance with the building permit granted in respect of that building work.
- A CoOC is only one element to ensuring that buildings are safe and minimise risk to the public - lack of a certificate does not imply that the building is unsafe.
- Regular and ongoing building maintenance programs are required to ensure buildings are maintained and structurally sound.

## Reasons for outstanding Certificates of Occupancy

It has been identified that a large number of outstanding CoOC issues relate to:

- Works certified with CoOC on agency files but not registered with BAS.
- Works identified by building certifier completed; final inspection not undertaken.
- Works identified by building certifier not undertaken.
- No CoOC sought.
- CoOC submitted but not registered in the system.

These issues will be resolved through the work of agencies participating in the Taskforce.

## Achievements to date

- A baseline has now been established for outstanding CoOC relating to government owned and leased buildings.
- Work to resolve issues and tighten up systems has begun to address long term management of the issue and all departments will ensure future compliance issues are met for new and completed works.
- Work has begun on Phase 2 which will address priorities and engage certifiers to complete outstanding CoOCs.

Key actions completed during the term of the taskforce include:

- 105 Reserved permits cancelled in the ILIS system
- 46 superseded permits cancelled
- 23 CoOC registered
- Database developed to manage outstanding CoOCs
- Additional staff recruited to assist departments and source files and information
- Introduction of new protocols to ensure CoOC obtained before project sign off
- Leasing processes to include securing CoOC from landowners.

## Next Steps

- New systems and processes are being put in place to certify all government buildings and ensure that this continues into the future.
- A subsidy scheme has been introduced to assist non government building owners in regional and remote areas obtain building certification during the moratorium period that will remain in place until June 2011.
- NT Government is working with the building certification industry to address the issues that exist and ensure we create sustainable certification processes across the Territory.
- For more information on building certification, the moratorium and subsidy, visit [www.nt.gov.au/buildingmoratorium](http://www.nt.gov.au/buildingmoratorium) or call 8999 8965.