

# Fact Sheet

## Finalisation of a building approval (residential)

### Do I need a final certificate if I'm selling my home?

Property owners may not be aware that their dwelling has not had a final inspection. It is only at the point of selling their property that this information comes to light.

It is not unlawful to occupy a dwelling without a final inspection, but it may be a deterrent to purchasers.

This fact sheet is for residents to understand what is needed to obtain a final certificate.

### When can Council issue a Final Inspection

Before the introduction of private certification in April 1998, Councils granted building approvals.

The responsibility to issue approvals since April 1998 has belonged to *Private Building Certifiers*.

Council *may* be able to finalise a building approval issued between 1983 and April 1998, however this depends on many factors.

Firstly, it is most important that the structure has not been altered from the original approval. Any changes (including structural) will need a new building approval.

If Council does not have plans, inspection records, documentation, or relevant certificates, then a final certificate will not

be able to be issued, and a Private Certifier may be required.

Property owners will need to give these documents and certificates to Council for a final inspection to take place.

This is to ensure any occupants of the building or structure will be safe.



The following aspects may present a danger to the occupants of a dwelling, and need certification by a licensed person:

- Waterproofing of bathrooms and wet areas
- Termite protection
- Hard-wired smoke detectors
- Glazing certificates for windows and shower screens to ensure they meet the required standards
- Framing inspections

Other certificates will be required if there are outstanding inspections. These may include:

- Certificates from a Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ Engineer) for the footings, slab, frame, and retaining walls
- Plumbing and Drainage Final



## When can I make an application for a Final Inspection?

For existing pre-April 1998 Council approvals, applications can be made for a building and/or plumbing and drainage final inspection with Council. The Register of Cost-Recovery Fees and Other Charges is available on Council's [website](#).

Before Council inspects the property, written authority from the current property owner is needed.

When all relevant information is received, Council Officers will assess and if satisfactory, they can inspect to make sure the completed building and structure meets the existing approval requirements.

Private Certifiers are generally responsible for finalising building approvals post-April 1998. Council keeps records of building approvals which may be accessed via a paid search process.



If the building and plumbing inspections are passed and we have received all the relevant paperwork including certificates, we can issue a certificate of final inspection - for a residential (class 1 and class 10) building.

## Owner's responsibilities

Property owners should check applications and approvals statuses for their property. This information is generally available on Council's [PD Hub](#).



## More Information

Phone: 3412 3412

Email: [council@logan.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@logan.qld.gov.au)

Website: [www.logan.qld.gov.au](http://www.logan.qld.gov.au)

## Common scenario - obtaining a building final

Property owners contact Council all the time requesting help with a final certificate.

Jim has signed a contract to buy a property in the City of Logan. Jim requests a building search to ensure the dwelling on the property has approvals in place.

The report shows an application to construct the dwelling was approved. It does not show the final inspection took place.

There is no supporting documentation such as waterproofing, termite or glazing Certificates.

In Queensland, you can occupy a dwelling without a final certificate. Though Council recommends you gain a final certificate before occupation.

As Local governments no longer grant building approvals for new or existing dwellings. The owner needs to engage a building certifier to approve the dwelling.

Now, this is where things get complicated for Jim. He can do any of the following things:

- Choose to buy the property without a building final.
- Request the current owner get a building final for the dwelling.
- Make his own inquiries with a building certifier.

Property owners are disappointed when told Council does not have records of inspections. The certifier is responsible to provide the paperwork to Council. This does not always take place.

The certifier handles the approval process. Once the certifier is happy and have confirmed all is in order, may approve the final inspection.

If the house is new, or the private certifier is known, you can make contact and request they carry out the final inspection.

On older homes this may not be possible, and a new certifier will be required.

Gaining a retrospective building final can be complex and costly. The new certifier will need supporting documentation to issue a final certificate.

Council is unable to approve a retrospective building final, when no documentation is available.

The property owner or the buyer will need to use a private building certifier to undertake this task.

### Outcome

In this case, Jim chose to engage a private building certifier to get a final for the dwelling on the property.

Jim needed waterproofing and glazing certificates for the certifier.

Jim had to remove the tiles to reseal the bathroom and replace the windows on the dwelling. Jim's total cost with the certifier fees was approximately \$12,000.