

Planning And Regulatory.G Douglass.GD
Reference: 5057822
Phone: 02 4974 2728

19 December 2014

Dr Gabrielle Wallace
NSW Building Professionals Board
PO Box 3720
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Dr Wallace

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR CATEGORY A5 PORT CERTIFIERS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed criteria for Category A5 Port Certifiers. Officers in my Service Unit at the City of Newcastle have been involved in processing complying development certificates for the Port of Newcastle under the Three Ports SEPP.

I am concerned about the move to limit accreditation for Port related complying development certification work to NPER engineers only, including the matching of a particular branch of engineering to a particular type of Port development. I find the inclusion of chemical engineers and, to a lesser extent, mechanical engineers, somewhat perplexing. It is not clear why it is necessary to exclude Building Surveyors entirely from the proposed Category A5.

While I acknowledge that the engineering qualifications specified in the proposed criteria are at least partly relevant to the design of the structures to which they have been matched, the linking of design expertise to the certification regime has not previously been such a prominent feature of the accreditation scheme. I question the basis for proposing that the certification of a bulk liquid storage tank be the exclusive domain of a chemical engineer. I also question why the demolition of Port structures would become the exclusive domain of persons with engineering qualifications.

The linking of engineering qualifications to Port development seems to suggest that the engineering expertise of a certifier would be applied to the assessment of aspects of development that fall outside of the actual assessment criteria for the relevant development types under the Three Ports SEPP. Given that councils could not justify the employment of persons with the range of engineering qualifications proposed in the draft accreditation scheme, a perception would be created that Council staff (principally Building Surveyors) who do process Port related CDCs for work that is not classifiable under the Building Code of Australia are under qualified and/or not competent to perform the work.

In summary, I am not convinced of the merits of excluding Building Surveyors from the proposed Category A5, in favour of Engineers, given that Building Surveyors continue to have the most experience in applying the State's certification regime.

On a positive note, I believe that the identification of development categories in the Three Ports SEPP, to which the proposed A5 category will apply, will limit the ability

of building certifiers to assign an arbitrary classification under the Building Code of Australia, providing much needed clarity in this regard.

Should you require any further information, please contact me on telephone 4974 2728.

Yours faithfully

Geoffrey Douglass
ACTING MANAGER DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING