Discussion paper

Accreditation of council certifiers

June 2004
Foreword

Certification of building and engineering works plays a critical part in ensuring that these works are safe and comply with accepted standards.

Accreditation of private certifiers has taken place in NSW since 1998. Accreditation of council staff will be new. Accreditation will ensure that minimum standards of technical competence apply to council certification officers so that they can perform their role in a way that meets with community needs.

The purpose of this paper is to develop proposals on how to accredit council staff involved in certifying development under the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

I urge you to consider the proposals in the discussion paper. Your input will help in the design of an effective accreditation framework for councils. I hope that you will take the opportunity to play a role in the Government’s consideration of this important matter.

Dianne Beamer
Minister for Juvenile Justice
Minister for Western Sydney
Minister Assisting the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
(Planning Administration)
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix 1. Private and council certifiers in NSW</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Assumptions about council accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Summary of options for transitional accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certifiers play a critical part in the building regulatory system. They ensure that building and engineering works conform to relevant regulations, standards and codes. They approve construction certificates, compliance certificates, occupation certificates, subdivision certificates, strata or complying development certificates or conduct inspections of buildings during the critical stages of their construction under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

At present, private certifiers must be accredited under an accreditation scheme authorised by the NSW Government. This accreditation specifies the certification work certifiers are authorised to do. Accreditation is based on the individuals’ experience and qualifications and is dependent on the individual undertaking continuous professional education and holding the required insurance.

No such system exists for council certifiers. Accrediting council certifiers based on their technical competence will ensure that minimum standards are set for all certifiers whether they are employed by a council or in the private sector. This is in the interests of consumer protection. It will help to ensure that all certifiers are accountable and competent and that building regulations, standards and codes are enforced.

Accreditation of council certifiers will be undertaken by State Government through the Building Professionals Board which is currently operating in the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR).

Accreditation of council certification staff will mean major change for local councils. To ensure that this change does not have major adverse impacts on certification services to the community, and in view of the vital part that councils play in certification throughout the state, the system for accreditation of council certifiers needs to be carefully designed.

To ensure that this change occurs with least disruption to building activity and community services, three major assumptions have been made about accreditation of council staff:

- Councils cannot refuse to be the certifying authority or principal certifying authority for a development within the council area.
- Council as a body will be the certifying authority or principal certifying authority rather than the individual council officer.
- There will be phasing-in of accreditation of council certification staff (transitional accreditation).

DIPNR is inviting your comments on four issues on accreditation. Underlying the assessment of the options is the need to:

- balance consumer protection against the costs of accreditation to the community
- ensure a minimum availability of certification services throughout NSW given the current undersupply of certifiers.

Accreditation will have the important consequence of raising professional standards and improving building outcomes; but it could reduce the supply of certifiers able to do certain work and it could increase costs to councils and communities.
The four issues and options were developed in consultation with representatives of local government, and professional associations who currently accredit certifiers. These issues are outlined below.

Summary of issues and options

**Issue 1.**
**How should council certification staff be accredited?**

**Option A.**
Similar system and consistent criteria for private and council certifiers including annual assessment of certifiers (‘level playing field’)

**Advantages:**
- level playing field between private and council certifiers
- greater assurance to consumers about the quality of council services

**Disadvantages:**
- potential for some costs to be borne by State Government and councils
- may reduce supply of council certification services

**Option B.**
Different system for council officers – for instance like Ordinance 4, *Local Government Act 1919*

**Advantages:**
- may cost less for councils and communities in long run
- councils retain flexibility to decide what their staff work on

**Disadvantages:**
- could mean lower standard for local government certification than for private certifiers and potentially lower quality building outcomes
**Issue 2. Who should be accredited?**

**Option A.**
Accredite all staff (permanent and contracted) who approve Part 4A certificates, strata or complying development certificates or who undertake mandatory critical stage inspections of buildings under the EP&A Act.

**Advantages:**
- Level playing field between private and council certifiers
- Councils retain flexibility to decide staff numbers and tenure and to allow unaccredited staff to be supervised by accredited officers

**Disadvantages:**
- No consistent criteria on qualifications and experience for assessment officers

**Option B**
Accredite all those identified in option A and assessment officers i.e. staff who provide professional advice or prepare reports on applications for Part 4A certificates, strata or complying development certificates but do not approve these certificates.

**Advantages:**
- Potentially better consumer protection and quality assurance
- Assessment officers benefit from aspects of accreditation such as CPD and codes of conduct

**Disadvantages:**
- Increased costs for council and community and could reduce the supply of experienced certifiers
- May discourage new entrants to certification because accreditation is required
Issue 3.  
How should transitional accreditation work?

Option A.  
Transitional accreditation time limit but grades apply

Option B.  
Transitional accreditation time limit and no grades

Advantages (options A and B):
- Time limits deliver the benefits of full accreditation faster

Disadvantages (options A and B):
- May reduce supply of council certifiers in short and medium term

Option C.  
No transitional accreditation time limit but grades apply

Option D.  
No transitional accreditation time limit and no grades

Advantages (options C and D):
- Grading limits staff to work within their existing level of experience

Disadvantages (options C and D):
- Potentially limits the work that councils can do.

Mandatory CPD would help ensure that those with transitional accreditation are kept up to date with developments in their area of practice. However, mandatory CPD would increase costs for councils and the community.

Comments are also invited on whether continuing professional development should be mandatory during transitional accreditation.

Issue 4.  
What should qualify as continuing professional development?

Options include face-to-face courses, membership to professional associations, council in-house courses.

Issues include the mix and type of courses accepted as CPD. Comments are invited on CPD courses and activities for council officers.
How to have your say

We welcome your comments on the discussion paper. Please send your comments by ***July*** to:

Director
Building Professionals Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
GPO Box 3927 Sydney NSW 2001

Email: bpb@dipnr.nsw.gov.au
Fax: 02 9762 8720
1 Background

1.1 Certification – how it works

Before 1998 only councils certified whether proposed works, mostly building and engineering works, would conform to established standards, regulations and approved plans. In 1998 the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) was amended. This enabled private sector professionals to do the same work, provided that they had appropriate authorisation. This provided consumers with some choice on certification.

Now, both private certifiers and councils can approve:

- construction certificates
- complying development certificates
- compliance certificates
- occupation certificates
- subdivision certificates
- strata certificates.

Private certifiers and councils can also undertake the functions of a principal certifying authority (PCA) for a development. PCAs oversee the construction or subdivision process to ensure they meet with regulatory requirements. The specific roles and responsibilities of the PCA are set down in section 109E of the EP&A Act.

Recent amendments to the EP&A Act require that councils and accredited certifiers conduct inspections of buildings during the critical stages of their construction (see section 109E(3)(d) of the Act and clause 162A of the EP&A Regulation 2000).

1.2 How does accreditation work now?

Private certifiers must be accredited under an authorised accreditation scheme to approve the issuing of specific certificates, conduct critical stage inspections, or act as the PCA for a development. Private certifiers undergo interviews and must meet qualification and experience requirements set by the relevant accreditation scheme. Their accreditation is restricted to particular types of work according to their competence. Accreditation is also dependent on certifiers undergoing continuing professional development to keep their skills up to date. Private certifiers need to hold the required professional indemnity insurance. Accreditation must be renewed annually.

The responsibility for implementing the existing system of accreditation is presently shared between the NSW Government and the professional associations. Professional associations are authorised as accreditation bodies under the EP&A Act by either the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and the Minister for Natural Resources or the Minister Assisting the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Planning Administration).

Accreditation bodies run schemes which set the required levels of education and experience, codes of conduct, insurance, complaints management procedures and ongoing professional development. Currently, there are four accreditation schemes for private certifiers. The majority of private certifiers are building surveyors or engineers. Other accredited certifiers are land surveyors and town planners (see Appendix 1).
2 The future

2.1 Inquiry into the quality of buildings

The idea of creating a government accreditation body for building professionals came about most recently as a response to the Joint Select Committee on the Quality of Buildings chaired by the Hon. David Campbell, MP (2002), known as the Campbell Inquiry.

The inquiry expressed concerns about the adequacy of checks and balances in the regulation of the building construction process. Significant changes to the system were recommended, including that private and council certifiers be subject to the same licensing and auditing system.

The proposals in this paper are a response to those concerns.

‘The building regulation system should rely on three core pillars. These are responsibility, accountability and liability.’
David Campbell MP, Chairman Joint Select Committee on the Quality of Buildings, Report Upon the Quality of Buildings, July 2002, p.ii.

2.2 Functions of the Building Professionals Board

The Building Professionals Board (BPB) was initially established in January 2004 as a Branch in the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR). At present, DIPNR accredits private certifiers under the Building Surveyors and Allied Professions Scheme, investigates complaints, and audits the operation of private certifiers.

DIPNR recently gained the power to audit the work and activities of councils in their capacity as certifying authorities.

It is envisaged that in 2005 the BPB will be set up to be the single accreditation body for all certifiers whether employed within local government or the private sector.

In summary, it is proposed that the Government will:

- accredit certifiers, both private and council employed
- specify the minimum levels of qualifications and experience necessary for accreditation
- develop and maintain a code of conduct for certifiers
- investigate complaints against any certifiers
- undertake audits of all certifiers
- develop and implement continuing professional development courses
- provide advice to the Government and the community on the performance of certifiers against the BPB’s requirements.
2.3 Why council certification staff should be accredited

Even though councils carry out the same functions as private certifiers, the vast majority of council officers are not accredited – their qualifications and experience are not regularly checked in the way that those of private certifiers are and there is no requirement for continuing professional development.

Accreditation would set a minimum standard for council certifiers on matters of technical competence. Together with complaints investigation mechanisms and auditing of council certifiers, these processes will institute a preventative approach to building and subdivision problems. Action could be taken against any inappropriate practices and, where necessary, some certifiers could be subject to disciplinary action. All this will mean better service for consumers and greater consumer protection.

In summary, accreditation of council and private certifiers will help to ensure:

- that all certifiers are appropriately qualified, competent and experienced to meet community needs
- the enforcement of building regulations, standards and codes
- the accountability of certifiers
- consumer protection.

2.4 How accreditation will work

Accreditation will be mandatory for certifiers covered by the BPB. Accreditation will be granted only if specified criteria are met. Private certifiers must meet criteria on technical competence, satisfaction of codes of professional conduct, possession of required insurance cover, and undertaking required continuing professional development. Initial accreditation as a private certifier also generally involves an interview process. Accreditation must be renewed annually.

Specific criteria for the accreditation of council officers are yet to be developed. However, council certification staff will have to submit an application for accreditation to the BPB, which will assess applications.

Three basic assumptions have been made about the role of councils in the certification system and about how accreditation will be introduced. The assumptions and the underlying rationale for these assumptions are discussed below.
Table 1: Assumptions about council accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption 1.</th>
<th>Councils cannot refuse to be the certifying authority or principal certifying authority for a development within the council area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>It is important that communities have the option of using local certification services. Most private certifiers work in metropolitan areas. If councils were allowed to opt out of certification work some areas of the State could be left with little or no local certification service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption 2.</th>
<th>Council as a body will be the certifying authority or principal certifying authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>This system ensures that the individual certifier is competent and accountable (council and/or the individual can be investigated). The public has certainty as to responsibility for certification – this largely remains with the council. Records of certification work undertaken by individual accredited certifiers remain with council in its capacity as the principal certifying authority or certifying council authority when an individual certifier leaves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption 3.</th>
<th>Phasing in of accreditation of council certification staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Some councils already find it difficult to attract qualified staff. Given the current shortage of certifiers such as building surveyors, immediately requiring council staff to meet the full accreditation standards set for private certifiers could lead to an immediate reduction in council services. This would significantly disadvantage some communities, especially where there are few or no private certifiers to meet demand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Discussion issues

3.1 How should council certification staff be accredited?

**Option A: Similar system for council certification staff and private certifiers ('level playing field')**

The Campbell Inquiry recommended creating a 'level playing field' between council and private certifiers. Council staff who perform the same functions as private certifiers should also have to be accredited and investigated so that their competence is on a par with private certifiers who undertake similar work. This will give the community greater assurance on the quality of council certification.

It is intended that the BPB will establish consistent benchmarks for competencies, insurance requirements, codes of conduct, and auditing and complaints investigation for private certifiers. It seems fair and equitable that most of these requirements also extend to council staff that perform certification functions.

The key area proposed for consistency between private and council certifiers is technical competence. It is open to debate on whether it is practical or desirable to have a level playing field between council officers and private certifiers on some other aspects of certification. For instance, it is proposed that council staff be covered by council’s general insurance policy rather than needing to take out their own professional indemnity insurance as is required for private certifiers. Requiring council staff to be personally liable for their work would be a significant disincentive to working for a council.

**Advantages**

Creating a level playing field of technical competence between private and council certifiers will mean common standards apply to certifiers whether consumers choose to use a private sector professional or a council for the work. There will be consistent mechanisms for complaints and auditing creating clearer mechanisms for members of the public who have complaints against council certification.

**Disadvantages**

Accreditation processes similar to private certifiers may be more expensive and administratively complex for the State Government to run. Costs to councils may be borne by communities. These costs could include the renewal of accreditation each year and training of council officers to meet with accreditation requirements. This approach relies on a good supply of certification professionals – the BPB may restrict or remove individuals’ authorisation to practice if they are not competent for their proposed area of work.
Option B: Different system of accreditation for local government

Some councils have argued that councils are inherently more accountable to the public than private certifiers given the range of community services and infrastructure they provide. Accordingly, many councils have a range of checks and balances built into their procedures. On this basis a different system of accreditation may be a reasonable proposition.

Before 1993, building surveyors working for councils had to hold a certificate issued by the NSW Department of Local Government. Certificates were issued based on professional qualifications and experience under Ordinance 4 of the Local Government Act 1919. A range of local government professionals were required to be assessed under Ordinance 4 in order to practice in local government. At this time, there were no private certifiers or accreditation schemes for certifiers.

A similar system could be established to require council staff to have basic qualifications in their area of certification, for instance building surveying. This could be a one-off assessment by the State Government of the qualifications and experience of each council certifier.

Advantages

Costs to councils and communities may be lower in the long run. This option provides more flexibility for councils on how to use staff as each council decides on the suitability of their officers for specific work rather than this being decided through the State Government accreditation process.

Disadvantages

This would mean a less rigorous system of accreditation than exists for private certifiers leading to potentially lower quality building outcomes for most communities. Principal certifying authorities have a range of responsibilities over and above those of the professions from which certifiers are drawn. Consequently, a qualification in engineering, for instance, without other forms of training and experience directly relevant to certification, may be inadequate to undertake the role of a principal certifying authority.
3.2 Who should be accredited?

**Option A: Accredit all staff who undertake functions equivalent to accredited private certifiers**

Accreditation could be required for all council staff (whether permanent or contracted) who approve Part 4A certificates, complying development or strata certificates or who undertake mandatory critical stage inspections of buildings under the EP&A Act. The person approving these certificates or conducting inspections would need to be appropriately qualified. This is the situation now for accredited private certifiers.

**Advantages**

This approach guarantees a minimum supply of certification services for consumers at a local level. Councils would still have the flexibility to decide how to hire staff (permanent, casual, pooled between councils, or combination of these), and how many staff they need to have accredited to achieve required outcomes, without any State Government prescription about staff tenure and numbers. If the council does not have a certifier on staff who is accredited to issue particular certificates (for instance those involving alternative solutions under the Building Code of Australia), or if a small council employs only one accredited certifier who happens to be on leave, then the council can still contract out this work to an appropriately qualified accredited certifier. This could encourage a regional approach to certification and potential cost saving to councils and the community. For instance, councils could use a regional certification service jointly paid for by the councils.

This system would allow accredited council officers to rely on the assessment work of an unaccredited officer within council or someone appointed on a short term basis by council. It could also encourage councils to hire trainee staff who can be mentored by more senior staff. However, the accredited officer takes responsibility for approving the certificate, and, if there is a complaint about the issuing of that certificate, the accredited officer would be the person investigated.

**Disadvantages**

No consistent criteria on qualifications and experience are set for officers doing assessment work yet these officers may be doing the bulk of certification duties.
Option B: Extend accreditation to officers involved in assessment work

Rather than limiting accreditation to those approving certificates under the EP&A Act, accreditation could also apply to all people assessing work for certification (in addition to those who conduct mandatory critical stage inspections). Many officers in councils who give final approval to certificates rely on the recommendations and professional opinions of other staff in council (for instance, in some councils senior staff who are town planners may approve certificates based on the recommendations of building surveying staff).

Advantages

This option potentially provides better consumer protection and quality assurance. Assessment officers would benefit from aspects of accreditation such as continuing professional development and codes of conduct.

Disadvantages

Extending accreditation to assessment officers would increase costs to the council and the community through accreditation fees and continuing professional development costs. This arrangement would need to be extended to the private sector. It may reduce the supply of certification services in both the private and public sectors. It fails to recognise the mentoring and supervisory arrangements that operate in both the private and public sectors that act as a safeguard for quality of service. It may discourage new entrants into certification work as on-the-job experience may be difficult to obtain without accreditation.

3.3 How should transitional accreditation work?

DIPNR wants to introduce accreditation of council officers in a way that ensures the supply of certification services by councils both in the short and long term. This will allow currently employed council staff time to gain the experience and qualifications necessary for full accreditation.

To address these issues, DIPNR is proposing to phase in the accreditation of council staff. Four models have been developed to accredit council certifiers in the short to medium term. In each of the models, staff with transitional accreditation would be able to transfer to other councils but not to the private sector unless they meet full accreditation requirements.

Transitional accreditation would apply to staff identified from decisions on who should be accredited (see 3.2).

In all cases, council officers would apply for transitional accreditation by submitting a written application to the BPB. The application would have to:

- contain information on the officer’s duties and, if required, qualifications and experience
be accompanied by a statutory declaration and a letter from council verifying the information
be submitted with the required accreditation fee.

Option A: Transitional accreditation time limit but grades apply

The BPB would give transitional accreditation at graded levels depending on years and type of experience. The grading would determine the level of work the council officer is able to certify during the transitional period. At the end of the transitional period (2005–2009) staff within councils will need full accreditation if they wish to continue to do certification work on behalf of council.

Advantages
This option ensures that full accreditation is in place after the transitional period. Within the transitional period, this option limits staff to work within their existing level of experience – staff do not work outside their assigned level of accreditation.

Disadvantages
Within the transitional accreditation period, this option prevents councils from deploying these officers to other certification work that these officers have not done before. It may therefore reduce the capacity of councils to meet local certification needs. This option would require assessment and grading of staff by the BPB in the transitional period and may reduce the supply of council certifiers in the short to medium term.

Option B: Transitional accreditation time limit and no grades

The BPB would create a register of council officers who have been given transitional accreditation by the BPB. The accreditation does not limit the level of certification work the officer can do (that is, there are no grades). Transitional accreditation allows the officer to undertake work of that type in a council, that is building surveying, engineer etc. As occurs now, council management decides what level of work each officer can do. At the end of the transitional period (2005–2009) staff within councils will need full accreditation if they wish to continue to do certification work on behalf of council.

Advantages
This option ensures that the benefits of full accreditation are in place after the transitional period. It limits potentially adverse impacts on supply of existing council certification services because council certifiers are not restricted to particular types of work.
Disadvantages
This option maintains the existing situation where councils decide what work the officer does, even if that officer does not have experience and qualifications in the work. The requirement to meet full accreditation requirements after the transitional period may reduce the supply of council certifiers in the short to medium term.

Option C: No transitional accreditation time limit but grades apply

The BPB would give transitional accreditation to council certifiers employed by councils as of the date determined by the Government. Transitional accreditation restricts council officers to specific levels of certification work based on years and type of experience. This accreditation lasts for as long as each officer works for a council but would lapse if the officer ceases to work for any council for longer than a set period, eg 12 months.

This accreditation does not apply to certification staff employed by a council after the date determined by the Government. New staff employed after the date nominated by the Government will have to meet the full accreditation requirements set by the BPB.

Advantages
This option limits potentially adverse impacts on the supply of existing council certification services. Within the transitional period, it limits staff to work within their existing level of experience – staff do not work outside their assigned levels of accreditation.

Disadvantages
The benefits of full accreditation will take longer to realise (delayed until there is a new generation of council certifiers) under this proposal and minimum requirements for council certifiers take longer to introduce.

Within the transitional accreditation period, accredited council officers may not be able to undertake work they may be capable of but lack the appropriate grading for. This option may therefore reduce the capacity of councils to meet local certification needs. To implement this option the BPB would need to assess council staff in the transitional period.
Option D: No transitional accreditation time limit and no grades

This option works in the same way as option C, except that transitional accreditation is not based on experience. The type of certification work that the officer can carry out is not limited by the State Government (that is, there are no grades). Rather, as occurs now, each council decides the work the certifier can do.

Advantages

This option creates the least change for councils and therefore ensures the continued supply of council certification services in the short to medium term.

Disadvantages

The benefits of full accreditation will take longer to realise under this proposal (delayed until there is a new generation of council certifiers) and minimum requirements for council certifiers take longer to introduce. Council certifiers may undertake work they are not experienced in or qualified for.
Table 2. Summary of options for transitional accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Period of transitional accreditation</th>
<th>Application of full accreditation requirements</th>
<th>Transitional accreditation transferable</th>
<th>Does transitional accreditation apply to casual staff?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Transitional accreditation time limit with grades</td>
<td>2005 to 2009</td>
<td>From 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Transitional accreditation time limit and no grades</td>
<td>2005 to 2009</td>
<td>From 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. No transitional accreditation time limit but grades apply</td>
<td>From 2005 on</td>
<td>Only applies to:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• new certification staff, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• existing council staff who cease to work for any council for longer than a set period, eg 1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. No transitional accreditation time limit and no grades</td>
<td>From 2005 on</td>
<td>As for option C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 What should qualify as continuing professional development?

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a way for certifiers to keep pace with current developments in the industry. One of the BPB’s responsibilities will be to coordinate CPD programs for private and council certifiers. Much of the program will be delivered by external providers but the BPB will recognise certain courses and activities as fulfilling CPD requirements set by the BPB.

Some CPD will be through face-to-face courses. CPD activities could also include membership of professional associations which provide regular newsletters on current events and networks of professional contacts and courses organised by councils but recognised by the BPB. DIPNR recognises that cost, availability and accessibility of courses, especially for small councils and regional councils, needs to be considered in setting the mix and type of courses accepted as CPD.

*DIPNR invites suggestions on CPD courses and activities for council officers.*

An issue is whether *continuing professional development* should be mandatory for people granted transitional accreditation. Mandatory CPD would help ensure that those with transitional accreditation are kept up-to-date with developments in their area of practice. However, mandatory CPD would increase costs for councils and the community. While mandatory CPD would increase costs for councils and the community, continuing education helps to ensure that certifiers are familiar with the latest developments in their area of practice, thus helping to ensure greater protection for consumers.

*DIPNR invites your comments on this matter.*
## Appendix 1

### Private and council certifiers in NSW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building professions</th>
<th>Existing accreditation (NSW)</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Currently accredited by Government or industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accredited certifiers</strong></td>
<td>Current professional associations for certifiers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planners</td>
<td>Planning Institute of Australia</td>
<td>7 accredited certifiers</td>
<td>Government approved professional association scheme. PIA accredits individual certifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land surveyors</td>
<td>Professional Surveyors Occupational Association</td>
<td>8 accredited certifiers</td>
<td>Government approved professional association scheme. PSOA accredits individual certifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>Engineers Australia</td>
<td>150 accredited certifiers</td>
<td>Government approved professional association scheme. EA accredits individual certifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Surveyors</td>
<td>Building Surveyors and Professions Accreditation Board (now administered by DIPNR)</td>
<td>155 accredited certifiers</td>
<td>Government approved professional association scheme. Since May 2002 DIPNR has accredited individual certifiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council certifiers</td>
<td>Vast majority are unaccredited except where the council has a business unit allowing it to practice outside the council area, eg Sutherland Shire Certification Services.</td>
<td>Estimated 700 building surveyors in councils. Unknown number of engineers, land surveyors, planners doing certification work. Numbers to be confirmed by DIPNR survey.</td>
<td>Not applicable unless council has a business unit with accredited certifiers – these certifiers are accredited by a professional association authorised by the Government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment officer</strong></td>
<td>In this paper ‘assessment officer’ refers to a council officer who provides professional advice or prepares reports on applications for Part 4A certificates, strata or complying development certificates but does not approve these certificates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Council certification staff/council certifiers</strong></td>
<td>Staff employed by council either on a permanent or casual basis to approve Part 4A certificates, strata or complying development certificates or conduct inspections of buildings during the critical stages of their construction under the <em>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private certifier (or accredited private certifier)</strong></td>
<td>Private sector individual who can approve Part 4A certificates, strata or complying development certificates or conduct inspections of buildings during the critical stages of their construction under the <em>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</em>. These individuals must be accredited in order to perform these tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional accreditation</strong></td>
<td>In this paper ‘transitional accreditation’ means accreditation given by the Building Professionals Board that lasts only for the transitional period defined by the Government and under the terms specified by the Government. This accreditation system would be introduced in order to facilitate the phasing in of accreditation. It is contrasted with ‘full accreditation’ which would be required after the transitional period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>