

ABSOLUTE Education Pty. Ltd.

Becoming an Owner-Builder in VIC

Quick Start Guide



This course booklet is provided as a quick reference tool for owner builders in Victoria.

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1 Construction Approval Process

1.1 Discuss your plans with your neighbours

It is a good idea to discuss your development plans with your neighbours before lodging your plans with your consent authority. It is important that your neighbours are aware of your plans as you may be able to get some important feedback from them.

Discussing your plans with your neighbours should foster a healthy relationship. It is important to remember that they will be your neighbours for a considerable amount of time. Communicating with your neighbours right from the very start is important as first impressions count and your neighbours can be a useful source of information if anything untoward happens on site. It is also a good idea to keep neighbours up to date with what is happening, particularly if the construction works will create a significant amount of noise or dust.

Your neighbours may be approached for comment on the development by your council and given the opportunity to comment before approval for construction will be given.

1.2 Why protect adjoining property?

Building work can sometimes adversely affect adjoining properties. An owner who is proposing building work has obligations under the Building Act 1993 (the Act) to protect adjoining property from potential damage from their work.

If building work is close to or adjacent to adjoining property boundaries, then an owner may be required to carry out protection work in respect of that adjoining property. This is to ensure that the adjoining property is not affected or damaged by the proposed building work.

The Act defines adjoining property as:

Adjoining property means land, including any street, highway, lane, footway, square, alley and right of way, situated in relation to the site on which building work is to occur as to be at risk of significant damage from the building work.

1.3 What is protection Work?

Protection work provides protection to adjoining property from damage due to building work. It includes but is not limited to:

- ❑ Underpinning of adjoining property footings, including vertical support, lateral support, protection against variation in earth pressures, ground anchors, and other means of support for the adjoining property;
- ❑ Shoring up of the adjoining property;
- ❑ Overhead protection for adjoining property;
- ❑ Other work designed to maintain the stability of adjoining property from damage from building work.

Under the building Act the responsibility for determining whether protection work is required rests with the relevant building surveyor..

1.4 How do you know if protection work is required?

When making an application for a building permit for the proposed building work, the applicant (the building owner or agent of owner) is required to provide detailed information about the building work to the relevant building surveyor. The relevant building surveyor will then determine if protection work is required.

1.5 What obligations does a property owner have if protection work is required?

Serve Protection Work Notice on adjoining owner

Owners who are required to carry out protection work in respect of an adjoining property must serve a notice on the adjoining owner and provide details about the proposed protection work. Building work must not be undertaken until the adjoining owner agrees to the protection work or the relevant building surveyor has made a determination on the protection work.

- ❑ The adjoining owner must respond to the notice no later than 14 days after the notice has been served. They can agree or disagree to the proposed protection work or require further information to be provided;
- ❑ An adjoining owner who fails to respond to the notice within the required time is deemed to have agreed to the proposed protection work;
- ❑ If the adjoining owner agrees or is deemed to have agreed to the proposed protection work, the owner may proceed to carry out the protection work after obtaining any necessary permits or approvals.

In the event where the adjoining owner disagrees with the proposed protection work or requests further information, the relevant building surveyor must examine the proposal for protection work and determine whether the building work is appropriate. The relevant building surveyor must give the owner and adjoining owner notice in writing of the

determination. A property owner or the adjoining owner may appeal within 14 days to the Building Appeals Board against the determination.

Obtain contract of insurance

The owner of the property where the building work is to be carried out must ensure that a contract of insurance is in force against potential damage caused by the proposed protection work to the adjoining property.

The insurance policy must protect the adjoining property, occupiers and the general public during the works and for a period of 12 months following completion of the work. A standard Construction and Public Liability policy will not normally provide the minimum cover required. It is strongly advisable to check with your preferred insurer.

The contract for insurance must be with an insurer for an amount agreed between the owner and adjoining owner. A copy of the insurance policy must be provided to the adjoining owner before building work commences.

Prepare a survey of adjoining property

A full and adequate survey of the adjoining property must be prepared by the owner with the adjoining owner. The survey must be a record of all existing cracks and defects. This record must be signed or acknowledged as an agreed record of the condition of the adjoining property before the commencement of any protection work.

Disputes about insurance cover or the adequacy of the survey can be referred to the Building Appeals Board for a resolution.

Pay expenses incurred

A property owner is required by law to pay expenses necessarily incurred by the adjoining owner in protecting their interests. These costs include specialists' fees to check protection work documentation and expenses relating to the actual supervision of protection work following commencement on-site

1.6 What obligations and rights does an adjoining owner have?

The Act sets out clearly the rights and responsibilities of the adjoining property owner and/or occupier throughout the process, including response to notices, absent owners, appointment of agents, entry to properties, out of pocket expenses, compensation and liability. Their obligations and rights include the following:

- ❑ Once a Protection Work Notice has been served, the adjoining owner must respond within 14 days of the notice being served;

- ❑ The adjoining owner can agree or disagree to the proposed protection work or require further information to be provided;
- ❑ An adjoining owner who fails to respond to the notice within the required time is deemed to have agreed to the proposed protection work;
- ❑ The adjoining owner must assist the property owner prepare a full and adequate survey of their property before the commencement of the protection work;
- ❑ The adjoining owner has the right to seek reimbursement from the property owner for any reasonable expenses incurred while protecting their interests.

The relevant building surveyor may be able to offer some guidance to specific obligations but cannot act as an arbiter between owners and adjoining owners.

1.7 What if a dispute occurs?

Disputes about any aspect of protection work legislation can be referred to the Building Appeals Board for a resolution. Any other matter not within the jurisdiction of the Building Appeals Board can be pursued through the court system but this is usually very costly and time consuming. The Building Appeals Board can be contacted on 1300 421 082.

1.8 I am building close to the boundary – do I need to advise the adjoining owners?

If you intend to excavate 600mm or more near a property boundary, or place 200 mm or more of fill near the boundary, the Act requires you to do the following:

- ❑ At least 28 days before the building work commences, notify the owner/s of the adjoining property/ies in writing of your intention to perform building work and the nature of the proposed work;
- ❑ Comply with any condition imposed by the relevant authority at the time of approval;
- ❑ Take precautions to protect the adjoining land and/ or premises. At the request of the owner of the adjoining land or premises, you must carry out other building work to their land or premises as authorised by the regulations. This includes any building work specified by a professional engineer who has been engaged by the owner of the adjoining land or premises.

It is recommended that you verify the exact location of property boundaries and any easements before commencing building work, and if necessary engage a licensed surveyor to establish the correct alignment.

1.9 Exempt Developments

Certain renovations that are of a minor nature do not require any council approval or consent via a private certifier. These are known as exempt developments. What falls into the definition of minor works can vary from council to council. You may find that your development falls into the exempt development category if your renovation works are not affecting the structure of the existing property (such as a small fence or a barbeque). In this case, you will not need to get development consent as long as you satisfy the requirements given to you by the council.

Note 1: Contact your council before commencing any works to ensure that those works are exempt developments or to find out what category of development they fall into.

2 Owner-Builder Permit

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2.1 How to Get your permit

What is an owner builder?

An owner builder is someone who decides to build and oversee the construction of their property themselves. You don't have to have any formal trade qualifications to be an owner builder, but specialist work - eg plumbing, gas fitting and electrical work, must be completed by a licensed professional.

If you organise for the construction or renovation of one or more buildings within a three year period you may be considered to be carrying on business as a building work contractor. All building work contractors must have the appropriate licence.

Building your own home often takes longer and costs more than originally planned. It can be expensive, stressful, time consuming and complex. If you have building experience the savings can be significant.

You can choose to do all the work yourself, with the exception of specialist work, or can employ contractors to do all or some of the work.

You will need to obtain an owner-builder certificate of consent from the Building Practitioners Board in order to obtain a building permit to carry out domestic building work where the cost is more than \$12,000. You can only obtain a certificate of consent if you or a co-owner of any land and have not been issued with a building permit to carry out work as an owner-builder in the previous three years.

You will need to obtain subsequent certificates of consent for any additional building work (costing over \$12,000) on the same property.

A certificate of consent is valid for three years from the date it is issued.

Exceptions are:

- ❑ Where you have been issued with an owner-builder building permit for building work that relates to the same dwelling;
- ❑ Where the co-owner has had a building permit for the same land; and The Board may exempt an applicant in special circumstances;

- ❑ Must reside, continue to reside or intend to reside in the single home upon completion of works;
- ❑ Must be the owner of the property (registered proprietor on certificate of title).

The Victorian owner-builder certificate of consent legislation relates specifically to domestic building work. Typical domestic building work includes:

- ❑ The erection or construction of a home, including any associated work, such as landscaping, paving, retaining walls, driveways, garages, carports, swimming pools and spas;
- ❑ The renovation, alteration, extension, improvement or repair of a home. For full definitions of domestic building work, refer to the *Domestic Building Contracts Act 1999* and *Domestic Building Contracts Regulations 2007*.

An owner-builder certificate of consent is written approval from the Building Practitioners Board that enables you to obtain a building permit to carry out domestic building work as an owner-builder on your land. A certificate of consent is NOT a guarantee that you will be issued with a building permit.

2.2 What do I need approval for?

Most building work requires a Development Approval under the Development Act 1993, which must be obtained from your council before commencement of building work.

- ❑ Building work can include a new dwelling or extensions/ renovations, as well as carports, verandahs, pools, internal alterations, structural changes or the demolition of existing buildings. Some retaining walls, water tanks, fences and sheds may also require Development Approval depending upon their size and/or location;
- ❑ Contact your council personally to determine if Development Approval is required – do NOT rely on the advice of neighbours, friends or contractors;
- ❑ Heritage listed properties or properties located in heritage zones may also require Development Approval for other additional work such as painting;
- ❑ Special requirements may apply in environmentally sensitive areas, such as hills face, coastal, or bushfire prone areas;
- ❑ In some situations, the council may not support a dwelling at all in the location proposed. The land may be zoned industrial, or may be subject to a hazard, such as flooding, which would be unsuitable for the construction of a dwelling.

For further information regarding development approvals contact the Department of Planning and Community Development

<http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/planningapplications> or call 03 9208 3333.

What permits are required?

You may need a planning permit, a building permit, an occupancy permit, or all three.

Your architect or builder can give you some initial advice about the permits required but it is essential to get independent advice before commencing your project. Your local council is the best place to advise whether or not you will need permits.

Planning permits

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* is the legal basis for the town planning system in Victoria.

Under that Act, every municipality in Victoria maintains a planning scheme to control the use and development of land. Each of these planning schemes apply zones, such as residential zones and industrial zones, and overlays such as heritage and vegetation protection.

These have a bearing on the kinds of buildings and uses the municipality allows within its different areas. Many new buildings, additions and renovations require a planning permit as the first step in the construction process. In some circumstances, even simple projects such as fences may require planning permits.

Applications for planning permits are made to the local council. Before undertaking any building or construction work, a good first step is to talk to a council planning officer. It is the planning department in your local council that determines whether or not you are going to need a planning permit.

Building permits

The *Building Act 1993* is the legal basis for building in Victoria.

Building law stipulates that all building work requires a building permit unless the work is specifically exempted under the regulations.

A building permit is a written permission from a registered building surveyor certifying that your plans comply with the Building Regulations.

You must have this permit before any work can begin.

Laws apply to alterations, demolitions and removals. So always check with a registered building surveyor to see if you are going to need a building permit. Special provisions apply to owner-builders and these are discussed later.

Applying for a building permit

Before applying for a building permit, you need to choose a building surveyor. Choose either a municipal building surveyor or a private building surveyor. To obtain a building permit, you complete an application form and submit it to your building surveyor. The architect or builder can apply on your behalf for the permit but you must first authorise the architect or builder in writing to make the application.

Do not sign a blank form authorising others to obtain all permits for you and always check that a permit has been issued before any

Building surveyors

When you consider that almost anything you want to build on your land needs a building permit, building surveyors play a bigger role than you may realise in the building and renovating process, particularly during the construction process.

Building surveyors and building inspectors are responsible for making sure that buildings are safe, energy efficient and livable. They interact with other professionals such as engineers, architects and builders to ensure that buildings are designed and constructed to comply with building regulations. They provide advice on building legislation which could influence the design of buildings.

Accordingly, building surveyors work in your interest and the community's best interest to follow through the entire building process governed by the Victoria's building legislation.

After the surveyor has assessed your building plans, ensuring they comply with legislation, a building permit is issued to get the building or renovating process started. Once building work commences, the surveyor remains involved throughout each stage, carrying out inspections or having a building inspector carry out the inspection on their behalf before giving the final stamp of approval. In the case of building a new home, these inspections are carried out prior to placing the footings, at completion of the frame, and final inspection before the occupancy permit is issued to the owner. Along the way, if the inspection fails the building surveyor is authorised to take enforcement action, where necessary against the responsible party to ensure that the works are rectified and brought into compliance.

Building surveyors can also carry out inspections of established buildings to determine their existing condition and level of compliance with safety standards. The building inspection comprises an assessment of the building's fabric including issues such as water tightness and structural adequacy. The inspection can include all parts of the building that are easily accessible.

As the building surveyor's role is primarily structural integrity and public safety of a building, the onus of workmanship and quality of material and finishes is the responsibility of the builder and architect (if employed), but it is also up to you to check that you are satisfied with the construction process as it proceeds. Please refer to the checklist at the start of this section, if you have not already, which provides a handy reference for consumers to ensure the construction stage runs smoothly.

Owner Builder Application Kit

All sections of the Owner Builder Application Kit (available from the building commission) must be completed and submitted. Only copies are attached – do not submit original documents. Applications cannot be accepted via fax or email. A photocopy of the application form cannot be accepted. All documents provided must be current.

Section 1 – Application Details

Proof of Identity – Drives license of passport

Section 2 – Proof of Ownership

A Certificate of Title or Register
Search Statement

OR

- **Letter from your solicitor**

Where applicable:

- Provide an ASIC Company
Statement

OR

- Schedule from Deed of Trust

Ownership document must list the name(s) of all the owners listed in this application as the Registered Proprietor.

A Register Search Statement can be obtained online from Land Titles Victoria for a fee. For more information go to: www.land.vic.gov.au

Letters from a solicitor must:

- Be addressed to the Building Practitioners Board
- State the property address and name(s) of applicant(s)
- State the settlement date and confirm that settlement has occurred
- State that the applicant(s) are entitled to be registered proprietors on the Certificate of Title.

ASIC Statement – must list the name of the company

and director Schedule from Deed of Trust – must list the names of the trust, trustee and beneficiary

Section 3

**Change of name document
(if applicable)** E.g. Marriage Certificate

Section 4

Building Work Required on Property

Additional information to describe
building project (*optional*)

- Planning Permit (*if applicable*) E.g.
Floor plan, or separate sheet detailing proposed work

Section 5

Owner Builder Work within 3 years
Submission

- Owner-builder building permit
- Certificate of consent

Information relating to work undertaken as an owner-builder in the last
three years

Section 6

Payment of Fee and Invoice - ***Refer to the application checklist
(separate document) for correct application fee as it is subject to change***
Cheque, Money Order or Credit Card

Section 7

Statutory Declaration

Must be witnessed by a person authorised under the Evidence
(Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958

Certificate of final inspection

A certificate of final inspection is issued for extensions or alterations to existing homes.

The need for a certificate of final inspection will be indicated on your building permit.

Occupancy permit

An occupancy permit signifies that a building surveyor has approved your building as being suitable for occupation.

Compliance Certificates

The Plumbing Industry Commission regulates the industry through licensing and Compliance Certificate systems. Consumers should ensure that they sight the Practitioners license card prior to commencing work. Only licensed plumbing Practitioners can issue a Compliance Certificate on completion of work.

It is compulsory for plumbing practitioners to issue consumers with Compliance Certificates for every plumbing job of more than \$750 value, including labour, materials and appliances. This is compulsory even if the customer purchases the materials themselves.

Compliance Certificates must be issued to consumers and lodged by practitioners for all completed plumbing work including the installation of underground sanitary drains, gas pipes, gas appliance installations, gas conversions work and cooling towers, regardless of value of the work.

As a consumer, ensure you are aware of when certificates are required and always choose a licensed plumbing practitioner.

Appealing against a decision of the Building Practitioners Board

You may appeal to the Building Appeals Board if the Building Practitioners Board:

- Refuses to issue you with a certificate of consent; or
- Fails to make a decision on your application within a reasonable time.

The Building Appeals Board will consider your appeal and in making a decision may agree with, set aside, or vary the Building Practitioners Board's decision.

Appeals must be made within 60 days of the decision by the Building Practitioners Board.

If the Building Practitioners Board's decision is set aside, the Building Appeals Board may:

- Put in place its own decision;

- ❑ Require the Building Practitioners Board to reconsider your application in accordance with any directions or recommendations that it considers appropriate.

If the appeal is against the Building Practitioners Board's failure to make a decision on your application for a certificate of consent, then the Building Appeals Board may exercise the Building Practitioners Board's power to either issue or refuse to issue the certificate of consent.

The Building Appeals Board can be contacted on **1300 815 127**.

2.3 The Responsibilities of the Owner-Builder

The owner-builder is responsible for the roles normally performed by the builder. This means you will be wholly responsible for the co-ordination and contracting of contractors and tradespeople. You, as the owner-builder, will be responsible for:

- ❑ Being aware of and complying with all the regulations that apply to the construction;
- ❑ Providing plans, specifications, engineering and technical details to the appropriate authorities and contractors;
- ❑ Getting the necessary approvals from all relevant authorities - eg local council;
- ❑ Calling for tenders and quotes, selecting and contracting professionals, and organising payment;
- ❑ Dealing with any disputes or problems that arise;
- ❑ Organising finance;
- ❑ Ordering, delivery, management, storage and coordination of materials and services;
- ❑ Organising for the building to be inspected by a professional building works supervisor or surveyor on completion and obtaining a signed statement of compliance;
- ❑ Ensuring all necessary insurance is in place - eg public liability insurance;
- ❑ Guaranteeing all work done under the owner-builder permit for seven years, for the benefit of the subsequent purchaser. Contractors are responsible to the owner-builder for the work they carry out.

Note 1: Ultimately you as the Owner-Builder are responsible to the subsequent purchaser for the quality of the work that is undertaken.

Victoria has now mapped bushfire prone areas. There are many Pre cautions you can take to help protect your home and maximise your safety

If planning to build or renovate, key steps include ensuring an appropriate building site location, using suitable building materials, ensuring proximity to independent water resources, managing the vegetation surrounding the building and clearing debris close to the building. It is also important to ensure your property is accessible for emergency vehicles and has a water supply for fire fighting.

The Building Commission recommends the following to help reduce the risk of damage to homes in the event of a bushfire:

- ❑ Use building materials appropriate for the conditions and your Bushfire Attack Level (BAL);
- ❑ Remove any overhanging tree branches, take out shrubs over one metre high next to or below windows, keep grass short and clean up other debris near your building site or home that could easily catch fire to help provide some defendable space;
- ❑ Follow the step-by-step guide to protecting your home from fire by downloading the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Ready Kit from www.cfa.vic.gov.au or phoning the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 for a copy;
- ❑ Ensure you have a Bushfire Survival Plan in place and practise it regularly;
- ❑ Get involved in community meetings about fire preparedness in the neighbourhood. Go to the CFA website for meeting details;
- ❑ If you have a full rainwater tank near your home, ensure it is accessible.

Bushfire Attack Level (BAL)

The aim of the residential building standard for bushfire protection is to improve the ability of a building to withstand a bushfire attack. This will provide greater protection for the occupants who may be sheltering inside while the fire front passes. A great deal of scientific modelling has gone into the standard. The following chart outlines how the baseline data, which is defined as a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL), determines the type of construction required.

The BAL takes into consideration a number of factors including the Fire Danger Index, the slope of the land, types of surrounding vegetation and its proximity to any building.

Bushfire Prone Area Maps

Victoria has now developed on-line Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) maps. The bushfire prone areas have been determined using the most recent available scientific information and data. The maps can be viewed at www.land.vic.gov.au

If your proposed residential building is within a BPA then a BAL assessment is required. If that BAL is determined as low, the construction requirements must still meet a minimum of BAL 12.5 as detailed in AS 3959 – 2009.

2.4 Owner-builder Offences

As an owner-builder you should be aware that as of 29 April 2005, a number of new and serious offences have been introduced that you should be aware of. Under The Building Act 2011, it is now an offence for the holder of an owner-builder permit to:

- a) Knowingly engage an unlicensed contractor;
- b) Lend your permit to another person;
- c) Refuse to disclose names and addresses of contractors working on the site.

2.5 Standards Australia

For an up to date listing of the relevant standards for residential building, or if unsure of the current standard for any aspect of your owner-builder project then the latest standard can be purchased from: <http://www.standards.com.au/> or can be contacted by phone on 1800 035 822.

2.6 6 Star Standard applies to new homes, renovations, alterations and additions

From 1 May 2011, all new homes, home renovations, alterations and additions will need to comply with a 6 Star Standard as it comes into effect in the Building Code of Australia. This sees Victoria align with national energy efficiency measures.

The 6 Star Standard applies to the thermal performance of a home, renovation or addition, plus the installation of either a solar hot water system or a rainwater tank for toilet flushing. Some simple building work, not requiring a building permit, will not be affected by the new regulations. However, all new homes and building projects involving home extensions and major renovations will need to comply with 6 Star.

A 6 Star energy efficiency rating applies to your home's building envelope – its roof, walls, floor and windows. 6 Star requirements also include efficiency standards for lighting but not plug in appliances.

Meeting 6 Star compliance is not difficult: it's about good design, particularly at the planning stages. So talk to your building professional early to take advantage of the benefits, such as increased comfort, saving money on energy bills and making your home more resilient to climate change. Carefully selecting your site so your home's orientation takes advantage of solar energy can add up to 1 Star to the rating.

Star homes are projected to use 24 per cent less energy through heating and cooling compared to 5 Star homes. This will see Victorians with 6 Star homes saving a further \$100 off their energy bills each year. This is only an average saving, with residents who use their energy features in their home wisely saving even more. Consider design options that go beyond minimum regulatory requirements: it pays in the long run.

2.7 Case Studies

1. Garry bought a block of land and wants to build three separate dwellings on the land. Can Garry obtain an owner-builder permit for this work?

Owner-builders permits can be issued for dual occupancies only and as such Garry cannot obtain an owner-builder permit for this work.

2. Darren has built a house as an owner-builder two years ago but now needs to sell the property due to financial hardship. What does Darren have to do?

As an owner-builder Darren must state in the contract of sale that work was completed under an owner-builder permit. He must also organise owner-builders Home Warranty Insurance for the remainder of the 4-year period and provide a technical inspection report to the purchaser.

If the prospective purchaser is not advised that work was completed under an owner-builder permit or if Home Warranty Insurance is not provided, the prospective purchaser can withdraw from the sale without any penalty. If Home Warranty Insurance is not provided, the owner-builder can face large fines.

3. Margaret has just bought her first block of land and wants to build a house on the land. She has found a builder to do the work, but the builder has asked her to obtain an owner-builder permit. Margaret will not be doing any of the work and will have a contract with only one builder. Should Margaret become an owner-builder?

If the builder will be completing all works and organising the contractors, then Margaret does not need an owner-builder permit for the work. Owner-builders should be wary of builders who try to avoid the Home Warranty Insurance requirements by suggesting that they become owner-builders.

Even if Margaret decided to obtain an owner-builder permit, the builder and any other contractor is still required to supply Home Warranty Insurance for any of their contracts that exceed \$12,000 including G.S.T.

4. Jim and Denise have recently become married and want to become owner-builders and build a house on land that Jim owns solely. Jim recently had an owner-builder permit for another property. Can Denise become an owner-builder if her name is not on the title of the land?

Owner builder permits cannot be issued to non-owner spouses such as Denise. Jim would need to add Denise's name to the title of the land before an owner-builder permit can be

issued in her name. For more information on proof of ownership, see Section 3.1 – How to get your permit.

3 Licensing Requirements and Recommendations

3.1 Licence Requirement

Owner-builders are permitted to undertake residential building work, excluding work of a specialist trade, unless the owner-builder holds a current and valid licence for that specialist trade. Specialist trades include:

- Plumbing;
- Draining;
- Air-conditioning;
- Gas fitting; and
- Electrical.

Who is qualified to undertake the building work?

The *Building Work Contractors Act 1995* requires people or companies doing business as building work contractors to be licensed, and have the work supervised by a registered building work supervisor.

Whenever you contract with a builder or tradesperson (plumber, electrician etc), ask to see their licence. If they can't produce it, then ask for their licence or registration number, and then telephone the following institutions to verify their qualifications

Plumbing Industry Commission

<http://www.pic.vic.gov.au/www/html/7-home-page.asp> call 1300 815 127

Energy Safe Victoria <http://www.esv.vic.gov.au/> Call 1300 652 721

The Building Commission Call 1300 815 127

<http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/www/html/2631-contact-us.asp>

Note 1: Even where the work falls outside of these specialist trades, full consideration of the complexity of the work should be taken into account. For instance the owner-builder may also consider getting a licensed contractor for complicated work, even though you are allowed to do the work yourself.

Note 2: If the owner-builder is unsure about the specialist trades or if work falls into a specialist trade, the owner builder should contact the Building Commission for advice.

3.2 Recommendations

You may not be required to employ licensed contractors for all work that is being completed. Where the owner-builder is not a specialist or does not feel confident completing the work, the owner-builder should ensure that licensed contractors (with a current and valid licence) are contracted for the work they perform. Employing licensed contractors will enable an easier resolution of disputes.

Note 1: If you do employ unlicensed contractors, you may find it difficult to obtain a resolution to your dispute.

Note 2: Ask the tradesperson to provide letters of recommendations from previous customers and to view recent examples of their work.

4.1 Contract Recommendations

It is a good idea to seek quotes from at least three different builders / tradespeople. Ask each prospective contractor to give you a list of references containing at least three jobs recently completed. Feedback received from the referees should reflect the tradesperson's claim regarding the purported quality of their work. Suggested questions to ask the referees are:

- Did the builder start the work on time?
- Did the builder finish the work on time?
- Are you happy with the quality of the finished work?
- Were extras charged for and, if so, were they reasonable?
- Did the builder use the correct materials?
- Was the tradesperson approachable?
- Did the tradesperson answer your enquiries in a way that you could easily understand and in a timely manner?

Check to ensure that the builder / tradesperson has had not claims lodged against them or any outstanding tribunal orders not complied with by contacting:

- The Domestic Building List of Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) on 03 9628 9999 or checking the VCAT website www.vcat.vic.gov.au;
- Consumer Affairs Victoria 1300 558 181;
- Check the list of prosecutions on the Building Commissions website www.buildingcommission.com.au .

Note 2: Ask contractors for copies of insurances prior to commencing work.

Note 3: Where appropriate ask contractor for work method statements.

4.2 What needs to be in the contract

Under the Building Work Contractors Act 1995, you must have a signed contract for all domestic building work costing \$12,000 or more. This contract should detail the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, and define such things as the method and timing of payments, completion dates and the extent of damages, if any, that can be claimed. Standard contracts are available from the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association.

The use of template contracts may simplify the contracting process. However, it is very important to analyse the terms and conditions in the contract to avoid unintended consequences. A written contract must contain:

- ❑ The date and signatures of both you and the builder or tradesperson;
- ❑ Your name;
- ❑ The name on the builder's or tradesperson's contractor licence card and the licence number (Perform a Licence Check before signing the contract);
- ❑ A sufficient description of the work to be carried out;
- ❑ Any plans and specifications attached;
- ❑ The contract price which must be prominently displayed on the front page; and
- ❑ A warning and explanation if the contract price is unknown or subject to change.

Note 3: Contracts define the legal relationship between yourself and the tradespeople you contract with. It is important to consider all aspects of the work to be carried out when formulating the contract. Variations to the contract can often lead to delay, disappointment and extra cost.

Owner-builders should use fixed price (also known as lump sum) contracts to avoid variations by the contractor. The only exception would be with regard to excavation where rock is encountered. Variations for unforeseen circumstances are usually catered for in the standard form contracts.

Note 1: Read contracts carefully and understand what you are reading before signing. Ensure that your agreed schedule of payments matches the value of work, so that you only pay for work that has been completed.

4.3 Contracts and GST

Contracts should include the GST component as part of the total price of the contract. Beware of tradespeople who try to convince you that GST is not included in the total cost of the contract.

Business Activity Statements are not the responsibility of the owner-builder and the owner-builder is not eligible to claim a refund on the GST component paid on materials or contracts (For more information visit www.ato.gov.au).

It is important that the tradesperson/builder supply tax invoices or receipts for work completed. This will ensure as far as possible that the contractor is meeting his obligations in relation to the honouring of their Pay As You Go taxation requirements. Ensuring the tradesperson supplies a tax invoice will help to avoid any disputes about payments.

4.4 Progress Payments

Progress payments provide payment to the tradesperson prior to the completion of the work. Progress payments are more appropriate for larger jobs, to reflect the work that the tradesperson has completed. This is usually so they can pay for materials and labour as the job progresses. The signed contract between yourself and the tradesperson should set out the agreed stages of the construction that payment can be requested. Where appropriate you may consider the negotiation of retention amounts. It is recommended that between 5 -10% of the contract price be retained depending on the contract sum. You the owner-builder would need to write this into the contract.

As for how much and how often progress payments are made will depend on the circumstances. The basic rule is that you only pay for work that is completed. If borrowing money to finance the construction of your home or renovation, the bank or lending institution may have special requirements for progress payments. Additional clauses in the contract may have to be inserted to cover them. It is important to have finance arranged before you enter into the contract, due to the bank or lending institutions' requirements.

Note 1: If your contract has terms and conditions relating to progress payments, negotiate with your tradesperson or builder before signing, as once the contract is signed the terms and conditions in the contract are binding.

Note 2: Check with your lender to see if they have any special requirements before progress payments will be released. For example some lenders may require a written report or inspection.

4.5 Variations and additions to a contract

A variation is a change or adjustment to what has already been agreed in the contract. A common reason for varying a contract is due to unforeseen circumstances. The builder or tradesperson may request the contract be varied where unforeseen expenses are incurred or circumstances differ materially from what was expected.

Additions are items that the homeowner wishes to add to what was previously agreed. Variations and additions can be expensive because they disrupt the builder's program and generate more work. If you do need to make a variation to the contract, make sure it is in writing and attached to the contract and signed by both you and the builder/tradesperson.

Before the work commences on the variation or addition, the builder or tradesperson should give you a written description of the work, any plans or specifications for it, the extra cost, and any extra time required to complete the work, if known. The variation should include the cost of materials and labour. Both the tradesperson and yourself should sign this written variation, if you agree on the scope of the proposed work and price. If you don't agree, don't sign.

Note 1: When you negotiate your original contract, think things through and be specific as possible. This will save the need for expensive variations, delays in completing your project and possible legal costs.

Note 2: If the reason for variation is the builder's or tradesperson's fault, you do not have to pay for any extra work needed to rectify the problem and should not be pressured into varying the contract.

4.6 Contract Checklist

Read the contract carefully:

- ❑ **Does the contract meet the statutory requirements for a contract;**
 - Signed and dated by both parties;
 - Your name;
 - The name on the builder's or tradesperson's contractor licence card and the licence number (Perform a Licence Check before signing the contract);
 - A sufficient description of the work to be carried out;
 - Any plans and specifications attached;
 - Relevant warranties required by The Building Act 2011;
 - The contract price which must be prominently displayed on the front page;

- A warning and explanation if the contract price is unknown subject to change;
 - A caution about signing the contract if the consumer cannot answer yes to all items in the checklist;
 - A note about the contractor's obligation to provide a certificate of Home Warranty Insurance if the work is over \$12,000;
 - A clause that states that any agreement to vary the contract or any plans and specifications must be in writing and signed by the consumer and contractor;
 - A clause that states that all plans and specifications for work to be done under the contract (including any variations to those plans) are taken to form part of the contract;
 - A clause that states the work will comply with the Building Code of Australia, ensuring all other relevant codes, standards and specifications that the work is required to comply with under any law, and the conditions of any relevant development consent or complying development certificate;
 - A clause that states that the contract may limit the liability of the contractor to comply with the clause referred to immediately above if the failure relates solely to a design or specification prepared by or on behalf of the owner or a design or specification required by the owner if the contractor has advised the owner in writing that it contravenes the clause referred to immediately above.
-
- **Where necessary, does the contract specify what materials will be used e.g. specific fittings;**
 - **Where necessary negotiate schedule of payments before signing contract;**

5 Home Indemnity Insurance.

5.1 Consumer Protection

You are legally required to provide certain warranties when performing domestic building work. Regardless of the terms of the contract the work must:

- ❑ Comply with plans, specifications and all legal requirements;
- ❑ Be completed within a reasonable timeframe;
- ❑ Consist of good and proper materials;
- ❑ Be fit for human habitation if constructing a house;
- ❑ Be performed with reasonable diligence.

Claims against these warranties can be made up to 10 years after the work was completed.

* Note: You may apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to be exempt from any of these requirements if:

- ❑ There are exceptional circumstances; or
- ❑ Full compliance with these requirements is impossible and / or would cause undue hardship.

Ramifications for non-compliance with the requirements

If you enter into a contract to sell your owner-built home without complying with the requirements to obtain a defects report and insurance in respect of the dwelling and set out the warranties in the contract of sale, your sale could be at risk. The contract of sale is not automatically void, but is considered to be 'voidable'. You may also be prosecuted, with a maximum penalty of around \$12,000.

You cannot 'contract out' of these requirements. They will apply even if you and the purchaser agree otherwise.

5.2 Subsequent purchaser protection

Owner-builders can be responsible for the building work for up to 10 years.

The statutory warranties are also applicable (as far as is reasonable) to work done by owner-builders, for the benefit of the immediate successor in title to (i.e. subsequent purchaser from) the owner-builder. That is, the owner-builder warrants that the work results in a dwelling reasonably fit for occupation as a dwelling.

If you sell your home within six years from the date of a building licence or permit being issued, you are required to have in place a policy of home indemnity insurance which covers subsequent owners if problems with the building develop and the owner-builder fails to rectify faulty or unsatisfactory workmanship due to disappearance, death or insolvency.

The home indemnity insurance policy must cover the purchaser of the home and subsequent owners for the remainder of the six year period.

6 Other Insurance

6.1 Introduction

Other types of insurance are just as applicable to owner-builders as to contractors. These regulatory bodies may mandate you as owner-builder to take out insurance depending on the circumstances of your property development. Even where not mandated however, it is recommended that you consider your exposure to claims for damages or injury. It is practically unheard of for a licensed builder to undertake any construction project without the appropriate insurances in place, due to the very serious nature of the risks faced.

These include but are not limited to:

- ❑ Public Liability insurance;
- ❑ Contract Works (Builders All-Risk) Insurance;
- ❑ Workers Compensation.

These insurances do not cover the owner-builder themselves for injury or illness, for which the owner-builder should enquire about separately. The homeowner should also check that each trade contractor also has their own Public Liability and Worksafe Victoria insurances.

6.2 Contract Works Insurance

Contract Works should cover the owner-builder for loss or damage (for example caused by fire, storm, theft or vandalism to materials and work). It is important this insurance is taken out.

It is important that you do not under quote the “replacement value” when applying for the construction insurance. If you under-estimate the value of construction at the time the insurance policy is taken out, you may inadvertently be exposing yourself to risk.

In the unfortunate event that you need to make a claim on an under-estimated insurance policy, you could be left having to cover any extra costs being the proportional difference between what you are covered for under your policy and the actual replacement costs.

Under-insurance can be applied to all claims, not just total loss claims. E.g. if you have a \$600k project and you insure it for \$300k, and you then have a \$100k loss you will only get \$50k since you only insured half the project.

Note 1: If you are renovating or extending your existing home, you need to check the limitations of your home/contents policy. In most cases your existing policy will either cease entirely or instead severely limit the extent of cover afforded by the policy. Fortunately however, Contract Works insurance can be extended to compensate for this.

Note 2: Read your insurance contract and the terms and conditions carefully before purchasing. If you are unsure about the extent of cover ask the insurance agent to clarify it for you.

6.3 Public Liability Insurance

Public Liability insurance covers you against claims for a third party's property damage or personal injury that arises out of your construction works. Both the owner-builder and the contractors are recommended to carry Public Liability insurance to cover themselves in the event that any of them cause damage or injury to another person as a result of their activities in the construction work. In the event that an injury or property damage occurs as a result of negligence, you may have claims made against you if that injury occurs on your project.

For the owner builder to be liable it doesn't have to arise from their own direct actions. Since they are in charge of the project most liability claims will be their responsibility. Occasionally however where there may be very clear and obvious negligence by one of the contractors the liability claim may instead be directed at the contractor individually. In most cases the liability claim will be directed to the owner builder (or in some cases to both the owner builder and also the contractor as being jointly liable). For this reason it is important for the contractors to have their own insurance.

Note 1: If you are renovating or extending your existing home, you need to check the limitations of your home/contents policy. In many cases your current policy may cease entirely. Even where this is not the case however it will still not cover Public Liability claims that arise from the construction work. This insurance will need to be obtained specifically for the project.

Note 2: Read your insurance contract and the terms and conditions carefully before purchasing. If you are unsure about the extent of cover, ask the insurance agent to clarify it for you.

6.5 Worksafe Victoria

Workers Compensation insurance covers those engaged by the owner-builder that are injured on the building site. It is important that you are clear on the legal relationship between yourself and the tradesperson. Even where the tradesperson/s is contracted to

provide services to you, in the unfortunate event of injury to a contractor, you may be regarded as their employer at law.

You may find that it is possible that these tradespeople may be deemed to be your employee. You should contact Worksafe Victoria <http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/home> call 1800 136 089 before any work performed by the tradesperson/s is commenced.

As an owner-builder you should also consider insuring yourself against accident or sickness (accident and sickness insurance), especially if you have financial exposure such as a mortgage. An income protection policy will provide you with an income should you fall ill or if you are injured on site. Contact your insurer or broker to find the appropriate level of cover.

Note 1: Before any Owner-Builder work is commenced, contact Worksafe on 1800 136 089 to determine the appropriate level of cover if applicable.

7 Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S)

7.1 What is Occupation Health & Safety (OH&S)

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* strives towards providing a safe working environment for all workers and sets out the laws about health and safety requirements affecting most workplaces, work activities and specified high risk plant in **Victoria**. As an owner-builder, you must provide a safe working environment for yourself and any contractors. You must ensure the health and safety of people visiting or working on your work site.

Note 1: The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 is based on the principle of duty of care and covers all workplaces nationally, including those of owner-builders.

There is a general duty of care on the owner-builder to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and others who come on to the workplace. The owner-builder can achieve this through:

- a) Ensuring that the worksite is in a safe condition, and ensuring safe entrances and exits;
- b) Ensuring that there is safe use, handling, storage and transport of plant and substances;
- c) Providing and maintaining systems of work, and working environments, that are safe and without risk to health;
- d) Providing the information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees;
- e) Providing adequate facilities for the welfare of employees.

Note 2: It is the owner-builders responsibility to provide contractors/workers with site induction training, which should cover all of the above mentioned points.

7.2 Managing your risks

An owner-builder has an obligation to identify and assess foreseeable hazards. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, the employer must take steps to control the risk. As an owner-builder you will need to develop a risk management plan that identifies risks to the health and safety of your employee's / contractors.

Regulators Include

WorkSafe Victoria

WorkSafe Victoria's responsibilities include:

- ❑ Help avoid workplace injuries occurring;
- ❑ Enforce Victoria's occupational health and safety laws;
- ❑ Provide reasonably priced workplace injury insurance for employers;
- ❑ Help injured workers back into the workforce; and
- ❑ Manage the workers' compensation scheme by ensuring the prompt delivery of appropriate services and adopting prudent financial practices.

Contact details:

Website: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Email: info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1800 136 089 or 03 9641 1444

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)

In Victoria, regulations covering electrical equipment safety and efficiency are administered by ESV. The key functions of ESV include:

- ❑ Overseeing the design, construction and maintenance of electricity, gas and pipeline networks;
- ❑ Licensing and registering electricians; and
- ❑ Issuing and auditing Certificates of Electrical Safety.

Contact details:

Website: www.esv.vic.gov.au

Email: info@esv.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1800 652 563 – general and technical questions

Phone: 1800 815 721 – licensing and registration

7.3 Warning about Asbestos and Other Hazardous

Products

When doing home building, renovations or work around the home, you may come into contact with asbestos and other hazardous products such as lead or certain solvents.

Asbestos and other hazardous product can cause serious injury, harm and even death in certain circumstances if safety precautions are not followed. For some hazardous

products the law sets out who can do work involving these products and how to handle and dispose of the materials.

Asbestos dust and fibres are known to be highly hazardous when inhaled, and can be released into the air when products containing asbestos are incorrectly handled, removed or transported for disposal.

- **Non-friable** asbestos is the most common form, usually found as cement sheeting (either flat or corrugated), vinyl floor tiles, water or flue pipes, or other asbestos-bonded products produced before 1980. If left undisturbed, non-friable asbestos presents no known health risks.
- **Friable** asbestos was used in pipe lagging, insulation and asbestos-backed vinyl floor tiles. This type of asbestos presents significant health risks if disturbed.

Asbestos transportation and disposal

A licensed waste transporter can supply a plastic-lined skip/bin for disposing of asbestos. When the job is complete the plastic needs to be pulled over the top and sealed with duct tape or similar.

Waste transporters can be located under 'Asbestos removal and/or treatment' in the Yellow Pages.

Metropolitan residents can dispose of asbestos at specific transfer stations or waste depots. It is recommended that you contact your local transfer station or waste depot for advice on disposal requirements.

Asbestos can be taken to landfills but it must be wrapped in manageable-sized packages in thick (200-micron) plastic, and taped at the seams. Large hardware stores or building suppliers should sell this type of plastic.

Asbestos removal

Asbestos can be removed from residential properties but there are health and safety risks associated WorkSafe is one of three agencies in Victoria that provides information on asbestos.

We provide advice and information to help employers and workers understand the risks of asbestos, how to comply with your duties, and resources for managing and removing asbestos in workplaces.

If you are a householder intending to work with or remove asbestos from your home, the [Department of Health](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/) can assist you [www. http://www.health.vic.gov.au/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/) call 1300 253 942/

If you are involved in the disposal or transportation of waste asbestos, please contact [EPA Victoria. http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/) call 1300 372 842.

Your local council may also provide information on domestic renovations or construction work.

Generally, asbestos removal must be done by a removalist licensed by WorkSafe, or **trained employees** of a licence-holder. The licence-holder is usually required to notify WorkSafe in advance before any asbestos removal work is carried out. Unlicensed removal of limited amounts of non-friable asbestos is permitted under certain circumstances.

Class B licence-holders are only permitted to remove non-friable asbestos and must comply with a number of requirements, including:

- ❑ Appointing a nominated **supervisor** to oversee the removal work;
- ❑ Developing a **control plan** before the job;
- ❑ **Informing employees** in the area of the proposed removal work;
- ❑ Using **specific methods** for removal, waste containment and waste disposal;
- ❑ Using **signs and barricades**;
- ❑ Providing **decontamination** facilities;
- ❑ Providing **employees** with information, training, personal protective clothing and equipment, and medical examinations;

Only Class A licence-holders are permitted to remove friable asbestos.

Class A licence-holders must comply with the same requirements outlined above for Class B licence holders, but must also implement a range of specific measures to carry out the work safely and control the risk, including using enclosures and always having the nominated supervisor on site. These are detailed in the OHS Regulations.

8 Design and cost management.

8.1 Design & Architects

It is important that you have a clear vision of what you intend to build and what the budget for the project is. Once you have decided on what will be built, you should

develop some basic diagrams and a document that will describe to an architect what it is that you actually want.

Before going to the Architect ensure that you have thought of everything and incorporated those ideas into your vision. From there the architect will be able to come back to you with a few design alternatives. However, keep in mind that the more alternatives that the architect comes up with the more expenses that will be incurred. The architect's fees may be based on a % estimated builders contract price, a negotiated fee or an hourly rate.

It is also a good idea to contact your local council and speak to them about your ideas or preliminary sketches prior to submitting the development application. This will save time and money if council are opposed to part or all of the proposed development.

Note 1: Plan for the future, before committing to anything. Think of aspects such as the number of people living in the property or if you have to cater for people with disabilities. Planning for the future now will save on expensive additions in the future.

Note 2: If you do not have your own architect you can contact Royal Australian Institute of Architects, who should be able to refer you an architect to in your area. See useful links section.

8.2 Quantity Surveyor

One of the greatest problems that you will face as an owner-builder is determining how much your construction will cost. You can use the included guide to monitor your costs. However, we would recommend that you use the services of a qualified quantity surveyor to help you to more accurately determine the costs of the construction works. When estimating your costs you should closely monitor the following:

- ❑ **Costs involved with consultants**
 - Architect
 - Engineers (structural and geo-technical)
 - Surveyor
- ❑ **Permit and application costs**
 - Building fees (Application costs)
 - Owner-Builder permit (\$305 as at January 2010)
 - Charges
 - Kerb and Gutter Bond/Deposit

- Rates and taxes
- **Insurance costs**
 - Workers compensations
 - Contract Works insurance
 - Public Liability
- **Material Costs**
 - As per cost monitor sheet (allow for inflation)
- **Equipment Costs**
 - Purchase or Hire
- **Labour Costs**
 - Contractors
 - Your own labour (Only allow for as many hours as you can actually perform on a weekly basis)

8.3 Using the included Cost control monitor.

- Ensure that you obtain at least 3 quotes for works being carried out;
- Highlight the chosen quote; **do not** automatically choose the cheapest quote;
- Enter in percentage figure for deposit paid. Remember to check the allowable deposits that the tradesperson is entitled to request;
- Enter the residual amount to be paid after deposit has been made;
- Finally if the quoted amount and actual amounts differ enter in "Actual Cost".

Note 1: The cost-monitoring schedule that is included should be used in conjunction with a professional quantity surveyors report, as each project will have different requirements.

Note 2: Do not automatically choose the cheapest quote, the person with the cheapest quote may have a number of different projects on or may skimp on the quality of materials used. This may delay your works and cost you additional monies or cause disputes.

Note 3: Only enter into fixed price contracts. And try to negotiate a cheaper price from the chosen contractor before entering into the contract.

8.4 Organisation

One of the most important building tips, is that you must be highly organised during all stages of the construction process including preparing to commence construction. Always check with either the building practitioner's board or by visiting the website at

www.buildingcommission.com.au that the contractors are licensed for the work and that the licence is current.

Keep records of quotes, contracts, licence details and correspondence relating to the building work. You may choose to keep a folder for written documentation such as quotes, contracts and invoices.

If you are to complete your construction on time and on budget you will need to use a building planner or diary to estimate construction stages and time frames. As an owner-builder, one of the most important tools that you will have is the building planner. The owner-builder can use the building planner to estimate the time frames in which certain activities will occur. The recommended method for using our planner is to fill in the dates from when the project will start. Secondly go through the planner with a highlighter or pencil and mark when each stage or event will begin according to your schedule. Finally when construction has commenced you can mark each stage off the planner as it occurs.

The building planner will enable you see if construction is going according to schedule or where delays are happening. The building planner will also allow you to see which if any trades overlap and can allow you to reschedule tradespeople and supply of materials if the project is running behind schedule.

8.5 Suggested Construction Sequence Important Notes

Note 1: Please note that this is only a guideline; all construction works have differing levels of complexity and different requirements that may not be covered by this guideline.

Note 2: If you are not a specialist in the area it is recommended that you do seek specialist advice before commencing any work as this may save you a significant amount of time and expense.

It is important that you speak to your council about when and at what stages council inspections have to occur as well as any other specific regulations they may have such as hours in which you can work. Talk to your energy suppliers about what certification they require and if they are required to inspect any of the works being carried out. Contact the water board and find out about what is required for connection of water services and sewerage.

Note 3: Call “dial before you dig” on 1100 to find out where any pipes are before any digging or excavation commences. This will save you time and any costs in the rectification of the pipes or lines. If there are pipes / lines, advise your contractors before they carry out any work.

9 Building Tips.

10.2.1 Arrange Your Contractors and Materials Before Starting Work

Contact contractors and suppliers and organise a time frame for them to complete the work and for suppliers to deliver materials. Ensure that materials are delivered only as they are required as unnecessary supplies can delay tradespeople from completing work and can cause safety risks. The following table contains contractors and materials that may be required:

<u>Contractors</u>	<u>Materials</u>
1. Surveyor	• Sand, gravel and filling
2. Engineers (where necessary)	• Bricks
3. Demolition	• Hardware
4. Excavator	• Concrete
5. Electrician	• Timber
6. Air Conditioning	• Roofing materials
7. Plumber & Drainer	• Windows, doors and other joinery
8. Gasfitter	• Roller Doors
9. Concreter	• Wallboard and Plasterboard
10. Carpenter	• Kitchen
11. Bricklayer	• PC Items, i.e. Toilets, Basins, etc.
12. Waterproofer	• Paint
13. Plaster (internal linings)	• Light Fittings
14. Roofer	• Tiles
15. Tiler (wall and floor)	• Insulation (wall & ceiling)
16. Floor Sander	• Fire Safety Alarms
17. Painter	• Security Alarm
18. Fencer	
19. Insulator	
20. Alarm System	
21. Fire Safety System	

Note 1: You will need to speak with your tradespeople and suppliers to ensure that materials are delivered when your contractor is available to do the work.

10.2.2 Site Preparation and Set Out

Before commencing any work check council regulations if any amenities need to be supplied. Often councils require that a site toilet be provided and necessary footpath crossings. You may also be required to arrange a temporary supply of electricity with your electrician and amenities for your workers / contractors.

Remove anything from the site that may prevent or slow the building work. Have your surveyor organise the set out of the site for you. You can also discuss the site levels and set out with the surveyor.

Ensure that a surveyor, concreter or someone with appropriate experience completes the set out. Check distances to boundaries (commonly called 'clearances') and ensure these are correct, as the building certifier will check them when the footings are inspected, so it is important that the site is set out correctly.

Note 1: Remember the two most important rules the set out must be "Square and Plumb".

Note 2: It is very important that the set out is completed accurately, if errors are made it could lead to expensive works to rectify the problem.

10.2.3 Plumbers – Pipes and Drains

As plumbing is a specialist trade all plumbing works need to be carried out by a licensed plumber. Check with the Plumbing Industry Commission https://consumer.etoobox.pic.vic.gov.au/layouts/cc/pic_validatepp.aspx to ensure that the plumber holds a current licence for the plumbing trade. The plumber needs to install all the pipes that will be under the flooring of the house. Also discuss with the plumber as to when drains should be excavated, laid and backfilled. It is possible he may wish to do this after the floor brickwork or at some other stage.

Note 1: Council inspections may be required before any plumbing / pipe works are covered.

10.2.4 Excavations

It is important that you employ a specialist excavating company that has a licence. Footings and floor slabs should be designed to comply with Australian Standards (see appendix for appropriate standard), council may also require structural details including engineer's reports.

Note 1: Don't leave excavations open to the elements for any longer than necessary. This is due to the costs associated with rectifying cave-ins.

Note 2: If you have not contacted dial before you dig or are still unsure where your pipes or telephone lines are get your contractor to contact 'Dial before you dig'. This will minimise the risk of damage to pipes or communication lines that are expensive to repair.

Footings and / or piers should be poured at this time. Piers often need to be constructed separately to footings. Check with a structural engineer to see if this is necessary.

Where excavation is necessary for your site, it is recommended that you should seek the services of a specialist excavator. Mistakes made during excavation can often lead to additional concrete to fill the excavation and as such additional costs.

10.2.5 Drainage

Where drainage systems are required ensure that the proposed drainage system will convey surface water to the appropriate outfall and that any water avoids entry to the building. Check with your local council to ensure that water is discharged to the appropriate point. The drainage system should be constructed in accordance with Australian Standards (see appendix for appropriate standard).

Note 1: Stormwater drainage diagrams should be generated by a Hydraulic Engineer and need to be approved by council at development application / construction certificate stage.

10.2.6 Termite Treatment

One area that the owner-builder needs to pay particular attention to is ensuring adequate termite treatment is undertaken and continuing maintenance and where necessary re-treatment is performed. Two types of protection for structural members (i.e. parts of the building) against termite damage;

- 1. Physical barriers*
- 2. Chemical Barriers*

The first step is to consider whether the structural framework is to be metal or termite-resistant timber. Even where the structural framework is metal, pest protection measures must be undertaken to protect non-structural elements, i.e. doorframes and other timber components.

Physical barriers for timber floors are mandatory under the Building Code of Australia and can be formed by caps to piers and continuous ant capping to brick walling in the sub floor area. Soil treatment under concrete slabs can either be done by chemical or non-chemical methods or a combination of both.

The owner-builder needs to ensure that the chemical installer must carry an appropriate termite treatment licence. The installer must show evidence of their licence, professional

indemnity insurance (that is current) and the installer must provide a minimum 12 months warranty against termite infestation.

It is important to note that the homeowner must perform regular inspections as part of ongoing maintenance for their home. As part of these examinations homeowners should look around the home for signs such as crumbling/splitting timber, and around garden/perimeter and other access areas for dampness. It is recommended that trained building and timber pest inspectors perform regular inspections no more than 1 year apart.

If a chemical treatment is selected, check with the supplier as to the life expectancy of the treatment. Ensure that you plan for periodic re-treatment. For a new house, you could install a reticulation system, which is a series of pipes under the concrete slab that allow for chemical re-treatment. Otherwise you would have to drill holes through the concrete slab. Check with the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association (www.aepma.com.au) for qualified member pest controllers in your areas.

Note 1: Contact your council to find out what the individual council requirements are before selecting a method of termite protection. Some councils have banned the use of chemicals for termite protection.

Note 2: The Building Code of Australia requires a durable notice be fixed to the building. The notice should contain the method of termite risk management, the date the system was installed, if chemical is used its life expectancy and manufacturers recommendations for scope and frequency of pest inspections.

10.2.7 Concrete Slab

In preparation for the pouring of the concrete slab you should ensure that the site is clear so that concreter has adequate site access. Before pouring of the concrete slab you may need an engineers report or on site inspection, you may also be required to supply the engineers report to your council before commencing work.

Concrete is commonly used for footings, slabs and for mortar for bricklaying. Concrete should meet the Building Code of Australia standards (see appendix for appropriate standard):

- Have a minimum grade as specified usually 20 Mpa for 'slab-on-ground' type constructions and footing, and 25 Mpa or higher for suspended concrete. (Mpa is an abbreviation for Mega Pascals. Mpa is a metric measure of pressure used to

measure the concrete's load capacity.)

- ❑ Do not have water added on-site to pre-batched deliveries – orders should have required 'slump' (slump is a standard test on wet concrete which gives an indication of the 'workability' of the concrete)

Allow the concreter to organise his own materials, keep any docket or documents related to the supply of the concrete and ask for concrete test results.

Note 1: Unless you are an expert in the area do not attempt this. You can contact the Cement And Concrete Association of Australia (www.concrete.net.au) for referral to a specialist.

Note 2: The slab should not be allowed to dry too quickly as this may cause cracking and in some cases structural faults. In hot weather the owner-builder should contact a concreter for specialist advice.

10.2.8 Plumber

It is important that you ensure that your plumber has a valid and current licence for plumbing. Ensure that all floor waste holes, pipes and drains have been installed before progressing and ensure that the relevant authority has inspected the waste pipes before concrete is poured. When work on internal waste pipes has been completed.

Call in your pest controller to treat the ground after your plumbing inspection and the pipe work has been covered and before the vapour barrier is laid.

Note 1: Ensure all pipes are pressure tested before internal linings are fixed, this will save expensive rectification work at a later date.

10.2.9 Vapour Barrier and Reinforcement

The vapour barrier consists of polythene sheets laid over the entire area where the slab is to be laid. All penetrations such as plumber's pipes should be secured through the membrane. The Building Code of Australia requires a vapour barrier to be installed under slab-on-ground construction and that the vapour barrier has a nominal thickness of 0.2 mm. The vapour barrier should be medium impact resistant so that the vapour barrier is not damaged.

The installation of the vapour barrier must not lap less than 200 mm at all joints and the vapour barrier must be taped (duct tape no less than 50mm in width) or sealed with a close fitting sleeve around all service penetrations.

Use of a specialist concreter will ensure the membrane is placed in the correct position and it is not damaged. If the vapour barrier is punctured ensure that it is repaired with additional polyethylene film and tape before concrete is poured.

The concreter can now install steel mesh placed on bar chairs and any boxing can be placed for sunken lounges or any other recesses. Once finalized, you can contact council to organise an inspection before the concrete is laid.

Note 1: After steel mesh has been installed and the job is ready to pour, a council inspection may be required before the concrete is poured.

10.2.10 Framing

One of the important decisions that you will have to make as an owner-builder is that of what type of framing method you will use in the construction process. The most common framing methods for construction are:

- ❑ Timber framed construction;
- ❑ Metal framed construction.

Timber framed construction relies on the use of timber products for the sub-floor frame, floor, wall and roof to support structural loads. Timber is used in conjunction with other products such as fibrous cement, metal or plastic sheeting or brick. Where brick is used for a brick veneer construction, the brick wall is connected to the frame with metal ties.

When using timber for the construction method you should consider the following:

- ❑ Light weight;
- ❑ Can be used with all types of floor construction;
- ❑ Materials easily available;
- ❑ Less trades are involved then if using other methods;
- ❑ Pest control should be an important consideration particularly termite protection; and
- ❑ Location.

Steel framed construction relies on the use of metal products for the sub-floor frame, floor, wall and roof. As with timber framing a variety of finishes can be used.

Note 1: Ensure that metal frame is earthed properly for safety reasons.

10.2.11 Floor Framing

Your carpenter will place the bearers, then floor joists. Once this is done ensure floor frame is straight and level. If this is not done it could lead to irregularities that may be difficult to fix.

It is easy to insulate beneath your floor at this stage. Simply lay foil over your joists prior to laying your floor.

Before flooring is fixed check that bearers are resting on the piers and no gaps are present. Ensure joists are fixed tightly to the bearers. This will save you from fixing squeaks at a later stage.

Note 1: Council Inspection may be required prior to the placement of the floor.

10.2.12 Wall frames and Roof Trusses

You should consider the use of prefabricated wall frames whether timber or metal framing method is used. This will save time and simplify the job. Wall frames need to be constructed in accordance with Australian Standards (check appendix for listing of appropriate standard).

It is recommended that prefabricated roof trusses be used. They are designed and engineered to suit spans, roof coverings and loadings. The supplier will detail spacing and placement and supply all associated hardware such as bracing and triple grips for fixing.

10.2.13 Windows and external doorframes

Fix window frames as soon as possible and ensure that flashings are used. Co-ordinate the installation of windows and doors with your bricklayer.

10.2.14 Walls – Bricklayer

Building the brick walls for the house is one of the largest tasks that will be undertaken in the construction process. It is recommended that you leave this up to a specialist i.e. a licensed bricklayer.

The majority of modern houses built are built using a brick veneer (masonry veneer) construction. If the owner-builder wants to estimate how many bricks are necessary, the average single thickness brick wall needs 60 bricks per square metre. The owner-builder can make the estimate based around whole bricks, allowing 10mm for each mortar joint. Then you will only need to contend with half bricks, which may be purchased.

An area where the owner-builder may be able to help the bricklayer in is the preparation of the bricks, a common requirement is that bricks may need to be cut in half before laying. To cut a brick, mark the line in chalk, using a brick bolster or chisel and heavy hammer, cut groove around the brick. On a soft base – sand or lawn, a hefty whack will give a clean break in the brick.

The owner-builder needs to ensure that as the bricklayer lays the bricks, that the bricklayer leaves a 25mm (min) cavity between the brick wall (masonry leaf) and the closest portion of the wall frame, for services, insulation or other elements located in the cavity. The owner-builder also needs to ensure appropriate wall ties are used, Australian

Standards require wall ties be:

- ❑ Spaced correctly 600mm both vertically and horizontally. Or 300mm around openings in the wall such as doors and windows;
- ❑ Wall ties should slope downwards towards the external wall (external leaf) and should be embedded a minimum of 50mm into the mortar joint. The other end of the wall tie needs to be secured by an approved system, installed according to manufacturers specification;
- ❑ If in corrosion risk area check wall ties meet appropriate standard.

Where timber frame is used for the framing method, ensure the bricklayer leaves adequate space for timber shrinkage. For single storey construction this is usually 10mm below any window frame sill and door frame sill, and 10mm below roof framing and or eave-linings.

10.2.15 Roof Guttering – Plumber

After frame and fascia are completed, the plumber is required to fix the guttering before the roof is covered. Valley flashing should also be installed. The plumber should make sure that the guttering falls to the position of the downpipes. Plumber should also do a “rough in”, which relates to fixing off hot water and cold water services and drainage points in the wall.

Where gas is to be used, it is important to contact your gas provider to discuss the rough in and your final connection to the main system.

If concealed gutters are used no fascia is required as the gutter and fascia are combined and are fixed by the plumber.

10.2.16 Roof Covering

Ensure that any roof coverings are fixed according to manufacturers specifications that should be available from your supplier. Sarking (foil) should also be installed as prevents entry of dust and also has insulation benefits. Sarking also gives additional security against water penetration.

10.2.17 External doors – Carpenter

Carpenter can fit external doors. Eaves should be lined and the sub floor access door fitted.

10.2.18 Wiring – Electrician

Contact energy supplier with regard to electricity supply, Telephone Company for the provision of supply pipes in the slab and a gas supplier for supply of gas services before the pouring of the concrete.

Electrician will place the lighting and power cables. These should be installed according to the initial plan. Electricians also usually install your telephone cables, see below.

10.2.19 Telephone

Contact Telephone Company and advise them of your requirements so that pre-cabling can be done. If an electrician is installing cabling for telephone or other related systems ensure they hold the appropriate Austel licence.

10.2.20 Gas

Gasfitter will place the gas pipes to the locations of the appliances.

10.2.21 Wet area flashing for Bathroom, Laundry and kitchen

Remove all debris and mortar deposits. Ensure that the contractor uses an accredited water-proofing system. Flash all internal angles formed between the floor and the walls and to shower uprights. With concrete floors the full shower base should be sealed. On particleboard the whole bathroom should be sealed. The waterproof membrane that you select should be flexible enough to allow for normal movement in timber framed structures. It should be strong enough to resist any damage during installation of the floor surfacing material and be suitable for bonding with flexible adhesive.

Note 1: You also need to ensure that a certificate from the waterproofer is obtained. As this will need to be provided to council.

Note 2: Contact your council to organise inspection of all wet areas prior to internal linings being installed.

10.2.22 Wall linings

If insulation is required it should be done after bricks have been placed but prior to any linings being installed.

10.2.23 Internal Linings – Plasterer

Ensure all tradespeople have completed their work correctly and according to their contracts, as any errors not detected may lead to expensive rectification work.

Ensure all trimmings for fittings have been installed and that walls are straight, power and light points are in the right positions and plumbing points are placed correctly. Ensure that wall cavities, vermin wire and wall ties are clear of mortar.

Your Plasterer can now proceed fixing the linings. Ensure that all joints are backed with either studs or noggings or installed according to manufacturers specifications.

Note 1: The wall must be straight and cornices straight and even.

10.2.24 Joinery and fix out – Carpenter

Carpenter can install all internal doors, kitchen and mouldings along with any extra joinery as required.

10.2.25 Wall and Floor tiling

The owner-builder needs to get an experienced tiler to inspect the area to be tiled to ensure the area is suitable for tiling. It is recommended that a minimum of two months be left before fixing tile coverings to protect against shrinkage of concrete. It is also important that where the area to be tiled exceeds 16m² that appropriate expansion joints be used.

Check that all joints and junctions are watertight in and around the showers. If not watertight, leakages can cause superficial damage and in some instances cause structural damage.

Joints must be straight and even. Tiler must use high quality adhesive and it must be used as specified by supplier. Grouting to the joints must be finished to a high standard to prevent any leakages.

10.2.26 Painting

Painting is an important decision for the owner-builder to make and can make a huge impact on the overall finish to your construction. It is advisable to spend a little extra and get an interior designer to come in and make some suggestions about the colour scheme

and possibly which paint finishes will suit your construction works. For instance you may consider a 'feature wall' and have a sponge effect or suede effect. Little touches like these can make all the difference and can add to the value of your home.

Remember that any imperfections on the surfaces of walls and ceiling should be fixed, any nail holes filled and sanded and mouldings secured before painting. Do not use high gloss paint on plasterboard surfaces, as any minor imperfections will be seen. Ensure that high quality paint is used and that it is used according to manufacturers specifications such as ensuring consistent colour throughout paint and correct application.

For more information and tips on painting you can visit www.dulux.com.au that has a tool that allow you to experiment with colour schemes and calculate how much paint will be needed. You can also visit www.bristol.com.au for tips on colour schemes and they also offer a helpdesk facility where you can email an expert with a question.

Note 1: Ensure that after the painting is completed that additional paint is stored so that any damage to paint work during final fit out can be fixed easily.

Note 2: Make sure the painter uses drop sheets to prevent spillages on expensive fittings and brickwork.

10.2.27 Final Fit Out – Plumber

The plumber will fit wastes to the Basins, sink tubs, and showers. Taps will be fitted and hot water connected.

Note 1: Ensure down pipes are fitted correctly and sewer connected. The stormwater drains should be connected and inspected by council.

10.2.28 Final Fit Out – Electrician

Installation and fixing of switches, power points, etc, should be finished. The electrician may also connect an alarm and smoke detectors.

Note 1: The electricians work needs to be inspected and tested. Application to connect needs to be done by tradesperson, before electricity supply is connected.

Note 2: If down lights are fitted, do not cover transformers with insulation due to fire risk.

10.2.29 Finish up

Insulate ceiling cavity after electrician has completed all work.

If any rubbish has not been removed as work has progressed remove all rubbish before finalising final fittings and landscaping.

Finalise landscaping and ensure termite barrier is not disturbed. Ensure any paving falls away from the house and ensure that water drains into storm water system.

Install any extra fittings such as garage doors, fly-screens and security doors etc.

Note 1: All construction work must be built in accordance with the Building Code of Australia to ensure that your construction will be fit for occupancy for yourself and any future owner.

Note 2: This has been provided purely as a guide and it is recommended that where you are not a specialist in the area that you seek specialist advice before starting any work.

10 Preventing and Resolving your disputes

10.1 Dispute Prevention

One of the owner-builder's main roles is to manage the relationship they have with the contractors and other employees. As you are taking on the role of the builder you will need to make conflict prevention and resolution one of your highest priorities. Some important tips that will help you minimise disputes are:

- ❑ Most importantly ensure that the contractor holds a current and valid contractors licence for the work they are carrying out. And where required ensure that the contractor can supply Home Warranty Insurance where the value of the work exceeds \$12,000;
- ❑ Where required and even where possible ensure that you have written contracts with your contractors that specify exactly what is expected, what the payment conditions are and the expected time frame works will be completed in;
- ❑ Be courteous and respectful to contractors, remember they are the specialists and are critical to the completion of your project. Gaining the co-operation of your contractors will go a long way to ensuring that the work is completed correctly and on time;

- ❑ Leave contractors alone to carry out their work. When work is to be inspected organise a time with them so that they are not disturbed during their work;
- ❑ Specify what materials are to be used in the contract so that you can avoid disputes with the contractor as to the quality of the materials that are being used. Having this written down avoids any ambiguity;
- ❑ Research the materials / fittings and work to be completed by the tradesperson. This will show that you have an understanding of the materials \ fittings or work to be completed. However, do not try to intimidate the tradesperson with your knowledge. Remember, if you have chosen your tradespeople correctly, that they are the experts;
- ❑ Make payments promptly and within the specified time frame as per the schedule of payments. If you have any outstanding issues raise them with the contractor as soon as possible and make payment promptly when issue has been resolved.

10.2 Resolving your disputes

One of the most difficult tasks that an owner-builder will need to tackle during the construction process is having to resolve disputes with contractors. As an owner-builder you may have to resolve disputes that relate to:

- ❑ Materials used by contractors;
- ❑ Quality of workmanship;
- ❑ Incomplete work; and
- ❑ Unlicensed or uninsured work.

As soon as there are any problems or concerns with a building project, or work done by a tradesperson, write them down. Record details of the problems, take photographs where possible, and then approach your builder or tradesperson. Talk reasonably and try to negotiate a solution. Where the dispute is not resolved, or to confirm your agreement with the builder/tradesperson, note the details of your conversation and/or agreement in a letter then file a copy for your own records and send builder/tradesperson a copy by registered post. In the event that there are any further problems or that the matter is not resolved this documentation is admissible and recognized by the court and/or other authority. It may also help to have an alternative builder or qualified tradesperson inspect the work or give an assessment of the situation and document the report

Your ability to resolve these disputes can affect the success and completion of the construction works in a timely manner. Resolving any disputes in a timely and efficient manner must be your highest priority if you are to finish construction on time and on budget. A number of methods to help you resolve your disputes include:

- ❑ Speak with the contractor on site and list the issues that you feel are in dispute. Give the contractor a chance to respond to any claims;
- ❑ Put the issues in writing to the contractor, address only issues that relate to the work that in his scope of works. The letter should contain;
 - Address the relevant issues.
 - List what you see as a reasonable outcome.
 - Give him a time frame to come to a resolution to have the issues rectified in.
 - Send the letter via **fax** or **registered post**. Keep a copy of the letter and the confirmation slip that is gained from successful delivery of the letter.
- ❑ Another place to obtain assistance might be the Trade Association or Organization that the contractor is a member of. A list of these organizations and their contacts are provided under our Advice/Builders and Tradesman's Licences section of the website;
- ❑ Building disputes can be resolved through the tribunal in several ways. A builder/tradesperson may be ordered to complete/rectify the work in dispute. He may be required to pay compensation. Where a dispute is not resolved by this method it may be required to be resolved through the court. It is important to seek legal advice before taking this step.

If you have a contractual dispute about a domestic building project

Building Advice & Conciliation Victoria (BACV), a partnership between the Building Commission and Consumer Affairs Victoria, is a one-stop-shop for consumers and builders providing free advice and assistance to resolve domestic building disputes. Both **owners and builders** can call on BACV to assist in the event of a dispute about a domestic building project. Telephone 1300 557 559.

If you are preparing to lodge a dispute at VCAT then you may also be able to apply for a **domestic building inspection**. For more information visit <http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/www/html/1779-what-are-domestic-building-inspections.asp> or call 1300 815 127.

If you have a complaint about a practitioner

Registered Building Practitioners are typically proud of their professionalism and ethical standards, but sometimes their clients, or members of the public, may have concerns about their conduct or ability.

If you have such concerns, you should **discuss them with the building practitioner** - either the builder or the relevant building surveyor. If you are not satisfied or you do not

wish to discuss the matter with them further, you can seek advice or assistance from the Building Commission.

The Commission will consider all complaints about Registered Building Practitioners who may have breached the ***Building Act 1993***. Where an investigation identifies breaches of legislations or professional conduct the matter is referred for Inquiry by the Building Practitioners Board or Prosecution before a court by the Building Commission on 7300 815 127.

If you have a dispute relating to the application, compliance or effect of any provision of the Building Regulations

Disputes relating to the application, compliance or effect of any provision of the Building Regulations 2006 should be made to the Building Appeals Board. The Building Appeals Board can waive, modify or vary the provisions of particular regulations based upon the particular case. Contact by phone: 1300 421 082

Contact by email: bab@buildingcommission.com.au

If you have a complaint about an Architect

Complaints about architects should be made to the Architects Registration Board of Victoria by phoning (03) 9417 4444 or emailing registrar@arbv.vic.gov.au. You can also visit

Note 1: The best method to resolve the dispute is through self-help it will avoid any lengthy delays in work being finalised or the delay of works by other tradespeople.

11 Maintaining your property

11.1 General Maintenance

- ❑ If defects are found contact the contractor who completed the work and ask them to return and make any necessary rectifications. If the contractor fails to return in a reasonable time frame refer to the section that relates to how to resolve your disputes;
- ❑ Any landscaping is to be carried out with due care and consideration for the other structures in the vicinity. Appropriately qualified contractor should carry out any excavations. Certain retaining walls may also require an Engineers certificate and /or building approval by council, seek councils' advice before commencing;
- ❑ Ensure that regular pest inspections are carried out every 12 months and ensure that a qualified pest inspector carries them out so that termites do not attack the building. If you do find evidence of termites such as mud tunnels do not disturb them and seek specialist advice immediately;
- ❑ Seek advice on planting of appropriate trees close to the building as tree roots can cause severe damage to footings, slabs and can affect plumbing;
- ❑ Perform minor maintenance on a regular basis such as cleaning gutters so that expensive repair costs will be minimised. Performing minor maintenance tasks such as cleaning gutters will also reduce fire hazards.

12 Useful links

12.1 Technical information or Advice:

[Standards Australia](#) Tel: 1300 308 989

12.2 Contacts before you start your work

Safework SA www.safework.sa.gov.au Tel: 1300 365 255

[Dial before you dig](#) Tel: 1100

Consumer Affairs- Housing and Accommodation

<http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing-and-accommodation>

Victorian Heritage Register

<http://www.dpced.vic.gov.au/heritage/victoria-heritage-register>

Fencing Online- Victorian Fencing Act

<http://www.fencingonline.com.au/disputes/fencing-act.htm>

MFB- Fire Safety Guidelines

<http://mfb.vic.gov.au/Community-Safety/Workplace/Fire-Safety-Guidelines.html>

Consumer and Business Services www.cbs.sa.gov.au Tel: 131 882

12.3 Looking for a building inspector:

[Yellow Pages](#) look under 'Building Consultants' and 'Building Inspections Services'

Architects Registration Board of Victoria

<http://www.arbv.vic.gov.au/default.aspx> Tel (03) 9417 4444

[Australian Institute of Architects](#) Tel. (03) 8620 3866

[Australian Institute of Building](#) Tel. 1800 644 715

[Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors](#) Tel. (02) 6282 2222

[Housing Industry Association](#) Tel. (03)9280 8200

Engineers Australia Victoria Division division Tel. (03) 93298 8188

Master Builders South Australia Tel. (03) 9411 4555