

Waterproofing: the builder's contractual responsibilities

Over 80% of complaints about building are waterproofing issues, and so many of these issues are in the control of the builder.

How can you, as the builder, supervisor or site foreman, be in control and on top of the waterproofing? The answer is in the knowledge of the other trades that go before or after the waterproofer — writes **Henk van den Heuvel**.

Just how does the tiler interact with the waterproofer? What should the brick layer have in place for the waterproofing to be effective and how do you coordinate the windows installer, electrician, renderer, the plumber, the concreter, the landscaper, the air-conditioning installer.

Are you aware that all these trades play a vital role in making sure the waterproofing works?

What about the architect or the engineer's role? How can they make life simple for you or the worst position you will ever be in?

Builders oversee, coordinate and work on the construction or repair of homes and other buildings; and they own the project's quality, professionally and legally. In addition to undertaking some of the works personally, some builders also manage the entire project. This may include arranging for subcontractors to complete specific jobs, and making sure that the project meets industry and government regulations as well as the clients' requirements.

As a builder, you'll be responsible for a range of manual, managerial and administrative

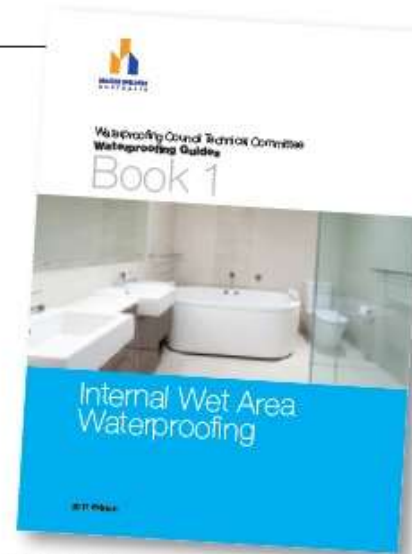
responsibilities, which may include:

- Interpreting plans or organising for plans to be drawn that meet building code regulations and client specifications.
- Providing quotes or submitting tenders for building works.
- Arranging inspections of building work.
- Organising contractors including carpenters, electricians, plumbers and painters to carry out building tasks.
- Calculating quantities and costs and sourcing of building materials and labour.
- Supervising contractors or employees to ensure safety & compliance standards are maintained and works remain on schedule.

But do you have the knowledge to coordinate all these trades to ensure your job is 100% waterproof?

One of the solutions is to get a holistic approach to waterproofing, to truly understand how each of the trades affects the waterproofing and to truly understand the selection of the right membrane system for the right application.

Don't be sold on an idea from the waterproofer who has no idea on what the other trades are doing or how their work will interact. It is up to the builder to understand that role and to relay that information onto the waterproofer, not the other



way around.

The builder must control the site and he/she must be aware of all the technical details to get that membrane applied and seeing out its expected life.

Much of this knowledge base can be learnt and there are now a series of four books the MBA endorses for this transfer of information.

Armed with this collection, you can expect to understand and tackle the most complex details. You will be able to recommend changes to the architect to ensure compliance and workability. You will be able to know the substrate preparation that has to be done by the previous trade or the level of preparation expected of the membrane applicator.

You will get to know how the tiler must prepare his tile bed over the membrane and how far up the damp course must be to accommodate the membrane, the tile bed and the Australian Standards for the level of free-board above which damp courses or flashings must sit. All this and more.

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