

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 240

Topic: Building Codes for HOIL Houses

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Payne asked:

In the answer to Additional Estimates QoN 165, FAHCSIA informed us that it cannot be determined whether HOIL houses complied with relevant building codes as this was not, and is still not, required under NT legislation. As these are Commonwealth funds being expended, why has the government not ensured that something as basic as building code compliance is not a condition of funding?

Answer:

Houses purchased by Home Ownership on Indigenous Land (HOIL) clients were outside the building control areas in the Northern Territory (NT), therefore the Building Code of Australia did not apply as a matter of course. However, structural reports were obtained for each house purchased and renovated to ensure work was completed to an appropriate standard and that the houses were safe to occupy.

For IBA clients in remote areas seeking home loan funding for new constructions or renovations, it is a condition of loan approval that builders contracted by the client are required to complete the works to the standard required by the Building Code of Australia. IBA funds an external Project Manager in such circumstances to independently validate that the building works comply with the Building Code of Australia before final payment to the builder proceeds.

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, states and the NT have agreed to reform land administration arrangements to reduce the barriers faced by individuals acquiring property in remote communities. Minister Macklin recently wrote to the NT and the states communicating her expectation that people in remote Indigenous communities are protected by effective building regulation.