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Local governments adequately assess residential building applications, but there is limited monitoring to ensure compliant building works

The Office of the Auditor General has tabled its [Local Government Building Approvals](#) report in Parliament today which looked into whether 4 metropolitan and regional local government entities effectively regulate residential building permits.

Residential building permits play an important role in regulating building activities such as new constructions or renovations of houses, carports, and sheds.

In 2017-18, local government entities in Western Australia issued approximately 18,400 permits for residential buildings. Of these, nearly 13,500 permits related to new houses totalling more than \$3.8 billion.

We found that all 4 of the audited local government entities:

- assessed applications, but could strengthen their controls to reduce the risks of inappropriate permit approvals, and improve the transparency of their building control activities
- issued most permits on time
- used different application processes and interpretations of the Act, which can limit the consistency and efficiency of building approvals
- do not effectively monitor and enforce compliance with building permits.

'I was glad to find that the 4 local government entities adequately assessed applications and had all improved timeliness of approvals over the last 4 financial years', Ms Spencer said.

In Western Australia, residential building permits are legislated under the *Building Act 2011*. This Act provides local government entities with enforcement powers that can help ensure that builders' work is safe and complies with the approved permits. However, the audit revealed that these powers were rarely used.

'It was disappointing to find that local government entities conduct limited monitoring and inspections of building works, and that compliance issues were not always resolved quickly', said Ms Spencer.

This audit assessed if the City of Albany, City of Gosnells, City of Joondalup, and the City of Mandurah adequately assessed building permit applications, and if they effectively monitor and enforce compliance with those permits.

These local government entities were selected as they issued a large number of building permits between July 2016 and June 2018.

You can read today's report at www.audit.wa.gov.au.

ENDS



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Report resources

- [Local Government Building Approvals](#) – Report PDF version

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- [Regulation of Builders and Building Surveyors](#) – 22 June 2016