

Steelwork auditing authority starts up

By Manager, Steelwork Compliance Australia ALAN NIGHTINGALE

The auditing authority for the new National Structural Steelwork Compliance Scheme (NSSCS), Steelwork Compliance Australia (SCA) commenced formal activities during October.

Following on from a round of fabricator information sessions culminating at the end of the ASI national convention on the Gold Coast in December, we secured commitment from 25 fabricators to commence the process of certification.

Since then we have attracted keen interest from a number of other fabricators to get involved in the Scheme.

The process to achieve certification is to apply to the SCA and provide some high level details about the fabricator's business and aspirations in terms of the Construction Category they may wish to be certified to. This is a straight forward exercise and should take only about half an hour.

There is a fixed fee of \$500 associated with this initial review of the fabricator's capability.

As SCA Manager, I review each application and discuss the aspirations of the fabricator with their representative and following payment of a further fixed fee of \$1000, we provide a comprehensive audit document for the Stage 1 (Desk Top) Audit.

This document is reviewed by the SCA and any shortfalls or queries resolved with the fabricator.

Provided conformity has been demonstrated, the fabricator has the option to accept certification to Construction Category CC1 at that point and can park the process and work on improving compliance capability to the next levels before committing to further costs or audit time.

For the fabricator seeking certification to Construction Categories 2 or 3, the process then proceeds to Stage 2 (Site Audit). Indicative audit fees



associated with this audit are provided on the SCA website (www.sca.compliance.com.au) and are confirmed with an official quote. The audit arrangements are agreed to between the fabricator and SCA and the site audit undertaken and completed.

The SCA website is up and running (with the exception of the Application and fee payment sections) and we refer this to any interested parties seeking to understand the processes and systems of the SCA.

We aim to provide certification for the first 25 fabricators through the certification process before Christmas and will then be looking for a new wave of interested parties committing to the Scheme.

We have been pleased with the range of fabricators who have expressed interest to date, representing a good cross section of capabilities across the three principal construction categories.

The Scheme provides a defined level playing field for fabricators and supports the development of improvement plans for their activities and to seek certification to higher levels over time.

During September, the Australasian Procurement and Construction Council released its 'Procurement of

Construction Products' guide which makes recommendations in regard to procurement activities to avoid non-conforming product. Third party certification schemes such as the NSSCS are a critical part of these recommendations.

An industry-lead compliance scheme is also a natural conclusion to the Ai Group's survey into non-conforming product where **95 percent of steel industry participants said their industry was adversely affected by non-conforming product.**

The ASI continues the dialogue with engineers who will specify a construction category for all components of their projects, which then guides the contractor to employ fabricators certified to that category.

The ASI has released Technical Note TN011 – ASI Code of Practice – Implementation for Engineers which can be found at: <http://steel.org.au/elibrary/asi-technical-notes/>

The ASI continues to engage with key stakeholders and during the past month had dialogue with businesses including government agencies (TMR, DPTI, VicRoads), major builders (Grocon, Brookfield Multiplex), engineers and fabricators and are pleased with the level of support received across all phases of the structural steel supply chain.

