

plain English; anything spelt out in detail is a non standard/non-NATSPEC requirement, which means that tenderers will be able to quickly assess requirements particular to the project and assess and price them accordingly. Apart from saving trees in reduced paper use, once there is the requisite degree of familiarity with NATSPEC, benefits should accrue in reduced time in specification preparation and in tender assessment.

There has been some concern at the implementation of this concept by particular contractors and industry organisations, on the basis that a full specification should be provided, particularly for the benefit of subcontractors. Some contractors are concerned that they may have to prepare a full specification themselves for subcontractors to use in tendering and for construction. Other contractors and their organisations feel that it is not beyond the ability or resources of the industry to make the change proposed.

NATSPEC executives believe that the concept will gain acceptance when it is fully understood and that the ability of the industry and of subcontractors particularly to come to grips with it is underestimated.

The system is currently being trialled by Australian Construction Services in Queensland. Approximately half of the membership of the National Public Works Conference (which is comprised of Australian Construction Services and the State Public Works Departments) have indicated that they will use selective referencing for mechanical and electrical services.

At this stage, it is fair to say that the system has not yet taken off for building work.

NATSPEC Civil Engineering Specification

NATSPEC is currently being reviewed and some sections which are used by civil engineers are being expanded. NATSPEC executives are also working with several Government Departments to put their civil engineering specifications into NATSPEC form.

Ultimately, it is expected that both these activities will lead to a civil engineering version of NATSPEC but, due to the rate of progress, it is not possible to indicate a likely completion date.

NATSPEC Housing

A reduced version of NATSPEC was completed late in 1989 for housing. NATSPEC Housing uses the same framework as the full version of NATSPEC. Consequently, the Housing version can be used as an entry level NATSPEC for simple projects other than housing, e.g. small office buildings, with additional requirements added from the full version of NATSPEC to cover things such as suspended ceilings.

Use of NATSPEC Housing as an entry level system of using NATSPEC has attracted enthusiastic support from a number of architects, who prefer this approach to reducing the full version of NATSPEC to make it appropriate for relatively simple projects.

NATSPEC Housing is available for \$45.00 plus \$5.00 postage.

NATSPEC Preliminaries and Special Conditions

According to NATSPEC executives, the NATSPEC Tendering Conditions are likely to be withdrawn upon publication of the National Public Works Conference/National Building and Construction Council Tender Code (see Item 2 in Newsletter #4, page 2 - except that to date the Tender Code has not been finalised as it is being further considered as part of the NPWC/NBCC Joint Working Party, see Item 9, Newsletter #7, page 8).

The NATSPEC Preliminaries document is currently under review. A revised draft has been prepared and is out for comment to interested industry organisations such as ACEA, AFCC, BISCOA and MBCHAA. NATSPEC is hoping to have the review finalised by June 1990.

AFCC, BISCOA and MBCHAA had criticised the current version as containing the potential for pilot error in contract formation and also on the basis that existing contracts should be reviewed and modified by the committees which prepared them, rather than by filling in perceived gaps by adding provisions from some contracts to others via NATSPEC.

STRATA TITLES (LEASEHOLD) ACT (NSW) 1986

This Act was proclaimed to commence on 1 March, 1989. It enables the strata title development of land leased from a prescribed authority, that is, the Crown, a statutory body or a local council.

The Act will allow the strata subdivision, in a manner similar to that provided by Strata Titles Act 1973, of land that is, or will be, leased from a prescribed authority. It will be necessary to lodge a strata plan, as well as leases of the lots and any common property. Upon registration, certificates of title will issue for the leasehold interests in the lots and common property. A body corporate will come into existence. Developers will be able to dispose of the leasehold interests in the lots to other persons. A lessee will be a member of the body corporate of the leasehold strata scheme and have the same rights and obligations as a proprietor of a lot in a freehold strata scheme. Additionally, the Strata Titles Commissioner, Strata Titles Boards and the Supreme Court will have powers to make orders regulating the rights and obligations of persons affected by the leasehold strata schemes.

A novel feature of the Act is that it will permit the strata subdivision of part only of a building. In this event, easements for support and shelter will come into effect, and statutory forms of easements for access and services may be created to regulate the use and maintenance of the building by the lessees of the strata lots and occupiers of parts of the building not subject to the strata scheme. There will also be a joint obligation on the body corporate of the scheme, the lessor and any other lessee of part of the building not subject to the strata scheme to insure the building.

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