

Pre-sale report a vital safeguard

In these boom times, **Laura Keys** reports that it is more important than ever to arrange a building inspection

Buying a home should be an exciting and rewarding experience but elation can quickly sour if your investment turns out to be a structural lemon.

For just an hour of your time and a few hundred dollars, a pre-purchase building inspection can provide peace of mind and assurances about the quality of your new home.

Inspections can generally be carried out after the offer has been accepted, as long as it is stated in the contract that the sale is subject to a successful building inspection.

Consultants will professionally assess all structural aspects of a house including the roof, walls and floors, examining them for faults. They can also visually inspect the home's electrical and plumbing systems and

provide a comprehensive report on the state of the home and any faults that were apparent.

BSP Construction Consultants offers pre-purchase inspections for about \$330 for an average-sized home and managing director Brad Porteus said building inspections were an essential step in buying a home. "It's a matter of ensuring your investment is structurally sound," he said.

Although pre-purchase inspections were becoming more commonplace in WA, he said a lot of people were under the impression they were only needed for older homes. "But we find that newer homes have just as many, if not more, faults than older ones, especially these days."

He believed the skilled labour



Brad Porteus, managing director of BSP Construction Consultants.

shortage was to blame for lower-quality homes being built. Some builders were under pressure from buyers to have their homes finished and were rushing to complete them, at the expense of quality. He estimated the number of faults his inspectors found in new homes had increased 100 per cent from two years ago.

Building industry advisory body

Archicentre RAlA also carries out inspections and charges for example \$460 for 200sqm and \$490 for 201-300sqm. All reports are carried out by architects and include a 300-point inspection, verbal and written reports and a \$10,000 12-month guarantee.

Archicentre said although inspections were vital, buyers had to

be careful about choosing a company to carry out the work. Buyers could unwittingly leave themselves open to thousands of dollars of repairs if the home turned out to be faulty. There were many people operating in Australia without the correct insurance, which could leave buyers high and dry without compensation should the inspection miss a fault.

Professional indemnity insurance would protect the company against a claim and also gave buyers an avenue to recoup costs if repairs were needed.

Archicentre advises buyers to ask the person undertaking a pre-purchase inspection if they have professional indemnity insurance.

BSP Construction Consultants has the insurance and Mr Porteus said despite professional indemnity being hard for a company to obtain, it was vital they had it because the industry was so liable for mistakes.

"If a company doesn't have the insurance, the report is not worth the paper it's written on," he said.