



INFORMATION SHEET – WHY WATER BELOW A VANITY IS A STRUCTURAL DEFECT

This general information sheet highlights the usual cause of water sitting below a vanity cabinet, and why this is a structural defect.

As part of all of our building inspections we check for moisture within walls that back onto showers, as well as areas surrounding showers including the internal of cabinets abutting showers. Where moisture is detected we include a comment within the Building Report similar to the example below.

*'A moisture meter was used on the walls which back onto the shower; moisture was detected indicating that the shower is leaking. There are also high levels of moisture within the vanity cabinet; the moisture is due to the shower leaking due to a failure of waterproofing behind the ceramic tiles. There are specialists who can remedy without the removal of ceramic tiles and provide a warranty (Google search for 'shower repairs perth'). **Due to the moisture below the vanity this is considered to be a structural defect and the cause of moisture should be remedied prior to handover.***

The greater majority of sales annexures relating to building inspections is the REIWA Annexure, which at clause 7.6 commences with '*Structural defects means fault or deviation from the intended structural performance of a building element*'. National Construction Code (NCC) Part 3.8.1 outlines the requirements of a building element and table 3.8.1.1 specifically relates to the waterproof and water resistance requirements of wet area.

- The water below the vanity is a result of the structural failure in performance of a building element.

REIWA clause 7.6 continues with '*is a major defect to the building structure of sufficient magnitude where rectification has to be carried out in order to avoid unsafe conditions, loss of utility or further deterioration*'

- The water below the vanity is a result of the structural failure in performance of a building element.
- Water below the vanity will result in further deterioration.
- The water below the vanity is an unsafe condition - such as mold, and if left untreated mold can cause allergies and respiratory problems.

Due to the moisture below and within the vanity this is a structural defect and the cause of moisture should be remedied prior to handover.

It should be noted that there is a difference between 'Structurally Sound' and a 'Structural Defect'.

Structurally Sound relates to the majority of building remaining structurally sound and not in danger of falling down.

Structural Defect is a fault or deviation from the intended structural performance of a building element. This is defined in Australia Standard AS4349 (Pre-Purchase Building Inspections – Residential) at clause 1.4.14

For further details contact our inspector directly on 0409 906 688.