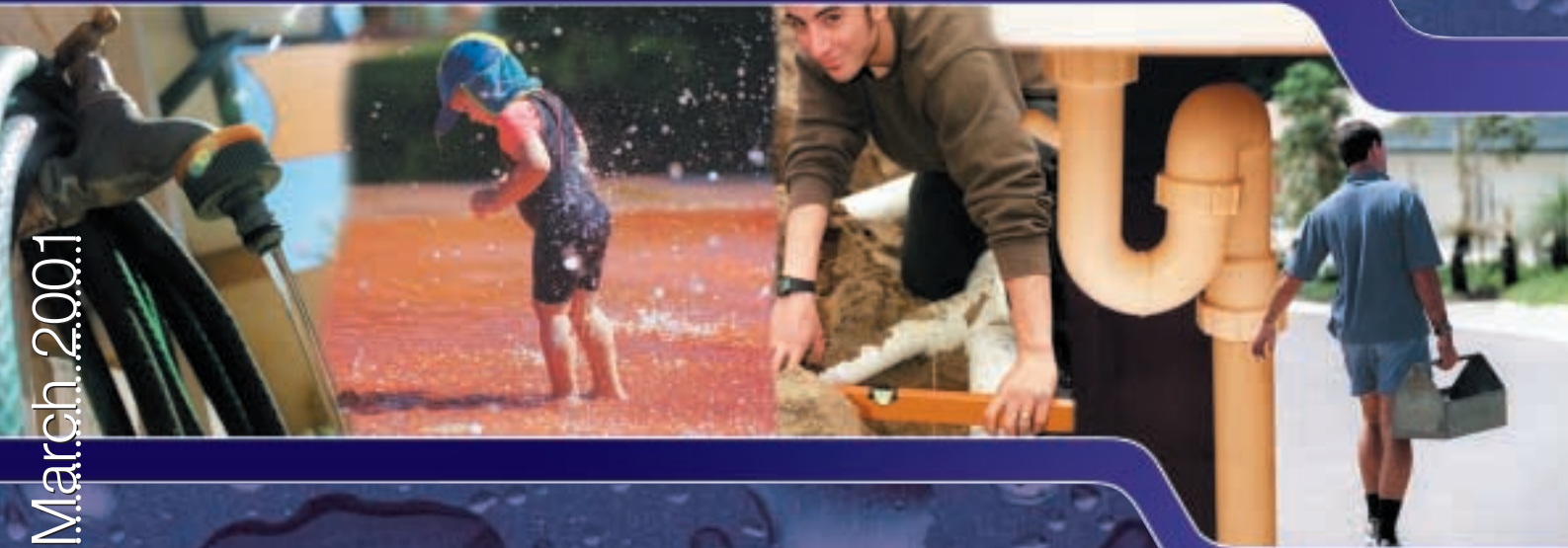




OFFICE OF WATER REGULATION

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# PLUMBERS



.....volume 2.....issue 2.....March 2001

## Licensing Board News

A competent and professional plumbing industry in Western Australia

# welcome

Plumbers Licensing Board news is a regular, biannual newsletter that is issued to all licensed plumbers, licensed tradespersons and key industry stakeholders to carry news of issues affecting the plumbing industry and provide awareness of the Board's activities.

Your input and feedback is important to the Board and may highlight matters that should be included in future editions of Plumbers Licensing Board News.

To provide feedback to the Plumbers Licensing Board about this newsletter please contact:

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Welcome to the second issue of *Plumbers Licensing Board News*. This newsletter has been produced and distributed by the Plumbers Licensing Board.

Please note that under the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000*, Registered Plumbers are now referred to as Licensed Tradespersons.

## Introducing the Board's Support Team

Administrative support for the Plumbers licensing Board is the responsibility of the Office of Water Regulation. Mr Kim Fare is Executive Officer to the Board, Ms Jean Villani has been engaged as Policy and Publications Officer and Ms Gayle Cowan provides licensing and administrative support.



L to R: Jean Villani, Kim Fare and Gayle Cowan

# Classes of Licence

The establishment of the Plumbers Licensing Board has not created a new regulatory regime but merely shifted the plumber licensing powers. The most significant change has been the introduction of a new class of licence known as a 'tradespersons licence'. This new licence has replaced 'registration' that was obtainable under the licensing scheme administered by the Water Corporation.

There are two classes of licence under the new licensing regime. In order to carry out plumbing work as defined by the new licensing regulations in Western Australia a person must hold either:

- Plumbers Licence – which authorises the holder to carry out water supply, sanitary and/or drainage plumbing, exercise general direction and control over the carrying out of plumbing work by the holder of a tradespersons licence and supervise the carrying out of plumbing work by an apprentice.
- Tradespersons Licence – which authorises the holder to carry out plumbing work and supervise the carrying out of plumbing work by an apprentice under the general direction and control of the holder of a plumbers licence.

The annual licence fee for a plumbers licence is \$200 and the annual licence fee for a tradespersons licence is \$75. Both classes of licence must be renewed prior to 30 June each year by payment of the relevant licence fee.

If you would like further information about the classes of licence issued please contact the Board's Licensing Officer, Gayle Cowan on 9213 0100.

## Obligations

When performing plumbing work, plumbers are responsible for ensuring that the work complies with all relevant legislation and appropriate specified standards. In addition, licensed plumbers and licensed tradespersons must also ensure compliance with the requirements under the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000*. These requirements relate to the licensing and regulatory structure and include:

- Employment of Unlicensed Persons Prohibited (Regulation 10)  
A person must not employ or otherwise engage a person under contract of service to carry out plumbing work if the person being employed or engaged does not hold an appropriate licence that authorises the person to carry out plumbing work.
- Providing Licence to Another Person (Regulation 23)  
Licensees must not dispose of their licence or permit another person to use their licence.
- Requirement to Display Licence (Regulation 24)  
Licensed plumbers must ensure that their licence is conspicuously displayed at their principal place of business.
- Licence Number to Appear in Advertising (Regulation 25)  
Licensed plumbers must ensure that their licence number appears in any advertisement relating to their plumbing business.
- Notification of Change of Address (Regulation 46)  
A licensee must notify the Plumbers Licensing Board of a change in the licensee's residential or business address no later than 14 days after the change occurs.

Compliance with the requirements set out in the new plumber licensing regulations will ensure that the Board can actively regulate the industry and restrict unqualified persons from engaging in plumbing activities. Non-compliance with the requirements is an offence and penalties apply.

Copies of the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000* are available for viewing at the Office of Water Regulation. Copies are also available for purchase from the State Law Publisher, to obtain your copy phone 93217688 or e-mail [sales@mpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:sales@mpc.wa.gov.au).

## ID Cards for Licence Holders

All licensed industry members will be issued with wallet sized identification cards in the 2001/2002 financial year.

This is a new initiative that will assist the Board to actively regulate the industry by allowing easy identification of licensed persons carrying out plumbing work.

From 1 July 2001 all licensed plumbers and licensed tradespersons will be expected to produce the identification cards at the request of plumbing inspectors and customers.

In addition to the identification card, licensed plumbers will continue to receive an A4 size licence for display at the licence holders principal place of business in accordance with Regulation 24.

## Drainage Plumbing: By-laws or Health Act?

Under the *Metropolitan, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981* and the *Country Towns By-laws 1952* a person who carries out sanitary plumbing and drainage plumbing connecting or intending to connect to the Water Corporation's sewer must do so in accordance with the requirements specified in the By-laws. These requirements essentially relate to AS/NZS 3500.

Under the *Health Act 1911*, no plumbing standards are specified with regard to drainage plumbing associated with onsite waste disposal systems. Such work must be approved by the relevant local authority subject to such conditions as that local authority thinks fit.

This means that a licensed plumber/tradesperson may be required to comply with two different sets of requirements depending on whether the drainage plumbing is connected to a sewer or to an onsite disposal system.

The Plumbers Licensing Board is currently liaising with the Health Department with a view to establishing uniformity in relation to drainage plumbing requirements in Western Australia.

## A Strategic Approach to Regulation

The Plumbers Licensing Board will be publishing its first strategic plan in the near future and will distribute it to all licensed plumbers, licensed tradespersons and key stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board at its December 2000 meeting, sets the direction for the regulation of the plumbing industry over the next 3 years.

At its inaugural meeting in July last year, the Board identified the need to develop a strategic plan to assist in identifying and prioritising the many regulatory issues that need to be addressed.

The Chairperson, Mr Tom Hall said, "There are a number of issues the Board is keen to address however it is not possible to deal with all of the issues at once. The development of the Strategic Plan has enabled the Board to prioritise these issues".

"Strategies ranging from establishing an ongoing audit process of plumbing work performed under the management of the Board to reviewing the current education and training requirements for licensing have been identified and will be addressed on a prioritised basis".

"Illegal plumbing work, while not directly referred to in the Plan, will be addressed on multiple levels through a series of strategies over the three year period. This relatively long term approach will ensure that the incidence of unqualified persons performing plumbing work is reduced while consumer confidence in our industry is improved".

"Progression of the strategies identified in the strategic plan will lead the way to achieving *a competent and professional plumbing industry in Western Australia* – the Board's vision. This is an ambitious vision that I feel reflects the Board's commitment to the plumbing industry and community at large. As Chairperson of the Board I encourage all stakeholders to read the plan which sets the foundations for the future of our industry".

Following publication and distribution, copies of the Plan will be available on request. Please contact the Plumbers Licensing Board on 9213 0100 should you wish to express your views on projects identified in the Plan or request a copy.



Tom Hall, Chairperson

# Understanding How the Plumbing Industry is Regulated

Although the recent regulatory changes are unlikely to affect members of the plumbing industry on a daily basis, all industry members should be aware of the Plumbers Licensing Board's functions and powers.



L to R: Paul Kelly, Seamus Doherty, John Bruinsma, Michelle D'Adamo, Richard Ballem, Tom Hall, Garry Dunbar, Anna Carlino and Kim Fare.

The changes to the regulation of the plumbing industry came into effect on 19 June 2000 with the proclamation of the *Water Services Coordination Amendment Act 1999*. This Amendment Act establishes a Plumbers Licensing Board with functions related to the licensing of persons carrying out plumbing work in Western Australia whilst the supporting regulations – *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000* – implement the licensing regime.

The aim of the regulatory structure and licensing regime is to ensure that plumbing work is carried out safely and competently so as to protect public safety and health and the environment from unsuitable plumbing systems.

The Board has powers to issue, revoke or suspend plumber licences and take disciplinary action where appropriate relating to breaches of the plumbing standards or licence conditions. Prosecution action can also be taken against unlicensed persons carrying out plumbing work in Western Australia.

In the short term the Water Corporation has agreed to continue to oversee inspections, notifications and certification of plumbing work in respect to the Corporation's schemes, on behalf of the Board. The Board is currently considering its role and structure in relation to inspections and comment from industry in relation to the establishment of a new inspection regime will be sought.

Further information about the regulatory structure can be obtained by contacting the Board's support staff at the Office of Water Regulation on (08) 9213 0100.

## Plumbing Work for which a Licence is Required

Under the new plumber licensing regulations an appropriate licence is required to carry out water supply, sanitary and/or drainage plumbing work anywhere in Western Australia. Collectively, the definition of these three categories of plumbing define the term plumbing work in accordance with the new regulations:



- (a) water supply plumbing is work that involves the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, repair or maintenance of pipes and other fittings used or intended to be used for the supply of potable water from a meter assembly to the points of use within any property;
- (b) sanitary plumbing work is work that involves the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, ventilation, repair or maintenance of fittings and fixtures used or intended to be used for the carrying of wastewater or other waste, but does not include drainage plumbing;
- (c) drainage plumbing is work that involves the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, repair or maintenance of underground pipes and other fittings used or intended to be used for the carrying of –
  - (i) wastewater to a sewer; or
  - (ii) wastewater or other waste to an apparatus for the treatment of sewage.

Categories of plumbing work outside of the above definition, such as roof plumbing and storm water drainage, do not require a licence to be performed.

# Licence Numbers to Appear in Advertising

The holder of a plumbers licence must ensure that the number of the licence appears in any advertisement relating to his or her plumbing business, under Regulation 25 of the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000*.

At its December 2000 meeting the Plumbers Licensing Board adopted a policy document that sets the 'Guidelines for the Inclusion of Plumbers Licence Numbers in Advertising' to assist licensed plumbers to comply with Regulation 25. A brief overview of the guidelines are detailed below:

## *What is an advertisement?*

An advertisement is any public announcement or notice designed to attract public attention. They include, but are not limited to, flyers, business cards, letterhead, vehicle sign writing, building or directional signs, newspaper advertisements, radio or television advertisements, invoices, statements and other similar paperwork.

Authorised entries in community directories such as the Yellow Pages and Big Colour Pages, including free listings, are also deemed to be advertisements.

## *How should the Licence Number be Displayed?*

When displaying the licence number in an advertisement, PL must be displayed as the prefix. The whole licence number and the PL prefix must be displayed. It is acceptable to preface the prefix and number with the words 'licence number' or any abbreviation thereof eg Lic. No. PL145.

The Plumbers Licensing Board issues plumber licences and there should not be any reference made to any other organisations in relation to the licence number.

## *Where should the Licence Number be Displayed?*

The licence number must be clearly associated with the main body of the advertisement. The licence number must not be placed in a position that bears no relation to the advertisement.

## *What size should the Licence Number be?*

The licence number must be large enough to be clearly legible and readable when viewing any advertisement. Specifically, for printed advertisements, the licence number should be the same size as the average type size and for sign writing, the licence number must be large enough to be easily readable when viewing the sign.

To provide plumbers with an ample opportunity to comply with the guidelines a lead-up-time until 1 July 2001 will apply. Further information in relation to the advertising of licence numbers can be obtained by contacting the Plumbers Licensing Board on (08) 9213 0100.



## Raising Issues

One of the major benefits of the establishment of the Plumbers Licensing Board is that all licensed plumbers and licensed tradespersons now have a real opportunity to participate in matters affecting the plumbing industry.

If there are issues affecting the plumbing industry that you believe the Board should consider please take the time to formally raise them with Mr Kim Fare, the Board's Executive Officer, or with your appointed representative on the Board.

