



Plumbers Licensing Board  
Government of Western Australia

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# PLUMBERS



Issue 6 June 2003

## Licensing Board News

A competent and professional plumbing  
industry in Western Australia

# welcome

## Industry forums

During the months of June and July last year the Plumbers Licensing Board conducted a series of industry forums across the state of Western Australia. The forums provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the Board and its activities and to discuss regulatory issues affecting the plumbing industry. More than 500 industry members attended and highlighted the benefits in conducting industry forums on a regular basis.

Another series of industry forums will be held across the state later this year during the months of September, October and November. The main topic will be the regulatory changes as a consequence of the proposed compliance and inspection regime.

It is planned for the first forum to be held on 9 September 2003 with the final forum being held on 11 November 2003. An invitation to register your attendance will be forwarded by mail in August.

## Update on photographic identification for licence holders

As reported in the last Plumbers Licensing Board News, the Plumbers Licensing Board is working towards introducing photographic licence identification cards. The Board has now decided to implement a photographic identification card for the 2004-2005 licensing period.

The process for production of the identification cards is yet to be finalised, however it is intended that industry members will be required to provide a certified photograph of themselves, which will be scanned and then printed onto a licence card. Once digitally captured, a photograph will remain current for at least five years.



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

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## Update on compliance and inspection regime

A position paper outlining a proposed framework for a statewide compliance and inspection regime for the plumbing industry was distributed to all industry operators and key stakeholders for comment by 4 June 2003.

Responses to the position paper are being analysed and will be taken into account in determining the final structure. The aim of the regime will be not only to ensure plumbing in Western Australia is performed to a high standard, and safeguards public health, safety and the environment, but also to ensure that industry operatives comply with their obligations as licensed plumbers and tradespersons.

Further information about the compliance and inspection regime will be provided at the planned industry forums and in the next newsletter.

## Licence renewals due on 30 June

All tradesperson and plumber licences expire on 30 June. This is a busy time for Board licensing staff, as there are more than 3,000 licences that are processed at this time. Please ensure that your contact details are up to date, and allow 10 working days for your new licence card to be posted to you.

Please note that the Board's mailing address has changed to Locked Bag 14, Cloisters Square, Perth WA 6850.

## Distribution of licensees

As at 31 May 2003 there were 3,166 licensed industry members in Western Australia. An analysis of the geographical locations of all currently licensed plumbers and tradespersons has indicated that approximately:

- 65% (2,058) reside in the metropolitan area;
- 2.6% (84) reside in Bunbury;
- 2.3% (73) reside in Geraldton;
- 2% (64) reside in Albany;
- 1.4% (43) reside in Busselton;
- 1.2% (38) reside in Karratha;
- 1% (26) reside in Broome;
- 1% (24) reside in Kalgoorlie; and
- 1% (21) reside in Esperance.

*(These figures do not include licensed persons who are located within surrounding areas).*

## Applications for licences

Under the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000* it is a requirement that the Board satisfy itself that an applicant for a licence not only possesses the relevant qualifications but is also a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

To assist the Board in complying with this requirement, applicants for a tradesperson's or plumber's licence will now need to provide a National Police Certificate as well as character references from previous employers. The National Police Certificate is available upon request from local police stations.

## Employing licensees from interstate

Under the *Water Services Coordination (Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000*, a person must not undertake plumbing work in Western Australia unless that person is the holder of a current licence issued by the Plumbers Licensing Board.

The Board recently became aware of some instances where persons who were licensed in other states of Australia were being employed to do plumbing work. Although eligible to apply for a Western Australian plumber's or tradesperson's licence under Mutual Recognition laws, they had not done so.

Industry members are reminded that employing or otherwise engaging under a contract a person not licensed by the Board to perform plumbing work is an offence and attracts a maximum penalty of \$5,000.

It is recommended that prior to engaging under contract or employing a person to undertake plumbing work the licence status of the person being engaged by confirmed by either sighting the person's Western Australian licence or by contacting the Board.

The Board will continue to monitor that all persons performing plumbing work in Western Australia are currently licensed.

## Plumbing By-laws

Queries were received after the publication of the last newsletter about Board disciplinary inquiries into non-compliance with By-laws 7.1 (Water Supply Plumbing) and 16.1 (Sanitary and Drainage Plumbing) of the *Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981*. It appeared that there was some confusion with regard to the connection between the By-laws and the Australian/New Zealand Standards National Plumbing and Drainage Code (commonly known as AS 3500.)

AS 3500 is a national standard for the installation of plumbing work. It has no legal standing in its own right. However, By-laws 7.1 and 16.1 adopt AS 3500, which results in AS 3500 being the mandatory standard for plumbing work in Western Australia. The By-laws also list a number of modifications to AS 3500 to address specific Western Australian conditions.

It is important that plumbers be aware of the requirements of the *Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981*. Failure to comply with the By-laws can result in a direction to rectify being issued to the plumber. If a breach is considered to be serious, the matter will be referred to the Board with the possibility of a disciplinary inquiry being held.

The By-laws can be purchased from the State Law Publisher, at Ground Floor 10 William Street, Perth WA 6000, ph: 08 9321 7688 or by accessing the following website:

<http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/statutes/regs.nsf/>

and choosing "M" in the "A-Z Browse Current Regulations"



## Update on identification cards for apprentices

As reported in the last issue of the Plumbers Licensing Board News, the Board was intending to issue identification cards to plumbing apprentices.

This initiative is now in place, with new apprentices receiving identification cards after the completion of their 3 month probationary period.

These cards provide apprentices with a means of identification that indicate the apprentice's authority to carry out plumbing work under direction and control of a licensed plumber or tradesperson.

The Western Australian Department of Training retains responsibility for the management of apprenticeships.

## Raising community awareness

To raise community awareness that plumbing work must be performed by a licensed plumber, a series of advertisements appeared in the Trades Section of 23 metropolitan and regional newspapers during the period 11 February to 26 March 2003. The advertisement highlighted that plumbing work must be carried out by an appropriately licensed plumber and that the homeowner should ask to see their plumber's licence, or check to see if they were licensed by calling the Plumbers Licensing Board.

## "Out of Service" tags

The Board recently received a complaint from a consumer about an electric hot water system that had been installed by a licensed plumber but the temperature relief valve had not been vented in accordance with the plumbing standards. On investigation, it became apparent that the system had been commissioned by an electrician before the plumber had finished the installation. This resulted in the relief valve discharging directly onto the laundry floor.

To avoid situations like this, it is advisable for plumbers to attach an "Out of Service" tag to incomplete installations, with the plumber's name, contact number and plumber's licence number clearly printed on the tag. Then persons such as members of the public, plumbing inspectors, and other tradespeople can clearly see that the installation is not complete, and therefore not fit for use.



**Summary of complaints received**  
January-June 2003

Type	Total Received	Justified	Not Justified	Still Under Investigation
Unsatisfactory Workmanship	13	5	2	6
Alleged Unlicensed Plumbing	20	5	3	12
Advertising Plumbing Work with No Licence Number	1		1	
Improper Conduct	3	1	2	

**Prosecutions for breaches of the Water Services Coordination  
(Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000**  
January-June 2003

Breaches of the Regulations are not dealt with by the Board, but are referred to the courts for determination.

Breach	Name	Lic. No	Fine & Court Costs (\$)
Carried out unlicensed plumbing work	Glenn Murray Rickman	N/A	\$872.50
Carried out unlicensed plumbing work	Gerard Van Brakel	N/A	\$557.70
Carried out plumbing work not under the general direction and control of a licensed plumber	Paul Broadbent	TL8797	\$477.50
Carried out unlicensed plumbing work	John Benjamin Durant	N/A	\$587.50
Three counts of carrying out unlicensed plumbing work	Kevin John Bolt	N/A	\$1137.50
Carried out unlicensed plumbing work	Rodney Charles Bennett	N/A	\$1077.50

**Disciplinary Inquiries held by the Plumbers Licensing Board  
in accordance with the Water Services Coordination  
(Plumbers Licensing) Regulations 2000**  
January-June 2003

Breaches of plumbing standards are determined by the Board.

Disciplinary Matter	Date	Name of Licensee	Outcome
Failure to comply with By-law 7.1(a)*	20 January 2003	Shane Michael Wood	\$300 penalty; work to be monitored for six months
Failure to comply with By-law 16.1**	20 January 2003	Stephen Anthony Ellis	\$1,250 penalty; work to be monitored for six months
Failure to comply with By-law 16.1**	20 January 2003	Ross Gregson	\$300 penalty; work be monitored for six months
Failure to comply with By-law 16.1**	20 January 2003	Christopher Paul Halsall	\$100 penalty; work to be monitored for six months
Failure to comply with By-law 16.1**	31 March 2003	Joseph Clynk	\$1,000 penalty; work to be monitored for three months

\* of the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981* (Water Supply Plumbing), which adopts AS3500 as the mandatory standard.

\*\* of the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981* (Sanitary & Drainage Plumbing), which adopts AS3500 as the mandatory standard.

4 disciplinary inquiries were dismissed.

1 disciplinary inquiry is currently the subject of appeal in the Local Court