



Plumbers Licensing Board
Government of Western Australia



Plumbers Licensing Board News

Issue 14 – December 2007





Future Trends for the Plumbing Industry

2007 has seen an unprecedented focus on and demand for the work of the plumbing trade. This edition of the Plumbers Licensing Board *News* highlights significant impacts on the plumbing industry, plumbing regulation and administration of the licensing and compliance framework.

Sustainability initiatives by the State Government in consumer and industry water consumption, recycling, re-use and discharge will continue the call for specialist plumbing services. The Board is consulting widely in these matters and has taken a lead role in supporting training for both apprentices and current licence holders to ensure that plumbers are qualified with the skills and knowledge to provide such services to consumers.

In line with specialisation in the industry, the Board is recruiting key staff with skills in the fields of training, education, compliance and regulation. The Board has already appointed a senior compliance officer to assist Indigenous and remote communities, and plans to recruit for further positions in 2008.

Other forthcoming changes will also influence the delivery of services to licensed plumbers. A new Building Commission will be created over the next 18 months to provide a "one stop shop" for all building issues. The Board is in favour of transferring its operations to the Commission due to the advantages to the trade and its consumers. Over the next year, the Board will also be incorporating e-business policies into its business operations to allow the delivery of online services to plumbers. This will provide individuals and businesses with greater flexibility and convenience in complying with their regulatory requirements.

The Board also congratulates the winners and finalists in the plumbing categories of the MPGA Awards for Excellence. These plumbers and businesses represent the high standards required of the industry and give confidence that the industry is more than capable of keeping pace with the rapid change it faces.

The Board looks forward to a challenging and successful 2008.

Tom Hall
Chairperson

New Technical Compliance Officers



*Compliance Officers
Jesper Bové (standing),
Alan Francis (left), and
Robert Crook (right)*

The Board is pleased to announce that Alan Francis, Jesper Bové and Robert Crook have joined the PLB's Compliance team as plumbing compliance officers. The new officers bring over 60 years of collective experience in the plumbing trade as well as a variety of skills gained from involvement in industry training and business.

The new officers will be using their extensive plumbing knowledge and trade experience to carry out audits of plumbing work and compliance checks throughout the state and to provide advice on the plumbing standards and regulations to licensees through the Board's Technical Advice Line on 1300 360 897.

Compliance services expand for remote and regional areas

A new specialist position has been created to assist Indigenous and disadvantaged consumers, particularly in remote areas, with plumbing-related matters. The Board congratulates Garry Dunbar on his appointment to the position of Senior Compliance Officer (Indigenous Communities). Garry will be providing technical advice to licensed plumbers on plumbing standards and carrying out plumbing work for indigenous communities.



Senior Compliance Officer Garry Dunbar in Geraldton

Additionally, as part of the Board's regional focus, Compliance Officers will be permanently stationed in the regional centres of Bunbury and Geraldton from early in 2008. Plumbers and consumers in these regions and their surrounds will benefit from greater access to local compliance services.

Cover Photographs

Top: Board members at a site visit to water and energy-efficient constructions

Middle: Finalists of the Plumber of the Year Awards with skills judges Shane Calegari (MPA) and Dale Froby (PLB) and other MPA sponsors. Image provided courtesy of the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association

Bottom: Plumber of the Year, Domenic Sauta's award

Sustainability and the Plumbing Industry

Sustainability Workshops

The Board is responding to the Government's initiatives on Climate Change and in October held a Sustainability Workshop over two days for relevant government agencies to share information on water policy matters.

The workshop involved presentations from senior representatives from the Departments of Water, Environment, and Housing and Works as well as the Water Corporation, and was also attended by the Master Plumbers Association. The sessions covered the delivery, use, recycling and discharge of water, with Board members also inspecting examples of sustainable plumbing systems in new residential and commercial construction projects.

The Workshop will assist in formulating the Board actions to assist and advise the community, government and the plumbing industry in this important matter.



Left: Enviro Plumb WA's Gordon Stimson (far left) showing Board members an underground rainwater tank.

Right: Steve Waller, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Department of the Environment, delivering his presentation on global temperature rises



5 Star Plus and Beyond

The Board is continuing to consult over the proposed Stage 2 of the Water Use in Houses Code and advise the Department of Housing and Works over measures that will be required to minimise the risks to consumers from the supply, use and discharge of alternate sources of water for drinking and other domestic use. As these measures will involve an expansion of industry training requirements and regulation, the Board will need to closely consult with key stakeholders such as the Department of Health, MPGA and the Plumbing Industry Reference Group.

At this time, it is proposed the Code is to be introduced to new house construction only and will be implemented after agreement has been reached with key stakeholders and appropriate safeguards are in place. In the Board's view, this will need to precede any consideration of extending these water sustainability initiatives to existing homes and other property use.

The Board's web site www.plumbers.wa.gov.au carries updates on *Sustainability and the Plumbing Industry* with links to the Government's *ActNow* web site for all sustainable initiatives and the Department of Housing and Works' *5StarPlus* sustainable housing programme.

Building Industry Commission for Western Australia

Western Australia is to have a Building Commission with the State Government recently approving the creation of a statutory body to combine the registration of builders and related trades and the regulation of work standards across the construction industry.

The Commission is scheduled to be fully operational in mid 2009 and will simplify building regulation and improve services to consumers and industry by providing a single agency for all building related matters such as legislation, codes, licensing and standards. The Commission will also research and develop policy and advise the Minister for Housing and Works and other agencies on all building industry matters.

The Board has considered the advantages to the plumbing industry and consumers from the creation of the Commission and has recommended to the Minister for Consumer Protection that the Board transfer its operations to the Commission.

Plumbers will continue to be licensed under and subject to existing legislation, regulations and plumbing standards.

The Board sees the creation of the Commission as an important initiative ensuring an efficient and cohesive approach to building standards as well as sustainability issues such as 5 Star Plus and the water use codes, by combining resources and expertise from across government and the industry.

Updates on the transfer of the Board's operations to the Building Commission will also be posted on the www.plumbers.wa.gov.au to keep the plumbing industry informed.

Online Services and Changes to Certification Forms

In 2008 the Board will be introducing new electronic systems to improve our level of service to the industry and increase the ease of complying with self-certification requirements.

The initiatives will allow more streamlined methods of notification. Options are currently being explored to allow plumbers to notify the Board of plumbing work they will be undertaking through alternate avenues to written notification.

The Board will be sending a short survey to all plumbing licence and restricted plumbing permit holders soon to allow comment on proposed changes to forms and lodgement processes. Feedback and suggestions will be considered and plumbers will be fully informed before any new procedures are implemented.

Compliance Investigations and Disciplinary Action by the Plumbers Licensing Board under the Water Services Licensing (Plumbers Licensing and Plumbing Standards) Regulations 2000

Summary Report of Complaints For the Period May 2007 to October 2007

Type	Carryover complaints (April 2007)	Complaints received in period	Complaints finalised	Current complaints under investigation
Alleged Unsatisfactory Workmanship	24	26	40	10
Alleged Unlicensed Plumbing	7	10	13	4
Other Regulation Breaches	8	6	5	9

NOTES

- During this six-month period 42 complaints new complaints were received and 58 finalised.
- Other breaches of the Regulations included failure to submit the required Notice of Intention or Certificate of Compliance to the Board; not quoting a licence number on business advertising; and carrying out plumbing work whilst not under the control of a licensed plumbing contractor.
- A number of complaints involved multiple concerns, for example workmanship and failure to submit required documentation.

Prosecutions for Breaches For the Period May 2007 to October 2007

Name	Date	Lic.No.	Fine	Cost	Breach
Matthew Neal	24 July 2007	Unlicensed	\$750.00	\$418.00	Unlicensed plumbing work

Disciplinary Inquiries referred to the State Administrative Tribunal For the Period May 2007 to October 2007

Name	Date	Lic.No.	Fine	Cost	Breach
No Disciplinary Inquiries were heard in the period.					

Where it is in the public interest, or needed to inform the plumbing industry, the website www.plumbers.wa.gov.au will contain Media Statements on plumbing related matters such as decisions of the State Administrative Tribunal.

Seasons Greetings

The Plumbers Licensing Board and Department of Consumer and Employment Protection (DOCEP) offices are open over the festive period, closing only on:



- Tuesday 25 December 2007;
- Wednesday 26 December; and
- Tuesday 1 January 2008.



The members of the Plumbers Licensing Board and the staff of the Plumbers Licensing Branch wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

Your input and feedback is valued by the Board and could highlight matters that should be included in future editions of the Plumbers Licensing Board News or on the Board's website. To provide feedback please contact:

Policy and Projects Team
Plumbers Licensing Board
Ph: 9282 0478
Fax: 9282 4387

Or write to us at:
Locked Bag 14
Cloisters Square WA 6850
Email: plumbers@docep.wa.gov.au



Plumber of the Year and Plumbing Business of the Year 2007

The Plumber of the Year and Plumbing Business of the Year were announced at the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner on 1 December 2007.

Congratulations this year go to **Domenic Sauta** of Charter Plumbing and Gas, and **Ace Plumbing & Gas** on their success.

Domenic was named the 2007 Plumber of the Year for demonstrating exceptional skills and workmanship, high levels of reliability and customer focus.

Ace Plumbing & Gas, the winner of the 2007 Plumbing Business of the Year Award, received the honour in recognition of its high standards of workmanship and compliance with regulatory requirements, as well as its customer service quality, commitment to training and development and general business practices.

The winners were presented with their awards by Jean Villani, Executive Officer of the Plumbers Licensing Board, and each received a luxury holiday prize package valued at \$2,500.

Plumber of the Year Award

Winner

Domenic Sauta

Finalists

Robert Aristei

Broome Plumbing and Gas

David Donovan

Enviro Plumb WA

Grant McGinnis

National Plumbing

Kevin Rowan

Warren Plumbing



Ace Plumbing & Gas



*Plumber of the Year Domenic Sauta,
with the Board's Jean Villani*

Plumbing Business of the Year Award

Winner

Ace Plumbing & Gas

Commendations

Enviro Plumb WA for *Sustainable Plumbing*

Kelly's Hot Water, Gas and Air for *Risk Management Practices*

Finalists

National Plumbing

Rowson's Plumbing Services

The Board would like to congratulate all of the finalists on the high quality of workmanship and standards exhibited in both award categories. Thanks are also extended to the Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon Michelle Roberts, for her attendance at the Gala Dinner, and the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association for their work on the industry awards. All licensed plumbers and plumbing businesses are encouraged to participate in next year's Awards. The Board looks forward to similarly successful night in 2008.

Photographs courtesy of the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association

Board Support for Industry Training

Supporting the training needs of the industry is a core component of the Board's strategies to encourage excellence in plumbing.

The Board has renewed its direct involvement in training through its development of the course workbooks for the plumbing contractor course launched earlier this year. A further and significant contribution is the writing and administering of classroom based assessments for the course.

Other major steps for plumbing education are:

- continued liaison with the Master Plumbers Association (MPA) of Western Australia, and support for the MPA to implement and deliver post trade courses for plumbing contractors;
- creation of a Flexible Delivery Strategy for the Certificate IV package; and
- establishment of a Plumbing Industry Training Fund, which will commence in 2008 and will provide registered training organisations with up to \$100,000 worth of training resources over the year. The Fund will supply practical resources, such as hot water systems and fixtures and fittings for use in training.

Regulations in Practice

This edition begins a new section of the Plumbers Licensing Board *News* to highlight and explain the *Water Services Licensing (Plumbing Licensing and Plumbing Standards) Regulations 2000* (the Regulations). Each edition will focus on a particular regulation or set of related regulations.

1. Regulation 10 – Employment of Unlicensed persons prohibited

The purpose of this regulation is to make certain that public health and safety, and the plumbing industry are protected, by ensuring only qualified and authorised persons are installing and maintaining plumbing systems.

Regulation 10 states that you “must not employ or otherwise engage a person, under contract of service or for services, to carry out plumbing work if you know that the carrying out of the work by the person employed or engaged is or would be contrary to regulation 9(1)” (the requirement to hold a licence or permit).

Only appropriately licensed persons can carry out plumbing work in Western Australia. Not only is it an offence to perform plumbing work without a licence, under regulation 10, it is also an offence to employ an unlicensed person to carry out plumbing work.

This means that you cannot hire a person in any way to perform plumbing work that they do not have a valid licence to carry out. The penalty for breaching this regulation can be up to \$5000.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all employees, contractors or other people engaged to undertake plumbing work for you not only hold a licence, but are licensed for the type of work they are employed to do. For example, it is prohibited to hire a plumber who holds a tradespersons licence in drainage only to perform water supply or sanitary plumbing.

You should also note that a Trade Certificate is not a licence. All apprentices need to apply to the Board at the end of their trade studies to become a licensed tradesperson.

With the introduction of photographic identification cards, it is easy to confirm if any potential employee is suitably licensed by:

- requesting to view a valid licence card, which will confirm the licence expiry date, type of work the holder is authorised to do and any conditions imposed on the licence or permit, before hiring someone; or
- calling the Board's Licensing Team on 9282 0478

For current employees, you can also provide the Board with a copy of your employee register, marked to the attention of the Licensing Coordinator, and the Licensing Team will confirm the status of your employees' licences.

Technical Publications

The Board produces a number of technical publications for licensed plumbers, and will be releasing new Technical Notes on a regular basis. The series currently contains notes on:

- Drainage Audit Requirements;
- Pipe Sizing and Commissioning; and
- Inspection Openings for Drainage Plumbing.

Upcoming topics include Hot Water Units, Boundary Traps and Vacuum Seals.

Publications can be downloaded from the Board's website or sent on request.

Contact Information

Plumbers Licensing Board

General Enquiries: 9282 0478

Technical Advice: 1300 360 897

Fax: 9282 4387

Email: plumbers@docep.wa.gov.au

For copies of the Regulations:

State Law Publisher

10 William Street, Perth

(08) 9321 7688 or (08) 9321 7536

www.slp.wa.gov.au

Water filtration systems- timely reminders

Community concern over drinking water purity has increased the demand for water filtration systems being installed in residences and business premises.

To counter any risks to health by D-I-Y consumers the Board is launching a campaign over the coming weeks to alert hardware stores and consumers about the need to employ a licensed plumber to undertake any installation, maintenance, repair or replacement of a water filtration system.

The Regulations allow only licensed plumbing contractors or licensed tradespersons working under the direction and control of a licensed plumbing contractor to install and service water filtration units.

The Board also reminds licensed plumbers that any new installation is deemed to be *major plumbing work* under the Regulations. If the water supply has to be turned off or disconnected to accommodate the installation of the required water supply isolation valves, a Notice of Intention and Certificate of Compliance must be lodged with the Board by the licensed plumbing contractor responsible for the work.

Subsequent disconnection, as well as any maintenance, repair, or replacement of a water filtration system is *minor plumbing work* and is also to be certified on a Multi-entry Certificate provided to the Board.