

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board



NORTHERN TERRITORY PLUMBERS AND DRAINERS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board, a statutory authority established under the *Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act*, is responsible for the issue of Advanced Tradesman licences and Journeyman registrations.

The Board administers the *Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act*, which currently has effect in gazetted Plumbing Licence Areas and ensures only appropriately qualified people are licensed or registered. The Board is also responsible for the assessment and maintenance of standards of workmanship and consumer protection through the investigation of complaints and, where appropriate, disciplinary action. The Board fulfils its role by functioning in conjunction with other authorities who, under their own legislation, require authorised plumbing and drainage works to be carried out by appropriately licensed tradesmen.

Plumbing works undertaken outside gazetted Plumbing Licence Areas cannot be considered by the Board under the current Act.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Board should consist of five members, including a Chair and Deputy Chair, appointed by the Minister for a term not exceeding three years. These members are drawn from representative groups within the plumbing industry and those who are not public servants are entitled to remuneration, allowances and expenses as provided in the General Remuneration Determination.

At 30 September 2016 the composition of the Board was as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Chairman | Richard McElwee Licensed Plumber & Drainer, Tap & Drain Doctor NT |
| Deputy Chairman | Travis Miezis Licensed Plumber & Drainer, Ausplumb Pty Ltd |
| Members | Rodney Cryer Employment and Skilling Department of Trade, Business and Innovation (representative of the authority charged with registration of apprenticeship, etc) |
| | Armando Padovan Senior Director, Built Environment Building Advisory Services Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (employee of the Agency administering the <i>Building Act</i>) |

Raymond Simpson
Lecturer and Workplace Assessor
Building Technology, Charles Darwin University
(representative of educational institutions which provide training for
apprentice plumbers and drainers)

3. ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

In June 2016 Licencing NT appointed a Secretariat Team to carry out the administrative arrangements necessary to support several statutory bodies (including the Plumbers & Drainers Licensing Board) as part of the functions of Licensing NT. Secretariat support is provided in accordance with the legislative framework of the relevant Acts administered by Licensing NT.

In September 2016 Licensing NT were transferred from the Department of Business to the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. This movement has not affected the Plumbers and Drainers Licencing Board.

4. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

It is legislated that board meetings are to be held as required to attend to business at hand, with the proviso that the interval between one meeting and the next does not exceed three months. During the period covered by this report six meetings were held to deal with issues arising from the legislation and with complaints. Other matters were considered out of session.

Applications for licences and registration are determined by the Registrar under a standing delegation, subject to provision of all the information required by the Board.

The Board maintains an open door policy. Any plumber, plumbing contractor or other interested party who wishes to clarify or discuss any matter relating to the Act or the Board's administration of the Act, is invited to do so.

5. LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF APPLICANTS

The Board is responsible for issuing licences and registration cards to qualified persons within the plumbing and draining industry.

Licences are issued to people who satisfy the appropriate educational and practical experience qualifications as set out in the Act and determined by the Board, or who are currently registered elsewhere in Australia or New Zealand (Mutual Recognition). There are two categories of registration/licence:

An **Advanced Tradesman licence** enables the holder to contract in his own right and to perform and control the authorised work as specified in the Act.

A **registered Journeyman** is not permitted to contract on his own account or to carry out work unsupervised, but may perform authorised work only under the control and supervision of the holder of an Advanced Tradesman's licence.

Someone wishing to upgrade from a Journeyman registration to an Advanced Tradesman's licence must complete ten units of competency from the Certificate IV in Plumbing, demonstrate two years' work experience gained while holding a Journeyman registration or equivalent in Australia and hold a current NT Journeyman registration.

Applicants who qualified overseas and are now in Australia must fulfil the same requirements as locally trained applicants in order to obtain a Journeyman registration, i.e. completion of an apprenticeship and a Certificate III. In 2012 the Board developed a policy to deal with skilled migrants wishing to migrate to the NT. Successful applicants are issued with a conditional registration for one year to enable them to work while gaining the appropriate educational qualification and Australian context experience.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Board's website is constantly reviewed and updated to provide current Board policies, application forms and a list of currently licensed plumbers, as well as links to interstate licensing Boards. It also provides a link to the COAG site where plumbers can check the equivalent of their registration or licence in other states.

News items and links to useful publications by, for example, the Health Department and Power & Water Corporation, are also added on request.

The Board's website can be accessed at <http://www.plumberslicensing.nt.gov.au/>

From time to time the Registrar prepares a newsletter which is sent out to all Advanced Tradesmen and includes such information as how to apply for a licence/registration, policy relating to overseas trained applications, requirements for registration as a Certifying Plumber and Drainer and other information which may be useful to tradesmen arriving from elsewhere. Newsletters are available on the Board's website.

7. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Advanced Tradesman Licences and Journeyman Registrations are issued in the categories of Plumbing (Water and Sanitary) and/or Draining. They are issued to applicants who have completed training in the Plumbing and Draining trade or who are eligible for an equivalent licence on the basis of an interstate or New Zealand licence.

The following table shows a steady increase in the number of Journeyman Registrations (Jmn), Advanced Tradesman Licences (ALT) and conditional Journeyman Registrations (Con Jmn) issued since 2013.

| 2013 | | | 2014 | | | 2015 | | | 2016 | | |
|------|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|------|-----|---------|
| Jmn | ALT | Con Jmn | Jmn | ALT | Con Jmn | Jmn | ALT | Con Jmn | Jmn | ALT | Con Jmn |
| 370 | 739 | 0 | 465 | 755 | 0 | 516 | 765 | 9 | 594 | 882 | 12 |

8. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

During the 2015/16 Financial Year the Department of Business administered the Board's budget and finances during the majority of the period in question and the Department's financial statement forms a part of the Department's report. Expenditure on Board business in this financial year reflects the fact that once again Board members and the Registrar did not travel to Alice Springs during this period.

9. INTERACTION WITH INDUSTRY

The Board liaises with licensing authorities and various industry bodies throughout Australia in carrying out its functions under the Act.

10. INDUSTRY CONCERNS

Unlicensed persons advertising for plumbing work without appropriate licence which is taking work away from Licensed Plumbers.

Interstate companies operating businesses in the NT with inappropriately licenced Plumbers which are managing job sites and supervising apprentices contrary to current legislation.

Government contracts being awarded to non-plumbing companies which is taking work away from Licensed Plumbers and forcing Territorians to move interstate.

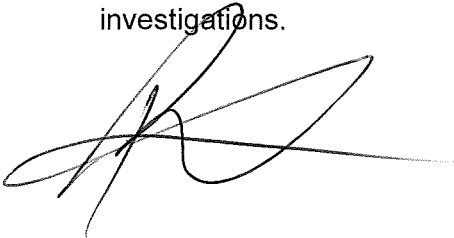
11. COMPLAINTS AND ENFORCEMENT

During 2015-2016 one complaint was received by the Board in relation to breaches of registration requirements by Journeymen or unlicensed persons found to be advertising their services. The matter was resolved without recourse to legal action. The Board continues to monitor and investigate complaints.

Reports of overseas-trained plumbers working unlicensed in the industry were investigated. The Board took steps to ensure that the tradesmen in question followed the board policy to rectify the situation.

12. REVIEW OF LEGISLATION

The Board is supportive of a general review of plumbing regulation to provide better clarity and strengthening of legislative requirements such as introduction of the requirement to display licence numbers when advertising for work and the handling of complaints period currently determined by statute of limitations requires to be extended to allow additional time to carry out necessary investigations.



RICHARD McELWEE
Chairperson

7 November 2017