

8 October 2004

Mr Tony Hinton  
Commissioner  
Productivity Commission  
P O Box 80  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Email: building@pc.gov.au

Dear Mr Hinton,

**Productivity Commission 2004, Reform Regulation,**  
**Draft Research Report,**  
**Productivity Commission, August**

On behalf of my Association, I wish to acknowledge the very comprehensive set of work presented in this Draft Research Report.

The MPMSAA is pleased to have the opportunity to comment, and our submission is attached.

We would be prepared to provide further detail on any issue of our comments and offer access to our records of reports focussed on occupational licensing.

In particular, we fully endorse the establishment of the National Plumbing Regulators Forum and the work done to draft the Plumbing Code of Australia.

It is only with strong commitment at the National level with all Government and Territory Support that nationally consistent outcomes can more rapidly and internationally responsively be achieved.

To that end the MPMSAA especially endorses the proposition of the Chairman of the ABCB for the establishment of a regulatory regime for plumbing that mimics the ABCB – an IGA for plumbing and the establishment of an Australian Plumbing Codes Board.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Herbert', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ray W Herbert, FIE Aust CP Eng  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**COMMENT ON THE  
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION 2004  
REFORM OF BUILDING REGULATION  
DRAFT RESEARCH REPORT  
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION, AUGUST**

By the

**MASTER PLUMBERS' AND MECHANICAL SERVICES  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

**OCTOBER 2004**

## **1. PLUMBING INDUSTRY OVERVIEW**

In Australia it is well established that plumbers and plumbing are regulated.

Initially, for public health purposes for water and sanitary work. Further regulation of gasfitting included OH&S and public safety requirements.

More lately, new regulatory requirements have been introduced for sustainable environment outcomes including water saving, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emission reduction and control of ozone depleting gases.

In Victoria for example, the regulation of plumbers for public health purposes began on 19 October 1914.

From this early beginning, the need for industry involvement was recognised by the appointment of members of the MPMSAA to this first regulatory board.

During the 1990's the Australian Plumbing Industry responded to the accelerated process of microeconomic reform seeking the achievement of national standards and regulations seen as essential to the efficient working of the Australian economy.

This applied to the replacement of local authority technical regulations with Australian Standards, and with improvement to reciprocity and mutual recognition of licensed trades' qualifications.

In our experience, the time frames to achieve nationally consistent systems have been long term.

Although the important AS3500 Plumbing Standard was achieved in 1989 after ten years of industry input, it took another ten years for gradual adoption by State and Territory jurisdictions.

The National Technical Standard was an important forerunner to the more important and recently developed Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) in 2004.

This outcome of the PCA has only been achieved by the establishment of the National Plumbing Regulators Forum.

In the 1980/90's era a series of reviews of occupational licensing of plumbers were undertaken.

These resulted in reports by B H Tregillis, A S Paine and L J Hossack.

The extent of study is shown by the attached Bibliography from:

*“A proposal for a Nationally Consistent System of Occupational Licensing for Plumbers and Gasfitters – L J Hossack 1992.”*

Refer Attachment No.1A.

As an outcome of these reviews, much has been done that has been assisted by the mutual co-operation of ANZRA – the Australia – New Zealand Reciprocity Association of Licensing Authorities for plumbers and gasfitters in Australia and New Zealand.

A copy of the ANZRA reciprocity agreement on recognition of the Certification of the Competency of Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers, July 1983 is attached. The original agreement was made in March 1950 and has been amended several times over the decades. Refer Attachments No. 1B and 1C *“What in the World is ANZRA”*

The fifty years of reciprocity and mutual recognition experience in ANZRA is an important key underpinning the establishment of the National Plumbing Regulators Forum and enables a national progression to an Australian Plumbing Codes Board.

As an outcome of these reviews, much has been done to modernise the trans-Tasman relationship for recognition of plumbing qualifications.

A key to progress in plumbing was the establishment in 1981 of the Victorian Plumbing Gasfitters and Drains Board, forerunner of the current Plumbing Industry Commission.

The introduction of this Board in Victoria dispensed with some 230 other plumbing regulatory bodies and paved the way to a more uniform and consistent technical regulatory system.

This has been particularly important in Victoria when the Water Industry corporatised and the Gas and Electricity Utilities privatised.

The background to the 1981 legislation is shown in the extract from the report,

*“A Business View of Industry Self Regulation for the Plumbing Industry – R Herbert, February 1993.”* Refer Attachment No. 1D

## **2. THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY CONSISTENT OPERATING REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT FOR PLUMBING AND GASFITTING IN THE AUSTRALIAN WATER AND GAS INDUSTRY**

An outcome of the reviews of the 1990's was a nationally consistent approach to the recognition of overseas qualifications, the approval of plumbing products and the alignment of plumbing and gasfitting standards with international standards.

As Australia continues to grow, skills shortages attract qualified migrant plumbers and gasfitters. ANZRA operates a reference system of qualifications of plumbers from known countries and provinces throughout the world that register plumbers and gasfitters.

This reference system is recognised by the World Plumbing Council (WPC) and of course, is used by all Australian States and Territories and New Zealand.

With the advent of the National Plumbing Regulators Forum and with the support of the ANZRA body, the 50 year old Association of the Plumbing Licensing Authorities in Australia, a breakaway from the failed National Building and Construction Industry Training Council, was achieved.

Almost immediately the plumbing industry was able to move forward again after 13 years and achieve a new forward looking set of Nationally Consistent Plumbing Trades Competencies.

Nationally consistent technical installation standards and product approval need to be aligned with, and where necessary, adopt international standards.

Water, waste water, reuse water, recycled water, roof water industry developments, and air quality standards in Australia are responsive to the World Health Organisation.

The MPMSAA as a member of WPC is very conscious of the international plumbing industry response to the recent SARS outbreak and of course, the ongoing issues related to Legionella in warm water systems and air conditioning.

Water borne diseases remain an increasing concern for high standards of plumbing as microbiologists show high levels of contamination of modern water supplies in Australia.

The maintenance of up-to-date separate technical standards and codes that reflect both Australian and international bodies of research is critical for both productivity and the general goals of public health and safety.

The productivity issues further highlight the need for separate and up-to-date standards for plumbing and also relate to the vast supply of imported products, pipe work systems and related service technology requirements.

Australian's are sold houses and apartments boasting the latest "European" appliances.

However, the market has a growing influx of Chinese manufactured products, and companies such as the Japanese manufacturer, RINNAI, are so well known they are often thought of as Australian products.

Gas technical standards are strongly influenced by the International Gas Industry and this again points to the important need of separation of the plumbing codes from the built fabric of the building codes and the need of local building regulators.

The MPMSAA for many of these reasons has opposed the incorporation of a Plumbing Code of Australia into the BCA.

This view has been held especially since the publication of the New Zealand Building Code gave example of the complexity this code provides for plumbing standards and regulations.

For efficiency and productivity the PCA and future conversion of the former Australian Gas Association Standards to Australian Standards must not be incorporated into the BCA, and remain as companion documents to the BCA.

Again, once the National Plumbing Regulators Forum was established in 2002, work was immediately possible on a Plumbing Code of Australia.

This code published in 2004 with its relationship with the Australian Standards has enormous opportunity to drive national consistency and productivity, particularly for the key areas of water efficient technology, gas efficient technology and new technologies for reuse and recycled water installations.

Australian productivity recommendation must consider the aggressive nature of the international plumbing technology and manufacturing industries that look to enter the Australian market as it grows and also responds to international standards of health, safety, environmental efficiency and sustainability.

The MPMSAA believes the current progress by the National Plumbing Regulators Forum in achieving the Plumbing Code of Australia is one of the most progressive steps in the last twenty years in response to the Inter Government Agreements of 1991 with the aim of reforming inter-governmental relations and enhancing national efficiency.

The use of Inter-Government Agreements might be considered a useful step to facilitate the collaboration of the NPRF with the Australian Gas Technical Regulators Committee (GTRC).

GTRC deals with transmission, distribution, installation, appliance, and safety and gas quality regulations in all States. GTRC is actively involved in regulatory reform and development activities.

The IGA for plumbing and gas could point the way for the future vision and Strategy for the Australian Plumbing Code Board.

### **3. AUSTRALIAN BUILDING CODES BOARD NAME SHOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED**

The MPMSAA notes that the Draft report suggests widening the scope and role of the ABCB and thus requires a name change.

The MPMSAA suggests it may be inappropriate to change the name to a Regulation Board. From a 100 years plumbing perspective, regulation is often at the lowest level of Authority and hundreds of plumbing regulators still function in Australia.

The ABCB has become an identifiable trans-Tasman brand name which could be successfully re-launched with additional responsibilities.

The use of the Term Code offers a higher level of professional statutory recognition than being seen as just another public service regulation department.

The MPMSAA dictionary suggests a Code provides for the Systematic Collection of Statutes, body of laws so arranged as to avoid inconsistency and overlapping; set of rules.

Regulation is more specific in definition *viz.* regulating or being regulated; prescribed rule; authoritative direction.

The goals for the ABCB seem to be more for establishing uniformity and national consistency for systems which could be achieved by a stronger commitment of State and Territory jurisdictions through a new Inter Government Agreement.

### **4. DRAFT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 Code Content and Coverage**

The benefits of national consistency or even international consistency are well recognised in many fields of endeavour, including plumbing and gas fitting.

The Draft report correctly notes there is considerable resistance from the plumbing industry against the consolidation of plumbing requirements into the BCA. This relates to many reasons of achieving industry efficiency through national consistency for plumbing qualifications, licensing, certification of compliance, audits and product approval processes.

The MPMSAA supports the recorded Statement of the South Australian Government at p.124 as follows;

“The National Plumbing Code of Australia will provide for plumbing what the BCA has provided for the building fabric. It is closely

aligned with the BCA and eventually be seen as a companion document regulating plumbing on a nationally consistent basis.

The MPMSAA suggests amendment to DRAFT FINDING 6.2 as follows.

#### DRAFT FINDING 6.2

**Incorporating the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) into the BCA would not seem to be warranted.**

The MPMSAA believes the Draft Recommendation 6.3 should be amended as follows:

#### AMENDED DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 6.3

**The ABCB (or its replacement) should continue to work with the National Plumbing Regulators Forum (NPRF) and the Australian Gas Technical Regulators Committee (GTRC) to identify and resolve differences between the BCA and the PCA and on-site gas requirements.**

#### DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 6.5

**The MPMSAA endorses DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 6.5 particularly to deal with ongoing maintenance and services access during the life of the building.**

### **4.2 Regulatory Systems: Compliance and Delivering Outcomes**

The MPMSAA endorses the Statement on p. 159 as noted by the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, a system of building practitioner licensing and accreditation should enable consumers to expect;

- the practitioner meets qualification and competence requirements
- he/she has a requisite level of experience
- he/she has undertaken continuing professional development
- he/she may be audited, and a complaints/investigation procedure is in place
- he/she has the required insurance

In respect to audits the MPMSAA endorses the model used by the Plumbing Industry Commission in Victoria. This model is trans-Tasman having been recently adopted by the NZ Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. It is a system closely aligned to



the CORGI system for gasfitting audit in the UK and Certification of Compliance used in France.

## **5. OTHER MECHANISMS FOR ACHIEVING OUTCOMES**

### **5.1 Training**

National Training Packages for plumbing and gas have been achieved in 2004 for the first time in Australia under the auspices of ANZRA and the National Plumbing Regulators Forum with the support of ANTA.

Until the 1970's, plumbing trade skills were dealt with in harmony with the many water, gas and local government regulators. These regulators also exercised a plumbing product approval process that maintained a technology flow into trade training.

Although not always consistent throughout Australia, lead agencies in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane enabled progressive technology transfer to occur for skills training.

In the 1970's, Australia moved to change its National Training Structures influenced in particular by the 1960's UK legislation for industry sector training boards and the now failed UK levy grant system.

A similar structure to the UK was put forward in Australia without any understanding of the distinctly superior plumbing regulatory arrangements in Australia.

Unfortunately for the plumbing industry it was drawn into the Building and Construction Industry Training Council: structure in Australia. This arrangement gradually impeded and choked improvements for plumbing as it was held alongside the breakdown of skills of the building trades into construction work categories.

The MPMSAA recommends that future education and training arrangements for plumbing and gas should be in conjunction with the NPRF and under the auspices of a new Sector Council Plumbing and Gasfitting under the auspices of the ElectroComms and Energy Utility Industry Skills Council.

### **5.2 Insurance**

A nationally Consistent System of Consumer Warranty Cover for plumbing and gas based on the model used by the PIC in Victoria would improve the ability to have a more competitive underwriter market.

## **6. GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

The MPMSAA submission includes reference to the voluntary agreement known as ANZRA which for 50 years assisted mutual recognition and reciprocity but had long time frames towards national consistency.

The MPMSAA suggests a DRAFT RECOMMENDATION 10.1A

“There should be a recommitment by governments, in an IGA, to the objective across jurisdictions for plumbing and gas regulation. State and Territory Governments should establish an Australian Plumbing Codes Board and ensure that the Plumbing Code of Australia is automatically referenced in State and Territory legislation and that jurisdictional variations and additions are minimised.

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AUSTRALIA – NEW ZEALAND  
RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT ON RECOGNITION  
OF THE CERTIFICATION OF THE  
COMPETENCY OF  
PLUMBERS, GASFITTERS AND DRAINERS

JULY, 1983

## FOREWORD

This Agreement is the most recent of a series of Agreements entered into by Authorities in the various States and Territories of Australia and in New Zealand, which have or had responsibility for the conduct of examinations designed to test the competency of plumbers, gasfitters and drainers, or which register, licence or otherwise certify to such competency.

The previous Agreements, and the signatories to them, are as follows:-

### • AGREEMENT NO 1

Made at a Melbourne Conference in March 1950 and amended at a Hobart Conference in March 1963. Signatories were: Department of the Interior (ACT); New South Wales Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers; Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); The Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Hobart City Council (Tasmania); and the Board of Examiners, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department (Western Australia).

### • AGREEMENT NO 2

Made at a Perth Conference in August 1965 and amended at a Brisbane Conference in May 1969. Signatories were: The Proper Authority, Department of Works (ACT); NSW Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers; Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); The Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Plumbers Registration Board (Tasmania); Board of Examiners for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumbers and Drainers (Western Australia); and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (New Zealand).

### • AGREEMENT NO 3

Made at a Rotorua (New Zealand) Conference in May 1971. Signatories were: The Proper Authority, Department of Works (ACT); NSW Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers; Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); The Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Plumbers Registration Board (Tasmania); Board of Examiners for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumbers and Drainers (Western Australia); Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board (Northern Territory); and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (New Zealand).

## FOREWORD

### • AGREEMENT NO 4

Made at a Sydney Conference in October 1973. Signatories were: The Proper Authority for the Canberra Sewerage and Water Supply Regulations (ACT); NSW Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers; Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); The Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Plumbers Registration Board (Tasmania); Board of Examiners for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumbers and Drainers (Western Australia); Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board (Northern Territory); and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (New Zealand).

### • AGREEMENT NO 5

Made at a Hobart Conference in October 1975. Signatories were: The Proper Authority for the Canberra Sewerage and Water Supply Regulations (ACT); NSW Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers; Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); The Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Plumbers Registration Board (Tasmania); Board of Examiners for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumbers and Drainers (Western Australia); Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board (Northern Territory); and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (New Zealand).

### • AGREEMENT OPERATING FROM 1 DECEMBER 1979

Agreement entered into at a Darwin Conference in June 1978 and amended at a Melbourne Conference in November 1980. Signatories were: The Proper Authority for the Canberra Sewerage and Water Supply Regulations (ACT); NSW Examining Board for Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers (Up to 31.12.80); Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers Board (NSW) (From 1.1.81); Plumbers and Drainers Examination and Licensing Board (Queensland); Chief Gas Examiner (Queensland); Plumbers and Gasfitters Board (Victoria); Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board (South Australia); Gasfitters Examining Board (South Australia); Plumbers Registration Board (Tasmania); Board of Examiners for Water Supply and Sanitary Plumbers and Drainers (Western Australia); Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board (Northern Territory); and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (New Zealand).

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# THE AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT

## SIGNATORIES TO THE AGREEMENT

RECIPROCITY AUTHORITY	TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
PLUMBERS, DRAINERS AND GASFITTERS BOARD	AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
PLUMBERS, GASFITTERS AND DRAINERS BOARD	NEW SOUTH WALES
PLUMBERS, GASFITTERS AND DRAINLAYERS BOARD	NEW ZEALAND
PLUMBERS AND DRAINERS LICENSING BOARD	NORTHERN TERRITORY
THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF DANGEROUS GOODS, DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY	NORTHERN TERRITORY
PLUMBERS AND DRAINERS EXAMINATION AND LICENSING BOARD	QUEENSLAND
THE CHIEF GAS EXAMINER, DEPARTMENT OF MINES	QUEENSLAND
SANITARY PLUMBERS EXAMINING BOARD	SOUTH AUSTRALIA
GAS FITTERS EXAMINING BOARD	SOUTH AUSTRALIA
PLUMBERS REGISTRATION BOARD	TASMANIA
PLUMBERS AND GASFITTERS BOARD	VICTORIA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SANITARY PLUMBERS AND DRAINERS	WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## PRELIMINARY

Each Reciprocity Authority (hereafter called an "Authority") listed on page 3 and collectively constituting an association of plumbing, gasfitting and draining authorities known as the Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Association, or ANZRA, HEREBY AGREES as follows:-

### SHORT TITLE

1. This Agreement, entitled the Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Agreement on Recognition of the Certification of the Competency of Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers, may be cited as "The Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Agreement".

### COMMENCEMENT

2. This Agreement shall commence on 1st July, 1983.

### FORMER AGREEMENT

3. This Agreement revokes and replaces the Agreement on Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers Qualifications entered into by the then members of ANZRA and which commenced to operate on 1st December, 1979.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE AGREEMENT

4. The objectives of this Agreement are:-

- (a) To facilitate the recognition, by each signatory to the Agreement, of certificates (as defined in paragraph 14) issued by any other signatory, as being an acceptable certification of the level of competency of persons in one or more categories of work, thus providing mobility within the plumbing, gasfitting and draining industry ("the industry").
- (b) To inquire into and assess the examination requirements and standards relative to ANZRA and overseas certificates.
- (c) To encourage the adoption of uniformly high standards of qualifications and practices within the industry.
- (d) To exchange information on the functions, practices and standards of each signatory.

#### CHANGES TO SIGNATORIES

5. A signatory to this Agreement is deemed to have ceased to be a signatory when, by legislative enactment or otherwise, it ceases to have statutory or administrative responsibility to assess or certify to the competency of persons in one or more categories of work.

Any new authority with such functions established within Australia or New Zealand, either in substitution for or in addition to signatories to this Agreement, may be admitted to ANZRA with the approval of two-thirds of all Authorities then currently existing, in accordance with paragraph 11, upon that authority formally adopting the Reciprocity Agreement by agreeing to be bound by it from the date of adoption.

The remaining signatories to this Agreement shall continue to be bound by it notwithstanding that one or more signatories will, from time to time, be outgoing or incoming in accordance with this provision.

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## ADMINISTRATION

### ANZRA CONFERENCES

6. Ordinary conferences of Authorities to discuss and resolve general matters appertaining to the objectives of the Reciprocity Agreement shall be held at times and in places decided by the Authorities, but not less frequently than once every three consecutive years. Special conferences dealing with specific matters or problems may be held at any time that at least two-thirds of the Authorities agree to attend.

### REPRESENTATION AT CONFERENCES

7. Each Authority may have two representatives at any conference who are entitled to speak for that Authority in discussion. The representatives of each Authority shall be announced at the commencement of the conference. Any Authority not represented at the conference may vote on questions appearing on the agenda by a postal vote.

### CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY

8. A Chairman, elected by the host Authority, shall preside at the conference and may, if he is a representative of an Authority, have a deliberative, but not a casting, vote. The Secretary of the conference will be the Executive Officer, or his nominee, who shall ensure that all discussions and voting at the conference are recorded and circulated to all signatories, whether present at the conference or not, as the Minutes of the conference.

### VOTING RIGHTS

9. (a) In any question arising for determination by ANZRA concerning this Agreement, each Authority shall have one vote, but may only exercise such voting right in accordance with paragraph (b) below.
- (b) Those Authorities which share the same territorial jurisdiction as another Authority may only exercise their voting right in a way that ensures that no more than one vote, on any one question, is cast by the combination of the Authorities within the same territorial jurisdiction. How the voting right of such Authorities will be exercised on any particular issue is a matter for them to decide.

## METHOD OF VOTING

10. Voting on questions arising for determination by ANZRA may take place either:-

- (a) At conferences, by representatives casting their vote or, in the circumstances referred to in paragraph 7 above, by postal vote; or
- (b) Between conferences, by a postal ballot on questions specified on papers circulated to Authorities, which include an adequate explanation of the issues involved.

## ANZRA DECISIONS

11. Any decision in which at least two-thirds of all votes validly cast by Authorities concur, is a decision of ANZRA, provided ALL Authorities have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to cast the vote to which they are entitled under the Agreement on the particular question.

## ANZRA SECRETARIAT

12. At each general conference, the Authorities shall be invited to offer to provide secretariat facilities for ANZRA between that general conference and the next occurring. If more than one Authority makes the offer, the matter will be determined by vote.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

13. (a) The Authority providing secretariat facilities shall appoint a Sub-Committee ("the Sub-Committee") and an Executive Officer.
- (b) There shall be an Executive Committee of ANZRA ("the Committee") which shall consist of the Sub-Committee together with one person appointed by each of the Authorities, other than the Authority providing the secretariat facilities. The Chairman of the aforesaid Sub-Committee shall be the Chairman of the Committee.
- (c) The Committee shall meet from time to time to conduct its routine administrative functions referred to in paragraph (e) below. At such meetings five members, all of whom may be members of the Sub-Committee, shall constitute a quorum and those present shall determine the conduct of the meeting.

- (d) The Committee shall meet from time to time in plenary session to carry into effect decisions made by ANZRA Conferences, which may include the determination of matters referred to the Committee by such conferences. Voting rights and method of voting at a plenary session of the Committee shall be exercised and recognised as if paragraphs 9 and 10 applied to the Committee's deliberations.
- (e) The Executive Officer shall act as Secretary in the conduct of all correspondence between Authorities in matters relating to the Reciprocity Agreement. The Executive Officer shall, in particular, carry out the following functions under the direction of the Committee or Sub-Committee:-
  - (i) Investigate overseas qualifications and arrange for an evaluation and report on such qualifications. Circulate such reports with recommendations to Authorities.
  - (ii) Arrange for the annual circulation of syllabuses established and examination papers set by Authorities and other relevant examining bodies in respect of each category of work.
  - (iii) Maintain a library of certificates referred to in Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4, and copies of the legislation governing the operations of the Authorities.
  - (iv) Arrange for the conduct of all postal ballots on questions put to the Authorities, or on non-binding resolutions arising out of conferences. Circulate the results of the ballots as soon as possible after they are received, and arrange for amendments to the Agreement to be circulated to all signatories.
  - (v) Draft, settle and circulate the agenda for conferences and act as Secretary to conferences.
  - (vi) Undertake any specific projects requested by Authorities designed to further the objectives of the Agreement.



## RECOGNITION OF CERTIFICATES

### DEFINITIONS

14. • The following definitions may require modification to satisfy statutory definitions in legislation administered by Authorities or under which they are required to operate.
- Where applicable, and not inconsistent with the following definitions, technical terms should be read in conjunction with the definitions included in the Australian Model Plumbing Code.

Subject to the foregoing, in this Agreement:-

#### "APPRENTICESHIP PERIOD"

means that period recognised by the respective apprenticeship authority in each State, Territory or Country represented in ANZRA, and includes, where applicable, that portion of the duration of accepted trade training credited to an apprenticeship period by such an authority.

#### "CATEGORIES OF WORK"

means draining, gasfitting, liquefied petroleum gasfitting, mechanical services plumbing, roof plumbing, sanitary plumbing and water plumbing. (Refer to Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4).

*? General plumbing*

#### "CERTIFICATES" --

*? at present includes roof & water*

#### "OVERSEAS CERTIFICATES"

includes all documents listed in Column 2 of Schedules 3 and 4, by whatever name called therein.

#### "RECIPROCITY CERTIFICATES"

means a certificate issued by an Authority, in the form of Schedules 5 or 6, indicating that the person to whom it is issued satisfies the qualifications and practical experience required under this Agreement for the category/ies of work stated on the certificate.

#### "SCHEDULED CERTIFICATES"

means all documents listed in Column 2 of Schedules 1 and 2, by whatever name called therein.

**"DRAINING"**

means the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, removal, renewal, repair and maintenance of pipes and fittings designed to receive the discharge from soil, stormwater and waste pipes, and convey the discharge to a public sewer or drain or to a septic tank.

**"GASFITTING"**

means the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, removal, renewal, repair and maintenance of pipes, fittings, appliances, apparatus and associated ventilation equipment, and equipment conveying and utilizing fuel gases, such as manufactured gas, liquefied petroleum gas, tempered liquefied petroleum gas, simulated natural gas and natural gas.

**"INDEPENDENT STATUS"**

means a level of competency recognised by an Authority as qualifying an individual to undertake one or more categories of work independently of direction, and to direct and supervise others, including journeymen and apprentices, in the performance of such work.

**"JOURNEYMAN STATUS"**

means a level of competency associated with a journeyman or operative which is recognised by an Authority as qualifying an individual to perform one or more categories of work under the direction of persons of independent status, and to supervise apprentices and other unqualified individuals in the performance of such work.

**"LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GASFITTING"**

means gasfitting in which the fuel gas conveyed and utilized is liquefied petroleum gas.

**"MECHANICAL SERVICES PLUMBING"**

means plumbing work carried out in connection with the heating, cooling or ventilation of buildings, and includes the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, removal, renewal, repair and maintenance of ducts, pipes, flues, valves, regulators, registers, tanks, heating or cooling lines or services, boilers, burners or coils or ancillary equipment used in heating and ventilation systems, and includes the extension and connection of water to those systems, but does not include gasfitting.

**"OVERSEAS"**

means any country other than Australia or New Zealand.

**"PLUMBING"**

may include each of the categories of plumbing work defined herein.

**"ROOF PLUMBING"**

means the installation, alteration, renewal, repair and maintenance of roof gutters, roof flashings, rainwater piping and roof coverings other than non-metallic tiles or slates or flat membrane sheeting.

**"SANITARY PLUMBING"**

means the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, removal, renewal, repair and maintenance of pipes, fittings and fixtures designed to receive and convey sewage and other permitted discharges, and the ventilation of those pipes, fittings and fixtures, and can include water plumbing, roof plumbing and draining.

**"WATER PLUMBING"**

means the installation, alteration, extension, disconnection, removal, renewal, repair and maintenance of pipes and fittings designed to convey water, including hot water.

**EXAMINATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

15. (a) On and from the commencement of this Agreement, Authorities shall issue reciprocity certificates only to individuals who have passed written and practical examinations in the categories of work to which the certificates relate, and after such individuals have had not less than the number of years' experience provided for in sub-paragraphs (d) and (e).
- (b) Written and practical examinations mean examinations conducted by the Authority issuing the certificate, or by an educational or examining body which is recognised by the Authority and which conducts examinations either within that Authority's territorial jurisdiction or, in the case of examinations conducted overseas, by a body listed in Column 3 of Schedules 3 or 4.

- (c) Experience acquired means experience in the category of work to which the certificate relates, under the supervision of the holder of that or some corresponding certificate of independent status, or under the supervision of a person eligible to hold such a certificate, which experience was acquired within the jurisdiction of any Authority, or, subject to paragraph 18 below, *(over page)* overseas within the jurisdiction of bodies listed in Column 3 of Schedules 3 or 4.
- (d) The length of experience required to obtain a certificate of independent status shall be not less than the periods set out in Schedule 7 in respect of the several categories listed therein.
- (e) The length of experience required to obtain a certificate of journeyman status shall be not less than the periods set out in Schedule 8 in respect of the several categories listed therein.

#### SCHEDULED CERTIFICATES

16. Authorities shall give full recognition to certificates listed in Column 2 of Schedules 1 or 2 and issued prior to the commencement of this Agreement, as satisfying:-

- (a) The formal qualifications criteria of each Authority required for the registration and/or licensing of the holder of the certificate of the relevant status; and
- (b) The practical experience criteria required for such registration and/or licensing at the relevant status.

#### RECIPROCITY CERTIFICATES

- 17. (a) On and from the commencement of this Agreement, reciprocity certificates only will be issued by Authorities for the purposes of this Agreement. Overseas certificates listed in Schedules 3 and 4 shall continue to be recognised.
- (b) Authorities shall give full recognition to a reciprocity certificate issued by an Authority prior to the commencement of this Agreement, or to a reciprocity certificate issued by an Authority on and from the commencement of this Agreement, in either of the approved forms, copies of which are annexed at Schedules 5 and 6.
- (c) Reciprocity certificates shall be sequentially numbered and a record of the number, category of certificate and recipient's name maintained.

## OVERSEAS CERTIFICATES

18. Schedules 3 and 4 list overseas certificates which have been assessed and adopted by Authorities as equivalent to certificates issued by them in various categories as set out in Schedules 1 and 2. Overseas certificates are recognised for the purpose of formal examination qualifications only and DO NOT constitute evidence of practical experience.

Authorities may issue a Reciprocity Certificate, based upon the recipient holding a corresponding overseas certificate, provided that:-

- (a) The Authority is satisfied the recipient has had at least the minimum practical experience within the meaning of paragraphs 15(c), (d) and (e).
- (b) At least three months of that practical experience has been gained with the holder of an appropriate certificate of independent status as per Schedule 1 under the jurisdiction of one of the Authorities.
- (c) The overseas certificate is listed in Schedules 3 or 4.

## LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

19. Authorities acknowledge that recognition of certificates may not, of itself, satisfy the legislative requirements of any particular Authority which must be met before registration or licensing can be effected. (This provision does not refer to the recognition of qualifications and practical experience referred to in paragraphs 16 and 17).

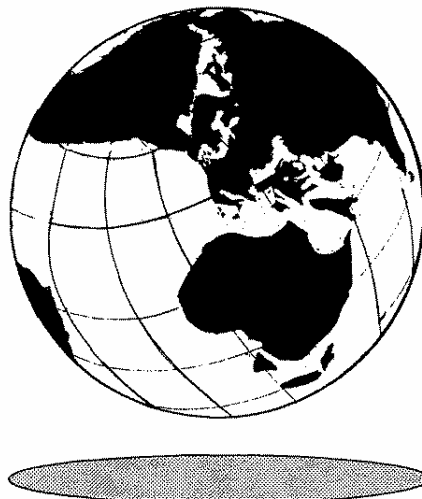
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## PLUMBERS, GASFITTERS, DRAINERS

Whether moving interstate, between New Zealand and Australia  
or coming from overseas, you'll need to know . . . .

# What in the world is ANZRA?

Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Association



The Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Association of the Authorities responsible for the  
certification of the competency of Plumbers, Gasfitters & Drainers.

ANZRA was established in 1950 and consists of the licensing authorities responsible for the certification of competency of Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers from New Zealand and each State and Territory of Australia.

## ■ THE OBJECTIVES OF ANZRA ARE:

To facilitate the recognition, by each member authority, of certificates and qualifications issued by each other to provide mobility in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainage industry.

To inquire into and assess both local and overseas qualifications.

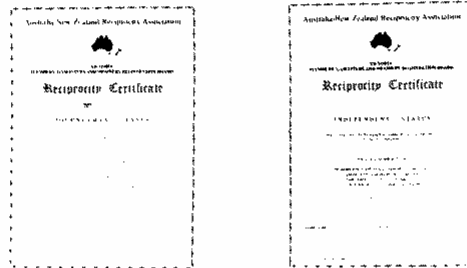
To encourage the adoption of uniformly high standards of qualifications and practices within the industry.

To exchange information on the functions, practices and standards of each signatory.

## ■ MOVING INTERSTATE OR BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

If you work in the plumbing and gasfitting industry and plan to travel interstate or between New Zealand and Australia you should make enquiries before you move as to your eligibility for issue of a Reciprocity Certificate at either Journeyman or Independent Status.

### ☐ Reciprocity Certificates



A holder of a Reciprocity certificate is automatically recognised by each licensing authority throughout New Zealand and Australia as having the required formal/technical examination qualification and practical experience at either Journeyman (i.e. employee/operative) Status or Independent (i.e. without supervision) Status for the categories of work endorsed on the Certificate.

### ☐ Work Categories

Reciprocity Certificates are issued to persons holding the required formal/technical examination qualifications AND practical experience in any or all of the following categories:

Sanitary Plumbing	Roof Plumbing
Water Plumbing	Draining
Mechanical Services Plumbing	Gasfitting

### ☐ Other Requirements to be satisfied

Holders of Reciprocity Certificates will receive recognition of their qualifications and experience. However, enquiries should be made with the licensing authorities as to any other local requirements (eg.. financial resources, good character etc.)

### ☐ Obtaining Reciprocity Certificates

Enquiries regarding obtaining a Reciprocity Certificate should be directed to the licensing authority in the Country, State or Territory where you completed your formal/technical qualifications. Refer to list of authorities on page 4.

## ■ COMING FROM OVERSEAS TO NEW ZEALAND OR AUSTRALIA

### ☐ Assessment and Recognition

ANZRA carries out assessments of overseas plumbing and gasfitting qualifications to assist the integration of overseas tradespersons into the local work force and to give proper recognition to migrant qualifications and skills.

To obtain automatic recognition at either Journeyman (i.e. employee/operative) Status or Independent (i.e. without supervision) Status a person must possess formal/technical qualifications and adequate practical experience.

### ☐ Countries with Qualifications Assessed and Accepted by ANZRA

Certain qualifications from the following countries are automatically recognised by ANZRA and its member authorities throughout Australia and New Zealand as satisfying formal/technical qualification requirements.

Austria	Hong Kong	Scotland
Canada	Hungary	Republic of Singapore
Denmark	Republic of Ireland	Republic of South Africa
England	The Netherlands	Switzerland
Federal Republic of Germany	Northern Ireland	Wales

In addition to holding the appropriate qualifications applicants will be required to provide evidence of completion of an apprenticeship (plumber/gasfitter) or a minimum of 4 years practical experience for recognition at Journeyman Status.

For recognition at Independent Status applicants will be required to provide evidence of 2 years practical experience after completion of an apprenticeship or 6 years overall experience including a minimum of 3 months supervised experience gained locally in New Zealand or Australia.

The qualifications recognised by ANZRA from the above countries are listed in the Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Agreement a copy of which has been forwarded to Migration officers at Australia and New Zealand embassies. Extracts from the Agreement for individual countries may be obtained from ANZRA.

### ☐ Other Countries and/or Qualifications

Formal/technical qualifications from other countries or other qualifications from those listed Countries will be assessed on request by ANZRA or the licensing authority in the State/Territory/Country you intend travelling to.

Should your qualifications not receive automatic recognition some States etc. provide the opportunity to obtain provisional registration enabling persons to find employment while undertaking local examinations. Other States conduct practical skills tests and/or bridging courses enabling persons to obtain local recognition at an operative/employee level.

Recognition at Independent (without supervision) Status will be subject to completion of the necessary local courses/examinations.

### ☐ 'On the Job Training' and/or Practical Experience Only

Persons not holding any formal/technical examination qualifications may still receive recognition in some States at an operative/employee level on the basis of acceptance of supporting references or completion of practical skills tests or special bridging courses. They may also qualify for provisional operative/employee level recognition while undertaking local examinations or courses.

Recognition at Independent (without supervision) Status will be subject to completion of the necessary local courses/examinations.



☐ **Contractor Licences/Authorities**

Persons not holding recognised qualifications may obtain a licence/authority permitting the contracting of plumbing draining and gasfitting on the basis that a qualified person is a genuine employee of the licence / authority holder or a member of the partnership or director of the company holding the licence/ authority.

☐ **Important - Confirm the Standing of Your Qualification**

All persons intending to travel to Australia or New Zealand to work in the plumbing and gasfitting industry are strongly recommended to confirm the recognition given to their qualifications and/or experience before they leave home.

In order to confirm the recognition given to your qualifications please contact either ANZRA or the Licensing Authority in the area you intend settling.

**■ LIST OF AUTHORITIES**

Australia - New Zealand Reciprocity Association  
PO Box 360  
CAULFIELD EAST VIC 3145

**Australian Capital Territory**  
Plumbers, Drainers & Gasfitters Board of ACT  
PO Box 158  
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Ph (06) 243 2164 Fax (6) 246 2774

**South Australia**  
Sanitary Plumbers Examining Board  
GPO Box 1039  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Ph (08) 226 2104 Fax (08) 211 7048

**New South Wales**  
Building Services Corporation  
PO Box 667  
CROWS NEST NSW 2067

Ph (02) 959 1444 Fax (02) 439 1316

**Tasmania**  
Plumbers & Gasfitters Registration Board  
GPO Box 816H  
HOBART TAS 7001

Ph (002) 307 011 Fax (002) 311 387

**Northern Territory**  
Northern Territory Plumbers & Drainers Licensing Board  
GPO Box 1680  
DARWIN NT 0801

Ph (08) 989 7475 Fax (08) 981 7495

**Victoria**  
Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainers Registration Board  
PO Box 360  
CAULFIELD EAST VIC 3145

Ph (03) 889 2211 Fax (03) 889 2244

**Queensland**  
Plumbers & Drainers Examination & Licensing Board  
GPO Box 690  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Ph (07) 224 2652 Fax (07) 221 9312

**Western Australia**  
Water Authority of Western Australia  
PO Box 100  
LEEDERVILLE WA 6007

Ph (09) 420 2662 Fax (09) 328 6407

**New Zealand**  
Plumbers, Gasfitters & Drainlayers Board  
PO Box 11-422  
WELLINGTON NZ

Ph (04) 384 2751 Fax (04) 384 7468

**5.1 Bi-Partisan Debate for the Second Reading of the Building Control (Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainers) Bill**

*"The Bill amends this unproclaimed part of the Act to enable the establishment of an independent self-funding board more in keeping with today's requirements, both for the consumer and the plumbing industry.*

*"The most important aspects of the proposed legislation are that the board will be independent and self-funding and that registration of plumbing contractors is introduced for the first time in Victoria. The board will operate on a similar basis to the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board operating in New South Wales.*

*"In future, all plumbers, gasfitters, drainers and plumbing and drainage contractors will be required to be registered with this single board before any plumbing work can be undertaken. This will have the advantage of all aspects of the plumbing industry being regulated by the one statutory authority, replacing the situation where a proliferation of public authorities, such as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and country sewerage and water authorities*

*separately licence plumbers to work in their local areas of jurisdiction.*

*"The creation of the new board will also make plumbing control in Victoria more consistent with that in most other Australian States, thereby simplifying the maintenance of reciprocal arrangements in respect of plumbing qualifications with other States. Currently the Victorian-New South Wales Boarder Anomalies Committee is most concerned at the variation between plumbers licensing procedures in the two States, which exacerbate State boundary problems.*

*"The establishment of an independent, self-funding board will ensure the effective and efficient administration of plumbing in Victoria by maintaining an acceptable level of public health, protecting the public in all matters relating to plumbing and tradespersons and plumbing contractors and ensuring a uniformly high standard of plumbing qualifications throughout Australia. Notes on the clauses are provided with the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House." (Walker MLC, Hansard November 14, 1985, page 1035).*

*"At the beginning of this century when sewerage systems were established in Australia, a series of sewerage authorities were established in the States, which issued licences based on trade qualifications to persons to take responsibility for the performance of plumbing work within the area covered by the particular sewerage authority. such persons became known as licensed plumbers and that system of licensing has gradually spread throughout the States.*

*"Victoria was one of the first States to establish a registration system covering the operatives who worked at the trade. Although the licence certificate was issued on trade qualifications, the licensed plumber would sign the requisite notices with the sewerage authority to assume responsibility for ensuring that the sanitary plumbing was installed in accordance with the by-laws and regulations of the particular sewerage authority.*

*"However, in the 1920s in Victoria operatives working at the trade of plumbing were registered but the registration scheme went wider than the work covered by the licence issued by the multiplicity of sewerage authorities. There were various classes of plumbing work. Gradually the other States adopted a similar system of registration of operatives, so that in Australia these two systems have worked side by side: the registration of operatives by examination and trade qualifications arising from apprenticeships and the licensing system.*

*"In 1948 a conference was held of statutory authorities responsible for the regulation of plumbing in the States. If a plumber from Victoria went to work in Queensland, he would be obliged to sit again for the theoretical and practical examination because the Queensland authorities took the view that they knew more about plumbing than the Victorian authorities did. Similarly, if a plumber from Queensland came to work in Victoria, that plumber was required to sit for another theoretical and practical examination, and the same situation applied in all the States.*

*"Therefore, in 1948 a conference was held of statutory authorities responsible for the regulation of plumbing in the various States and a reciprocity agreement was entered into*

*for the reciprocal exchange and recognition of plumbing certificates in the various States. That system has since developed and expanded.*

*"There is now an organisation called the Australia New Zealand Reciprocity Association which provides for the reciprocal exchange of licenses of various classes of plumbing work between the State of the Commonwealth and New Zealand. That association holds a conference every two years. In recent years it has been the regulatory and developing authority for the establishment of standards and the direction and development of the plumbing industry in Australia." (Crawford MLC, Hansard November 20 1985, page 1195).*

*"Plumbers and gasfitters have had to be registered for a long time, but contractors have not, provided the operatives were registered. This Bill adds the need for registration of contractors. One must stop for a moment and ask whether that is justified. Nobody likes additional registrations unless their necessity can be established, but here we are getting the abolition of bureaucratic requirements with the price of registered contractors, and I believe for good reason.*

*"If a particular firm or company consistently does shoddy work, there ought to be a remedy against that firm or company as well as against the individual operatives within it. The result will be that the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board will be able to deal with those who customarily do shoddy work or sub-standard work, but that does not really give the customer what he is entitled to. The board will be able to suspend the registration of the company or firm as well as deal with the operatives within it. Previously there was a loophole in this area. A firm that was repeatedly doing shoddy work could employ a licensed drainer, plumber or gasfitter and could direct him to take shortcuts, dispense with his services when he came into trouble and continue in business with impunity.*

*"I accept the fact and my part accepts the fact that there is a considerable gain in the abolition of all these unnecessary licenses, and one of the concomitants is the extension of registration to contractors rather than just to those they employ. That seems sensible and the board is clearly making recommendations which this Parliament ought to approve.*

*"I assure the Minister that those on the Opposition side of the house wish the proposed legislation a speedy passage. We express congratulations to the Plumbers and Gasfitters Board for its part in bringing about the measure. In conclusion I mention one aspect of the Bill that has not been mentioned, namely the minor changes to the composition of the board brought about by the Bill. The Bill will retain what is basically a coalition of employers and employees expert in the field who will be responsible for self-regulation of the industry and that is, in our view, the best way to go." (Hunt MLC, Hansard, November 20, 1985 page 1200-1201).*

*"Most honourable members agree with the provisions in the Bill, given that it is an attempt to standardize the standard of plumbing, gasfitting and drainage work in this State in line with other States.*

*"As a person who has lived in a border area for some time I have had considerable trouble with plumbers who reside in Victoria, but who wish to operate in New South Wales, where*

*a different set of standards apply, particularly regarding gasfitting.*

*Consequently, most of the plumbers or tradesmen in border areas of the State require a licence to operate in both States to cope with the different regulations. That has been a problem for those tradesmen because they have had to journey to Sydney to undertake an examination similar to that in Victoria, just because of the slight difference in rules that apply in those States. If the Bill can correct that problem, the National Party supports it.*

*"The National Party believes as high a standard as possible in tradesmanship should apply in most areas. It is hoped that the amendments made in the Bill will help that process."*  
*(Whiting MLA (Mildura) Hansard, November, 28 1985 page 2594).*