

# THE MASTER PLUMBER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  
OF THE MASTER PLUMBERS  
ASSOCIATION OF NSW

SPRING 2023

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Explaining new Fair Work Amendments

## INFORMATION

Backflow prevention: help is at hand

## MEMBER PROFILE

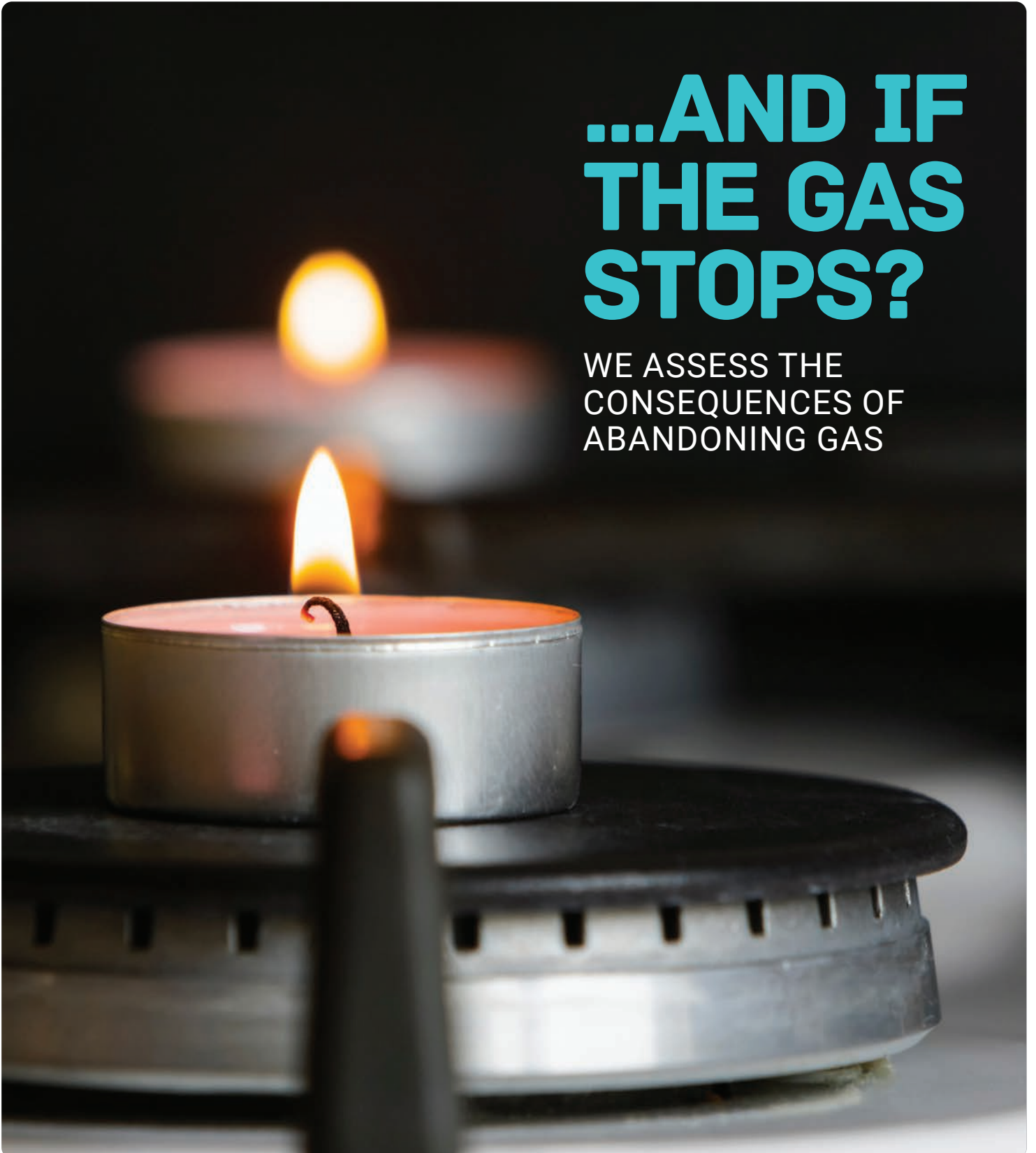
Turning adversity into opportunity

## DIRECTIONS

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# ...AND IF THE GAS STOPS?

WE ASSESS THE  
CONSEQUENCES OF  
ABANDONING GAS



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**12 COVER STORY**

**...And if the gas stops?**

The new CEO of MPA NSW, NATHANIEL (NAT) SMITH, says governmental moves to phase out gas too quickly will have disastrous consequences for both industry and homeowners.

In this issue's Cover Story, Nat describes how the Australian Government's recent push to reduce the country's reliance on gas has been met with mixed reactions from the public and various industries.

At the very least, he argues, policy makers should be mindful of the benefits of complementary technologies involving renewable gas and hydrogen.

**TO BOOK YOUR ADVERTISING CONTACT**

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**(02) 8789 7000**



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## EDITORIAL

# From the CEO's desk

I write to you for the first time in this publication since being appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in May this year.

I started my plumbing apprenticeship in 1997 and ran my own business as a licensed plumber for several years. I then took up an opportunity in 2010 to work in a PR & Marketing and Government Relations firm, where I acquired a Master of Arts in Organisational Communications at Charles Sturt University (CSU); also during that time, I was elected as a Councillor to Kogarah City Council from 2012–16. In 2016, I then worked for a Federal Senator/Minister. Following that, I was appointed a Senior Advisor to the NSW State Planning Minister before being elected as the State Member for Wollondilly in 2019. During that time, I served on several Parliamentary committees and was then promoted to Government Whip in the Perrottet Government. I have worked and served at the Federal, State and Local Government levels.

As your new CEO of MPA NSW, I use my experiences to embolden the Association's advocacy efforts, maintain our high standards for education and certification, and continue to promote innovative solutions to make our industry more efficient and effective.

We have recently held and promoted workshops and webinars, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming Industry Awards night dinner, which provides our members with valuable opportunities to meet other like-minded members. These events also create a sense of community and collaboration among our members, ensuring a strong and supportive industry network. We also have lined up several social events for the last quarter of this year, so please stay tuned.

Advocacy remains a key focus for the Association. You may have seen the Association quoted in several national media articles on issues such as the war on Gas and the controversial changes to Industrial Relations laws the Albanese Government proposed for later this year. We shall continue to be your strong voice for the plumbing industry, advocating for fair regulations and favourable conditions to run a business that promotes growth and safety.

We thank our members for their continued support and engagement and look forward to their active participation in our future endeavours.

**Nathaniel (Nat) Smith**  
CEO



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Using benefits means membership can be cost free

**F**or almost every business, the end of a financial year is a time of reflection on the year that passed. We have had our challenges.

The Association had many of the same hurdles that any plumbing company has, such as cash flow, staff changes, growth and equipment upgrade, etc.

From 2019 to 2023, the Association was under the leadership of CEO Michael Bennett, but, sadly, Michael advised the Executive Committee that he needed to move closer to his family and gave us notice that he was moving back to mid-west rural NSW and was unable to continue in the role as CEO. I am sure that you can all join me and thank him for the time and passion he has given the Association for the past four years.

### NEW CEO

Who is the CEO now? Like most plumbing businesses, finding a suitable applicant in this world



of plumbing is tough. Yet we found Nathaniel Smith; he is now our new CEO. Nathaniel started in May this year; his credentials for this position are as follows: he is a licensed plumber (he even had the pleasure to work with me at one stage in his experience-gathering journey). He has owned and operated a successful plumbing

business. In most recent years, he followed his dad's footsteps into the world of politics, becoming an elected member of the NSW Parliament up until the last State election. Clearly, he has advocacy knowledge and skills for our Industry through years of contacts gathered in Parliament, plus a hands-on understanding of the plumbing Industry. Yes, we kicked a goal in getting Nathaniel on board, and I trust all members join me in giving Nathaniel a sincere and warm welcome to the Association.

### A FRESH DIRECTION

Following Nathaniel, we had been hunting for an awesome marketing, membership, and events manager to bring fresh ideas and direction to the Association. This was necessary to revitalise brand awareness and educate plumbers and suppliers on the benefits of being an Association Member. We now have Julie Woods on the team, taking up this role. (See Association Updates on page 10.) Julie is a familiar face for many of us who are members of the Plumbers' Co-Op. Julie's previous role was in marketing, membership, and events, and she was a familiar face at many trade shows or conferences. She will, of course, know many of you, and she will reach out to every member over the coming months to explain what we can do for you and your business. I trust you will all give her a warm welcome, as well.

**NOT YOUR MAGAZINE?  
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Association of NSW today.**

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## REAL VALUE

Just for everyone's noting, regarding Association value, it has been roughly calculated that if the average member just used one (1) of the membership discounts available to them in their membership, then their membership, in reality, would be a neutral cost to their business. That means it could cost nothing (ZERO \$\$\$\$) to be a member. If they used all benefits, they would see the improvement in their profitability.

The Association has almost converted our membership data to a new state-of-the-art CRM (Customer Relationship Management System). Like anyone running a business, conversion from one system to another is full of grief, yet it is a painful exercise that has paid off. Julie and her team will be ringing all members to ensure our information about you is 100% correct so we can serve you better; we ask that you take the time to discuss your business type when we reach out in the coming weeks.

When we call, we may ask if you want to be a mentor. A mentor is a member who is willing to give back to the industry. A member with skill sets in a certain field and who is willing to share knowledge, if asked, such as an interpretation and application of gas standards. Or a mentor might be a person who has many staff and good experience handling complex business matters, or who has experience using a certain computer program. Then, if a member enquires about a certain business or work issue, we can refer them to an appropriate mentoring member. It's about working as a team to strengthen every member's business.

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**...we need each member to be an advocate for our Association and recommend to non-members the power we can create with strength in numbers.**

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## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Your Association is a 'not for profit' Industry-represented body; strength comes in numbers; we need each member to be an advocate for our Association and recommend to non-members the power we can create with strength in numbers to ensure good policy outcomes from Federal and State Governments for our businesses, our Industry and your livelihood. As stated above, the cost for a typical business is likely to be a cost-neutral and tax-deductible expense.

## ANNUAL DINNER, IMPROVED WEBSITE

The MPA NSW Annual Industry Dinner is fast approaching, to be held on 6 September 2023. Book a table for your staff and meet other businesspeople; we are also attempting to get a Q&A session from the Minister of Fair Trading, who is the Keynote Speaker for the dinner. Further to that, we will be grouping the seating on tables with like business models, e.g., home service businesses will sit near or on tables with other home business members, and construction with construct, so it can be a 'like business' chat night and an opportunity to learn from one another.

The Association website has been overhauled, becoming easier to manoeuvre around, and has a

better and reportable 'Find a Plumber', so you will be advised if a customer has reached out to you through the website.

## SAVE GAS

Your Association is leading the fight of 'Ask the community before you switch off Gas' with equal, united determination from our interstate and New Zealand Plumbing Associations (MPANZ) to create public community awareness that the State and Federal Governments have the determination to turn gas off to homes and businesses and FORCE them to go electric. The advocacy we are applying to these Government bodies is to save the gas sector of our livelihood and to make the community aware that the cost will be enormous for homeowners to delete gas from their lives.

In summary, your Association is in a stronger position today to assist you, your business, and the industry than it has been for the last 15 years. We are here to serve.

Work safe, play hard, and be confident to know your Master Plumbers Association has your back. **TMP**

**Greg McElroy**  
**President**



Greg McElroy has been a member of the Master Plumbers Association NSW for some 40 years. He was active on the Executive Committee from early 2000 until 2009, serving as President for several of those years. He is now serving on the Executive Committee again in 2023, with a special focus on business training and knowledge.

# NEWS

## KENKAR PLASTICS HELPS TRAINEES

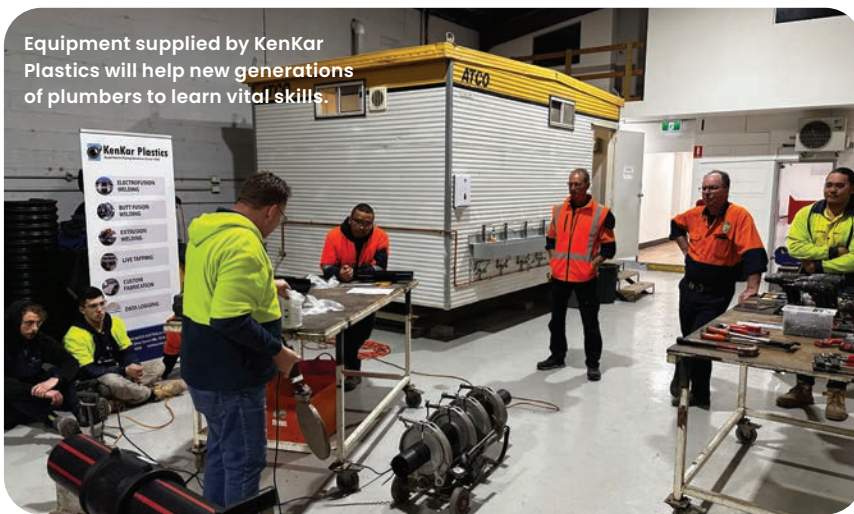
MPA NSW Member and Corporate Partner, KenKar Plastics has provided generous assistance and equipment to the Master Plumbers Association Training (MPA Training), which is the Association's in-house training hub.

We are constantly looking at new ideas to help develop theory and practical coaching for our apprentices classes. Weld Polyethylene and polypropylene pipes using fusion method is a subject we are currently delivering.

Prior to the teaching of a subject, resources are reviewed, improvements implemented, and the training content mapped to the government training package requirements.



Peter Nolan from KenKar Plastics addresses trainees.



Equipment supplied by KenKar Plastics will help new generations of plumbers to learn vital skills.

As part of this procedure, we contacted KenKar Plastics, who are industry leaders in the supply, fabrication, and on-site welding of polyolefin pipe systems, completing installations up to 1,200mm diameter.

KenKar business manager Peter Nolan has been instrumental in assisting MPA Training to improve our service delivery, helping to make it more interesting and relevant to students by providing welding equipment, pipe, and fittings. This equipment facilitates practical instruction to students relating to Butt and Electrofusion weld pipes to 125mm OD, covering the areas of Fire Protection, Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage, pipe dimensions, welding parameters, etc.

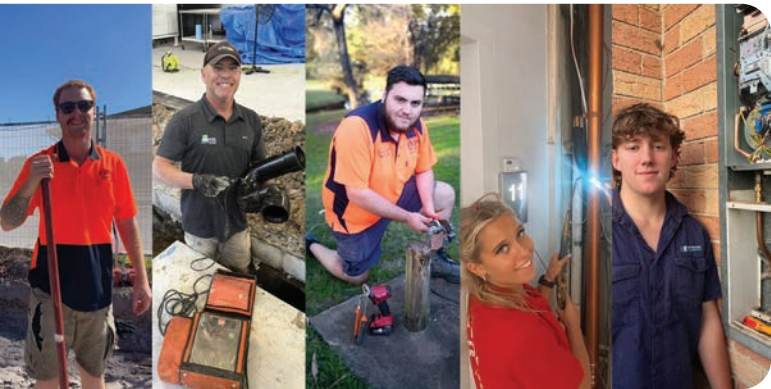
Recently, Peter paid a visit to MPA Training where he addressed students, demonstrating best practice and explaining the technicalities involved in fusion welding, as well as the specification of Polyethylene pipe systems in the plumbing industry. The use of this technology is increasing, so plumbing apprentices need to be well informed.

We appreciate the help we received and thank Peter and his team at KenKar Plastics for sharing their expertise and equipment with new generations of plumbers.



MPA Training is delighted to make use of advanced equipment in its training programs.





Rheem Apprentice Plumber Grants: NSW recipients.

## RHEEM AUSTRALIA PROVIDES \$30K GRANTS TO APPRENTICE PLUMBERS

Rheem Australia has awarded a total of \$30,000 to 10 deserving recipients as part of the 2023 Rheem Apprentice Plumber Grants. This year, five recipients are from New South Wales!

Each recipient received \$2,000 to assist with TAFE/RTO fees and textbooks, \$1,000 to help them build their all-important trade toolbox, and a tool tote bag for transport and storage of tools on the jobsite.

"This year's submissions represent the high caliber of workers entering the industry. They are committed to learning and supporting their current employer, but what's really exciting is how many young apprentices want to be their own boss one day and support others to join the industry too," says Chris Taylor, Managing Director, Rheem Australia.

The 2023 Rheem Apprentice Plumber Grant recipients are:

- Ebony Prasad, TAS, DEG Plumbing
- Bernard Courtney, QLD, Old School Plumbing and Gas
- Brandon Perhouse, QLD, Plumplus
- Yana Marks, NSW, Peter Hammond Plumbing
- Rory Withers, NSW, Advantage Plumbing Solutions Pty Ltd
- Jordan Di Benedetto, VIC, Combined Plumbing Pty Ltd
- Jed Gottaas, NSW, Fairy Meadow Plumbing
- Jack Parker, NSW, Coffs Harbour Plumbing Pty Ltd
- Anthony Bennici, NSW, John Nakhoul Plumbing Services Pty Ltd; and
- Zac Stichel, SA, TAPS.

Rheem also granted a \$500 Rheem Apprentice Plumber Recognition Award to:

- Angus Campbell, ACT, Greaney and Sweeney Plumbing Services
- Darcy MacErlean, NT, Ausplumb; and
- Harrison Fleming, WA, Coast and Country Plumbing and Gas.

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## ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Plenty has been happening! We've appointed Julie Woods to the Association's team, and made preparations for numerous Member events – see details below.

# From gas to golf...

### WELCOME JULIE WOODS

I am so very excited to be joining the team at Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW) and given the opportunity to be a part of the exciting times ahead.

I am fortunate enough to have been involved in this wonderful industry for nearly 30 years. With my previous role as Marketing Manager at a major plumbing merchant, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you already at industry functions such as conferences and trade shows. Now, I look forward to meeting many more MPA members soon.

With the recent appointment of Nathaniel Smith as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and an enthusiastic Executive Committee and Executive Team, there is definitely an air of positivity regarding the growth and success of MPA moving ahead, and I am grateful to be a part of this journey.

We currently have several new initiatives in place (watch this space),

including some very exciting Members' events planned for the next 12 months. We aim to ensure you receive maximum opportunity to regularly network with your industry peers, product manufacturers and industry bodies.

I have always been very Member-focused, and as with any Member-based organisation, you are our purpose, and we are here to ensure you receive the maximum value from your Membership. In this new role, I will do my utmost to enhance Member offerings, improve communications, contribute to Membership growth and increase overall value benefits to you, our members.

Please feel free to contact me any time, whether it be Membership-related or to say hello. If you haven't yet done so, book your tickets for the Annual Industry Dinner: visit [www.masterplumbers.com.au](http://www.masterplumbers.com.au) for details – we would love to see you there!



**JULIE WOODS**  
Membership, Marketing  
& Events Manager  
[julie@masterplumbers.com.au](mailto:julie@masterplumbers.com.au)  
0422 740 104



You deserve a 'slice' of the action!

### MEMBERS CHARITY GOLF DAY

You deserve it! Treat yourself and your team to a day on the golf course with our Members Charity Golf Day, on Wednesday 18 October at Stonecutters Ridge Golf Course, Coleby. Members Price is \$169 with Registration at 7am.

What a great networking opportunity to spend the day with your industry peers, leading manufacturers and MPA supporters at this stunning course.



We have limited spots so don't miss out – invitations have been emailed to Members. For further details, please call the Master Plumbers team on 8789 7000 or scan the QR Code.

The peak plumbing body MPANZ says the community should be consulted about ongoing gas supplies.



## WE'RE OFF AND RACING...

**Save the date – Friday 24th November 2023 – for the MPA NSW 'Bong Bong Picnic Raceday' at Bowral.**

Just one of the many Member events in the pipeline, we would like you to join us for a fun day at the Bong Bong races.

Always a popular day out, we have secured a marquee for the event exclusive to our Members – fully catered for with a scrumptious lunch and beverages, marquee betting facilities, and course entry all included in the ticket price.

We have you covered: you can book this event as your company Christmas party – what a great way to say thank you to your team for their hard work throughout the year.

Want to make a weekend of it? Visit [www.theaccommodationbrokers.com.au](http://www.theaccommodationbrokers.com.au) for your 'Members only' special deal.

We have limited tickets so don't miss out. You will receive your invitations and booking forms soon. Call 8789 7000 or email Julie on [julie@masterplumbers.com.au](mailto:julie@masterplumbers.com.au)

(Ticket costs should be fully tax deductible – check your eligibility with your accountant.)



Nothing beats a day at the races!

## MPANZ URGES: THINK BEFORE SWITCHING OFF GAS

Master Plumbers Australia and New Zealand (MPANZ) has urged Australia's governments to consult with the community before abandoning natural and renewable gas as an option for Australians to power their homes, now and in the future.

Chair of MPANZ, Tom Martin, said increased use of renewable gas would reduce emissions associated with natural gas production and use, and enable Australian homes to continue to enjoy the benefits of cooking and heating with gas.

"The plumbing industry is supportive of the Australian Government's plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050; however, we're concerned that the rush to remove a safe, affordable energy source from homes will prevent the development of a successful renewable gas industry, and impede consumer choice," Tom said.

Production and usage of renewable gas such as hydrogen and biogas is increasing in Australia and around the world. Biogas is receiving strengthening attention as an environmentally friendly fuel that can be used as a direct replacement for natural gas. Biogas is produced when organic matter, such as food or animal waste, is broken down by microorganisms in the absence of oxygen.

"Many Australian families and individuals continue to choose to install gas in their homes for power, heating, and cooking. The message that we as plumbers are hearing from the community is that people want to continue to be able to choose what's best for them and their family.

"The most important thing for state and territory governments is that they consult with the community on the future of gas as an option to power homes. We think many people would be surprised to learn that they could no longer have a choice about how they cook in or heat their home.

"Australians want a reliable, customer-focused energy system, and the freedom to choose the sustainable energy option that best meets their needs. The resilience of our electricity infrastructure has been tested in recent years, and the cost of switching to electricity is significantly higher, so it's understandable that 100% electrification might not be an appealing prospect for many Australian families.

"Vitaly, prematurely shutting down the domestic gas industry would see Australia lose the opportunity, expertise, and infrastructure that would support a successful renewable gas industry.

"Australia does not have the workforce to deliver 100% electrification, but it does have a highly skilled workforce that can support renewable gas. For this reason, government needs to engage more closely with the plumbing sector to fully grasp both the challenges and opportunities ahead."

As the industry peak body, MPANZ is engaging with government and industry partners to encourage an evidence- and risk-based approach to future gas policy, that keeps the option open for a vibrant renewable gas industry in Australia.



## COVER STORY: Gas supply

# What happens when the gas goes out?

**NATHANIEL SMITH** says government moves to phase out gas too quickly will have disastrous consequences for both industry and homeowners.

**T**he Australian Government's recent push in the 2023 Federal Budget to reduce the country's reliance on gas has been met with mixed reactions from the public and various industries. The Government aims to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change by introducing further electrification of households. However, the move has rightfully raised concerns among stakeholders in the plumbing and gas industries and homeowners who rely on gas for their daily needs.

The Federal Government's attack on gas stems from the need to meet the country's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. The Government has stated that gas is one of Australia's biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for around 13% of emissions in 2019. By reducing the amount of gas used, the Government hopes to reduce the country's carbon footprint and contribute to the global effort to tackle climate change.

- What is the expected increase in electricity use?
- What will be the increase in

electricity costs with the rise in demand?

- How much more coal and gas will need to be burned to meet this increase in demand?

In the May Federal Budget, the Government introduced various measures to reduce gas consumption to achieve this goal. These measures include the introduction of funding for electric vehicle infrastructure, support for new renewable energy projects, and grants for businesses that switch to electric heating and cooling systems.

The Federal Labor Government is committing the following:

- \$1 billion to deliver household energy upgrades\* that will help keep Aussie homes warmer in winter and cooler in summer. This fund is expected to support upgrades for approximately 110,000 homes.
- \$300 million to support energy upgrades\* to social housing, helping install all-electric appliances and other energy efficiency measures in around 60,000 social housing properties.
- \$314 million for a small business energy incentive to support small businesses to get off the gas,

become more energy efficient and lower their power bills.

The Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW) believes the Federal Government has *fired a shot across the bow* as a warning to the natural gas industry in Australia. The gas industry must act and act fast.

### STATE INITIATIVES

In addition to the Federal Government's efforts, some State Governments have also introduced their own initiatives to reduce the use of gas. For example, the Victorian Government has launched a \$797 million program to replace household gas appliances with electric alternatives. Similarly, the South Australian Government has committed to transitioning 50,000 households from gas to electric heating and cooling by 2025.

The most extreme measure a State/Territory Government has taken is in the ACT, which recently passed legislation to ban all gas connections to new buildings from November 2023. Similarly, the Victorian Government has foreshadowed its intention to ban the installation of gas to new buildings from January 2024.

## NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Many industry experts rightfully argue that reducing gas consumption too quickly could negatively affect the industry and homeowners. The Plumbing sector would be most heavily affected, and the nation would be at further risk of energy price increases, reliability problems and blackouts. The NSW network is already stretched, and Victoria has a huge gas network, and a hasty transition would put the grid under extreme pressure and would force Victorians to live in Third World conditions.

What angers the industry is that Government is not talking up green gas, the use of blending hydrogen with natural gas, which is already happening successfully here in NSW and in other parts of the country. The electrical industry has portrayed gas as a dirty and not a renewable product, which is incorrect, as Biogas is a natural gas that is 100% renewable.

In addition to the impact on jobs, there are concerns about the practicality of switching from gas to electric systems. For example, in some cases electric systems may not be able to provide the same level of heat output as gas systems, which could lead to lower levels of comfort for homeowners.

There are also concerns about the cost of switching to electric systems. While the government has committed to funding the transition to electric systems, many homeowners may still face high installation costs. For example, replacing a gas stove with an electric one (depending on the product) can sometimes cost several thousand dollars, which could be a significant financial burden for most households.

In larger buildings, such as Strata Residential or Commercial buildings, the problem is exacerbated. After speaking recently with a Hydraulic



## ... reducing gas consumption too quickly could negatively affect the industry and homeowners.

Consultant, drawing up Hot Water designs for a large student accommodation building for 60 students is as follows:

- Electric Condensers – \$75k per building – 10 tanks and two 15 kw Condensers – 20m<sup>2</sup> of Plant room required.
- Electric Condensers with Electric Boost – \$50k per building – 6 tanks and two 15 kw Condensers – 16m<sup>2</sup> of Plant room required.
- Electric Storage with Element – \$20k per building – 6 tanks – 8m<sup>2</sup> of Plant room required.
- Gas – \$20k per Building – one storage tank and four instantaneous heaters – 5m<sup>2</sup> of plant room required.

As pointed out above, gas is the winner by a country mile whenever large volumes of hot water and heating are required.

## ELECTRICITY PRICES

Another concern I briefly mentioned is that reducing gas consumption would lead to an increase in electricity prices. If more households

switch to electric heating and cooling systems, the electricity grid will have a greater strain, leading to higher prices.

The transition to electric appliances will be catastrophic for plumbing companies and gas appliance manufacturers and create massive supply chain issues for the entire building industry. As gas fitting is a highly specialised field, reducing the demand for gas could result in losing jobs for tradespeople trained in gas fitting. Plumbing companies that adapt to this shift in demand may position themselves as diversified companies offering electrical services, which provides an extra edge in securing work.

In conclusion, the Australian Government's Anti-Gas agenda to reduce gas consumption, they believe, is an important step towards achieving the country's emissions reduction targets and tackling climate change. Most of the industry believes this ideology trumpets common sense, considering they will need to burn more coal and gas to meet power grid demands and prevent blackouts. **TMP**

Footnote

*\*Upgrades refer to retrofitting from Gas to Electric.*



Nathaniel (Nat) Smith is the CEO of MPA NSW. Prior to joining the Association in May this year, he had a successful career as a qualified plumber and subsequently as a politician (State Member for Wollondilly). He has strong advocacy experience at all levels of government. Contact Nat at [nathaniel@masterplumbers.com.au](mailto:nathaniel@masterplumbers.com.au)



## FEATURE: Fair Work Amendments

# Changes in the pipeline

Recent changes to the Fair Work Act have implications for employers across the country, including members of the plumbing profession.

**KYLE KUTASI** and **PASCALE ELZERMAN** from Solve Legal provide an overview of the new regulations.

**T**he Labor Government's workplace changes are being implemented over the 12 months that follow the introduction of the *Secure Jobs Better Pay Act 2022* last December.

No matter the size of the business, most of these amendments will change the way your plumbing business operates.

Employers must familiarise themselves with their new obligations and their employees' new workplace rights.

### **PAY SECRECY CLAUSES**

Pay secrecy clauses are prohibited (as of 7 December 2022), and civil penalties for any such clauses are now in force (as of 7 June 2023).

Pay secrecy clauses are any written provisions (whether in contract or otherwise) that prevent employees from disclosing their pay or other conditions (e.g., hours of work) to anyone else (read: other employees). This includes bonuses and any other financial incentive.

Employers are obligated to review their employment contracts and confidentiality agreements and ensure no such provisions exist.

Furthermore, any documents or even templates used for salary reviews or bonuses should be reviewed to ensure no wording exists that breaches the new pay secrecy provisions.

Breaching this new law could result in civil penalties of up to \$66,000 per contravention. To avoid hefty penalties, you should ensure that any contracts that include pay secrecy clauses are promptly revised.

**SUMMARY: Pay secrecy clauses are now prohibited and heavy penalties may apply.**

### **FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE ARRANGEMENTS**

As of 6 June 2023, changes to the National Employment Standards have been made with respect to employees' rights to request flexible work. Flexible work arrangements include:

- Hours of work, e.g., changes to start and finish times;
- Patterns of work, e.g., split shifts or job sharing; and
- Locations of work, e.g., working from home.

The new provisions make more employees eligible to request flexible work arrangements, such as for pregnant employees or employees (or their immediate family members) experiencing family and domestic violence.

There is also an increased requirement to engage and consult with their employees before refusing a request for flexible work arrangements. Employers need to discuss any requests with the relevant employee and make a genuine effort to sort out alternative arrangements that can accommodate the employee's circumstances.

The Fair Work Commission now also has the power to conciliate and arbitrate flexible work disputes and make orders that can require employers to grant requests for flexible work.

**SUMMARY: More people are eligible for flexible work arrangements, and employers have a greater responsibility to consult with employees and genuinely try to accommodate flexible work requests.**

### **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS**

As of 1 July 2023, parents are entitled to 20 weeks of government-funded paid parental leave. The 20 weeks is shared between the two parents, and can be taken flexibly and by either parent, depending on the needs of the family. There is no longer a requirement to take leave in blocks of time.

This applies for children born or adopted after 1 July 2023, and the leave must be taken before the child turns two. Any single parents may take 20 weeks of government-funded paid parental leave.

This may have significant implications for members of the Master Plumbers who have not been accustomed to date to many employees accessing paid parental leave. Members need to be aware of any accommodations that need to be made for new parents.

**SUMMARY: For kids born after 1 July 2023, parents now share 20 weeks of paid parental leave between the two of them, which they can take flexibly.**

## ZOMBIE AGREEMENTS

'Zombie' Agreements are enterprise agreements made prior to 1 January 2010 that have not been replaced or terminated.

Employers are required to inform any of their employees covered by Zombie Agreements by 6 June 2023 that:

- they are covered by such an agreement;
- the Zombie Agreement will terminate on 7 December 2023; and
- the sunseting process for Zombie Agreements commenced on 7 December 2022.

Applications can be made to extend the default period of Zombie Agreements.

**SUMMARY: Zombie Agreements will terminate on 7 December 2023, unless an application is otherwise made to continue.**

## ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

From 6 June 2023, three new streams of multi-employer bargaining have been introduced. Employers currently not covered by an enterprise agreement or

not in written agreement with the CEPU (Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia) to bargain for a replacement single-enterprise agreement may be referred by the CEPU to the Commission to be included in an SIE (Single Interest Employer) Authorisation. To avoid being roped into an SIE Agreement, Master Plumber members ought to consider implementing a single-enterprise agreement to displace the operation of the Award. The Commission also has new powers to arbitrate and resolve impasses in enterprise bargaining.

These changes can be complex, and legal advice should be sought to clarify the best steps for your business.

**SUMMARY: There are three new streams of multi-employer bargaining, new rules around SIE Authorisations and Agreements, and the Commission has new powers to resolve impasses in bargaining.**

## WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY

Employers who have at least 100 employees have previously been required to report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) on gender pay equity, gender composition, workplace sexual harassment, recruitment and promotion, gendered work segregation, and leave and flexibility.

New changes mean that the WGEA will publish information from individual employers (instead of industry-wide, anonymous reports). This first round of information is only for employers who are not Commonwealth sector employers, and will be published in early 2024 and publicly available on the WGEA website.

In late 2024 or early 2025, the second round of published information will include Commonwealth sector employers.

**SUMMARY: If you employ more than 100 people, your individual company name will now be included in WGEA publications in relation to Workplace Gender Equality.**

## SEEK LEGAL ADVICE

Most of the enforcement dates for these amendments have already passed at the time of this publication. Therefore, if any changes have not been made yet, they are overdue, and employers may be legally at risk for not making changes in their business. If you are directly affected by these changes, and need assistance implementing changes, seek legal advice to ensure you are compliant with these new workplace laws. **TMP**



Kyle Kutasi is the Co-Founder and Legal Practitioner Director of Solve Legal. Kyle has extensive experience in commercial and industrial matters across Australia, and has spent over a decade advising clients in the construction industry on their commercial contracts, employment issues and debt recovery matters. Visit [www.solvelegal.com.au](http://www.solvelegal.com.au)



Pascale Elzerman is a Paralegal at Solve Legal. She has a keen interest in employment and industrial relations law.



## FEATURE: Backflow prevention

# Backflow prevention – help is available

Backflow prevention can be a complex science, and keeping up with new regulations and technologies is often difficult. The Backflow Prevention Association of Australia (BPAA) has resources to help you keep a professional edge. **PETER DAMASO** explains.

In the plumbing industry today, backflow prevention has become a major issue. As most licensed plumbers here in NSW are not accredited to commission or test backflow prevention devices, many wonder where they can turn to for help and information.

This is where the Backflow Prevention Association of Australia (BPAA) comes in...

### What is the BPAA doing to help minimise backflow issues?

The BPAA has been around for over 25 years, and currently has chapters in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania.

The chapters of the BPAA hold regular meetings for financial members, where backflow topics and issues are openly discussed and where solutions can often be found to help minimise backflow issues.

### Focus on NSW

Here in NSW on the 12 July 2023, the NSW State Chapter of the BPAA held a forum where Councils, Water

Authorities and other interested parties came together to discuss the new AS/NZS 2845 – 2020 and the Plumbing Code of Australia. There were over 20 attendees from various Councils and Water Authorities from across NSW being represented.

BPAA Committee member Stephen Jennison discussed the changes to AS/NZS2845.1, in particular the difference between the prior standard (Revision: 2010) and current standard (Revision: 2020) regarding pressure differentials between by-pass backflow devices and main/large bore backflow devices on fire services. He explained how the Australian Standards committees are made up of various stakeholders, and the roles that they play. It was explained how the change concerning the current requirement for a 20 kPa differential between the main backflow device and the attached by-pass backflow device on fire services valves such as Double Check Detector Assemblies (DCDA) was changed and the reasons why. The full

meeting can be viewed by financial members of the BPAA on their website, along with the decisions of various Network Utilities Operators, LGA, Councils and other jurisdictions as to what they will require when carrying out the annual testing or repairs to a DCDA.

### National BPAA resources

We also have Executive members sitting of the committees that guide the Australian Standards 3500 and 2845, and we have representation with the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), which governs the Plumbing Code of Australia.

Our education program includes a yearly conference where backflow topics are discussed, and we have a hands-on workshop where accredited backflow plumbers can refine their skills. Experts are on hand at these conferences along with manufacturers to help with problems and find solutions. This year the Conference will be held at Tweed Heads from the 18–20 October 2023. Visit our website



...the BPAA website is the go-to place to find information.

www.bpaa.org.au to find out more information and costs.

For our members, the BPAA website is the go-to place to find information about backflow prevention. The Members Hub Page gives direct access to various publications from authorities, safe work methods statements, fact sheets on trouble shooting problems with backflow devices, various authorities, backflow policies and Standards (not only for NSW, but also for other states). It also has videos to help testers.

### Education for the wider community

For the general public, the BPAA website explains the multiple conditions which can cause a backflow situation. It also explains if your property may require backflow protection, and what the consequences could be if you do not have proper backflow protection on place and have it tested every 12 months, as per Australian Standards AS/NZS 2845.3.

Here the general public can find the list of members who are licensed plumbers that hold backflow accreditation.

Remember: backflow prevention protects you, you family, your staff, the general public and your reputation. **TMP**



Peter Damaso has been a licensed plumber since 1985 and has been an accredited backflow specialist since 1999. He has sat on the NSW State Committee of the Backflow Prevention Association of Australia Inc. since 2015-2022 and has been an Executive Committee Member since 2017. Peter is now the Vice-President of the BPAA. Peter runs his own backflow plumbing business and has extensive knowledge of the backflow industry. Visit [www.bpaa.org.au](http://www.bpaa.org.au)

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## **SYDNEY WATER:** Backflow prevention

# Recycled water cross-connections and backflow prevention



**C**ross-connections between recycled water and drinking water services can cause backflow incidents, and usually result from non-compliant plumbing work. Ensuring recycled water and drinking water plumbing work is done in accordance with required standards will help ensure the protection of our drinking water network.

Adhering to plumbing standards when pipes are being installed is critical to avoid cross-connections. For example, not clearly identifying recycled water pipework, especially around meter sets and in situations where plumbers could hand over/interchange work has been a cause of confusion for plumbers in the past, and has resulted in cross-connections.

Here are three things to remember to avoid the risk of cross-connections when working on properties with both recycled water and drinking water services in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra:

- All plumbing work from the point of connection at the water main to the meter assembly (mains to meters) must adhere to Sydney Water's M2M requirements, as well as current plumbing standards AS/NZS 3500.
- All recycled water pipework and recycled water taps must be clearly identifiable (lilac colour). This includes all exposed pipework such as water meter riser assemblies. To further ensure that recycled water services are identifiable, signage is also required.
- When working on a new development with a recycled water service, an above-ground bypass must be installed at the meter assembly from the drinking water supply to feed and test the internal recycled service, as per AS/NZS3500.2.

The installation and maintenance of backflow prevention devices is an important control to manage the potential impact of cross-connections and backflow events across the water network. Safe, clean, high-quality drinking water is vital for a healthy, thriving community, and Sydney Water acknowledges the important role that plumbers play in protecting public health. As a reminder, when providing backflow services to customers within Sydney Water's area of operations, plumbers need to:

- Assess the property's backflow hazards and install appropriate individual or zone protection devices (managed by the NSW Department of Fair Trading).
- Identify the main water supply connection for the property, which is often referred to as the 'boundary' connection (where the backflow containment devices are installed).
- Ensure that any backflow containment devices you install match the highest hazard backflow device installed within a property, noting that any property identified by a licenced plumber as being medium or high hazard requires a testable backflow device to be installed at the main water meter connection.
- Ensure all testable backflow prevention containment devices are registered on the Sydney Water backflow database and test results are uploaded, remembering that these devices must be tested yearly.

Sydney Water has a number of instructional videos and information to support plumbers using its backflow database, which are available at [sydneywater.com.au/backflowplumbing](http://sydneywater.com.au/backflowplumbing). **TMP**

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## FEATURE: Member Profile

# Dan's winning ways

Following the loss of an eye in a devastating workplace accident in 2019, Dan Winning, Director of On the Job Plumbing Pty Ltd, has discovered that adversity can actually motivate the development of hidden skills, reinforce friendships, and inspire professional resilience.



Above: Dan with his uncle Jack Winning.  
Below: Dan receives support from his business partner Tim, following his accident.

### Q How did your career in plumbing begin?

I began my plumbing apprenticeship when I was 16 years old, right after completing my Year 10 exams. Throughout that year, I had the opportunity to do several weeks of work experience with a local plumbing company, and I enjoyed every moment of it. When the company that I had done my work experience with offered me an apprenticeship, I jumped at the opportunity. For some strange reason, I remember the exact date when I started my apprenticeship: 8 October 1996.

### Q Were you destined to work in the plumbing industry from an early age?

Yes, I think I was meant to work in plumbing from a young age. Although I didn't mind school, I was more interested in working with my hands on metal and wood projects. I wanted to use my brain and skills in a practical job, so plumbing seemed like the perfect fit for me. I do not have any regrets about leaving school when I was 16, and I have achieved a lot of success in an industry that I'm passionate about.

### Q Have you worked in any industries apart from plumbing?

Apart from plumbing, I haven't worked in any other industries. Unless KFC at the age of 15 counts (ha ha)!

### Q Have you had many mentors throughout your career?

Yes, I have been fortunate to have many mentors throughout my career, especially during my early days as an apprentice. Being surrounded by experienced senior tradesmen provided me with invaluable guidance and mentorship. They taught me a wide range of skills and techniques, which laid a strong foundation for my growth as a plumber.

Additionally, being thrown into challenging situations at a young age proved to be a big factor in developing good problem-solving skills. Navigating complex problems became second nature to me, and I thrived in those situations. This early exposure to demanding tasks and the need to think on my feet has undoubtedly contributed to my success as a problem solver in the plumbing field.



### Q Would you describe yourself as a 'people person'?

Yes, I would describe myself as a 'people person.' In the plumbing industry, it's crucial to interact and communicate effectively with clients and contractors. I believe in building good relationships based on trust, integrity, and clear communication. Being able to understand and address the concerns of my clients and work in with others has been a big part of my success as a plumber.

I believe that the person that you are communicating with does not always have the knowledge and know-how that you have, so it's vital to explain things in a way that not only outlines the issue clearly, but also allows them to understand why it is so important.

**Q What have been the most significant changes in the industry throughout your career?**

One of the most significant changes in the plumbing industry throughout my career has been the integration of technology. From advanced tools and equipment to innovative materials and digital systems. It has improved efficiency, accuracy, and safety in various aspects of plumbing, such as pipe relining,

**...I refuse to let this setback define me.**

pipe inspection and leak detection. Staying updated with these technological advancements has become essential in providing high-quality service to clients.

**Q What has been your greatest achievement?**

Without a doubt, my greatest achievement stems from the resilience and determination I've demonstrated since a life-changing workplace injury in 2019. In that unfortunate accident, I lost my



Dan Winning invented The Bash jetter safety plate following his accident – see full details on page 36.

right eye due to a high-pressure water jetting incident. Despite the physical and emotional challenges that I faced (and continue to face), I refuse to let this setback define me.

Instead, I focused on staying positive and found strength and inspiration in my passion for CrossFit training. I have worked hard and have stayed dedicated to my sport, and, as a result, I have some amazing achievements, including winning multiple CrossFit events like the Masters League 2022 games. It's

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Dan, Tim, Jason – and the ones that didn't get away!



Dan Winning says his family (left: daughters Immy and Miki; right: wife Danni) helped him to overcome the challenges of losing an eye.



been an incredible journey, and I'm grateful for all the support and great friendships I've received along the way.

But it didn't end there. Inspired by my own experience, I saw a chance to make a difference in the plumbing industry. With my knowledge and unique perspective, I created a safety product called 'The Bash' jetter safety plate (see page 36), designed to prevent accidents during high-pressure water jetting.

This invention showcases my greatest strength: turning a negative event into a force for positive change. I not only overcame challenges but also developed a solution that can protect countless lives in the future.

In short, it's about rising above tough times, staying positive, and using my skills and experience to create a safety product that can stop similar accidents from happening again.

**Q How important is ongoing professional training and development?**

I think training and development are vital in plumbing. The industry is always changing with new products, techniques, and technologies. To provide top-notch service, it's crucial to keep learning and adapting. Staying updated with industry publications keeps me informed about the latest products and information.

**Q How important has your family been to your career?**

My family has been so important to me in my plumbing career. Their support, belief, and encouragement have been incredible. From my apprenticeship days, I remember coming home and sharing the day's stories with them. They still talk about those adventures and how much they loved hearing about them. Now, with my own little family, their unwavering support continues. They back me as I create my own safety product and brand. Their belief in me gives me the confidence and motivation to pursue my goals. They are my everything.

**Q Will technology ever fix all plumbing problems?**

In short, no! Technology has transformed plumbing, but it can't solve all issues. Plumbing is complex, affected by infrastructure, environment, and mistakes. Advanced tools help, but skilled plumbers are still needed to analyse and solve problems. Technology is valuable, but I believe that human expertise remains crucial for tackling day-to-day plumbing problems.

**Q Have you noticed any changes to the way society regards plumbers?**

Yes, I believe society's perception of plumbers has mostly improved. Previously, plumbing was seen as a less prestigious or dirty job.

However, things have changed due to increased awareness about water conservation, sustainability, advancements in tool technology, and the crucial role plumbers play in maintaining safe and efficient plumbing systems. People now acknowledge the skill, expertise, and professionalism that plumbers bring to their work, and so they should!

**Q Is plumbing the best career in the world?**

Well, I don't know if we could go as far as 'best career', but it's got to be close. Plumbing is a very rewarding career for those who love working with their hands, solving problems, and helping people. I also feel with the way technology is evolving that a big portion of our work will always depend on human interaction, and this will keep our industry safe.

**Q What will you be doing in five years' time? And then?**

In five years, I'll be focused on working hard to continue to develop and add to my safety product business and brand, making it more successful and finding innovative ways to improve industry safety and awareness.

I also have a strong interest in the CrossFit training community. I want to share my knowledge and passion by coaching or getting involved with other fitness enthusiasts. Helping others achieve their fitness goals is important to me. **TMP**

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## TRAINING

**ROD JACKSON** outlines the Construct NSW Digital Learning Platform, which is an exciting new resource developed by the Office of the NSW Building Commissioner and TAFE NSW.

# Office of the NSW Building Commissioner

**T**he Office of the Building Commissioner (OBC) was created by the previous NSW Liberal government with the intention to restore confidence in residential apartment buildings, with the future intention to extend the focus to all residential building. This will be achieved through the Construct NSW digital platform with focus on six areas of industry reform: regulation, ratings, education, contracts, digital tools, and data and research.

Under education on the platform, the office of the NSW Building Commissioner in partnership with TAFE NSW have developed the Construct NSW Digital Learning Platform. The Digital Learning Platform proactively addresses identified skills and learning gaps in the building and construction sector by creating, sponsoring, and approving training modules/courses.

Currently, there are 27 short modules/courses available to complete if you would like or need to be up to date with current practice and changes affecting the building and construction industry. New content is created and added on an ongoing basis. Subscription to the program's monthly newsletter is recommended to keep up to date on changes and issues affecting the building and construction industry, including additions to the learning platform of new learning module/courses.

**...there are no eligibility requirements to enroll, just your interest and enthusiasm to be informed.**

### SUGGESTED MODULES/COURSES

Below are some suggested modules/courses from the education platform that may be of interest to plumbing businesses:

- Asbestos awareness for solar installers
- Establishing and maintaining a worksite
- Waterproofing design principles
- Waterproofing remediation: how to ensure a successful project
- The value of Australian Standards
- Understanding Occupation Certificate Audits
- Integrated testing and commissioning
- How to reduce construction waste and improve productivity
- Achieving quality-built outcomes in a development project
- Navigating the Design and Building Practitioners (DPB) Legislation
- New modules/courses coming soon, Preventing falls in construction.

The modules/courses offered on the platform are non-accredited; there are no eligibility requirements to enroll, just your interest and enthusiasm to be informed on the building and construction industry

changes and issues. These courses are designed for anyone who works in, or is interested in, the building and construction industry. The courses are usually one to two hours' duration and once you have enrolled you can complete the course at your leisure as your time permits for a period up to six months. There is an enrolment fee of \$140 for each module/course.

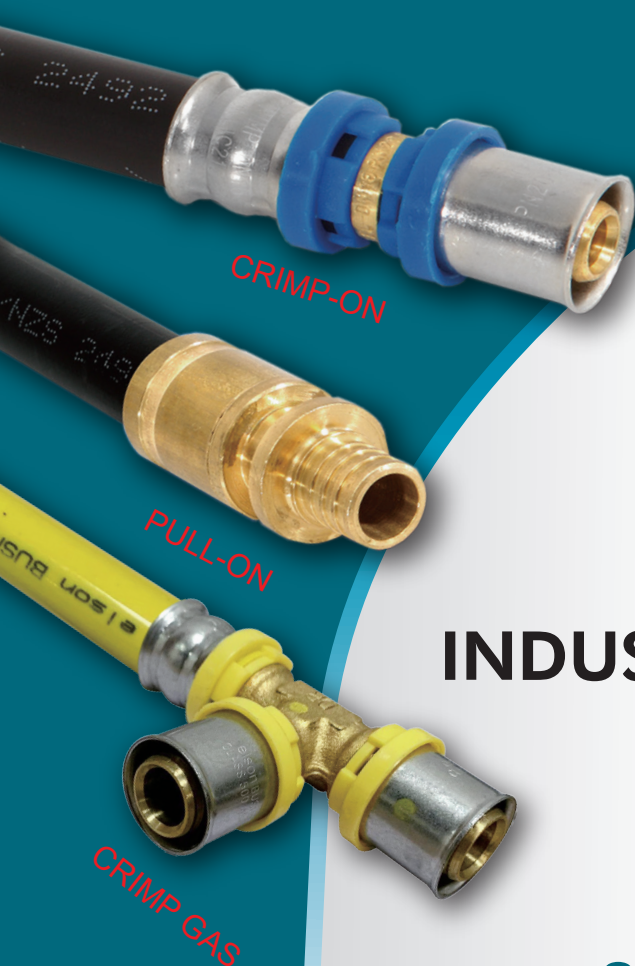
CPD points are available for anyone requiring points for licence category renewal. **TMP**

**Further detailed information is available on the website on the Construct NSW strategy delivering once-in-a-generation reform of the building and construction industry. Access and subscribe to the Construct NSW website using this link: <https://training.tafensw.edu.au/constructnsw/>**



Rod Jackson is the Compliance Administrator for MPA Training. A plumber by trade, Rod is very well known to the plumbing industry, having had oversight of the training of generations of plumbing apprentices throughout his lengthy career with TAFE NSW prior to commencing with MPA NSW. Email [info@masterplumbers.com.au](mailto:info@masterplumbers.com.au)





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## WOMEN IN PLUMBING



Something as simple as the way men address women can have a profound impact on business relations, work satisfaction, and prospects for work referrals. **JOANNE TONKS** explains.

# What's in a name?

**W**hat's in a name? 'Hun', 'Darl', 'Love'. My dad is a plumber, and he thinks they are all perfectly good substitutes for 'mate' when he doesn't know or can't remember the name of a female customer, supplier, work colleague, or – let's face it – any woman whose name he cannot recall! However, these are three of the most dreaded words I could possibly hear from a customer, a colleague or a supplier. Basically, unless you are over the age of 75 or you are my father, I'm not answering to any of these and bristle at the sound of them. So, my tip to all plumbers out there is: they should be removed as soon as humanly possible from your day to day communications in the workplace.

Not to be too extreme, but I can't express how this could be affecting you economically. I have changed the real estate agent I used to sell my house, my bank and my cleaner all due to the men I dealt with initially being too familiar in their communication style and not treating me the same as they would if I were a man.

This does not mean you have to be rigid or formal. It means you need to be appropriate for the context you are dealing with. In my opinion, calling someone 'Love', 'Darl' or 'Hun', etc, is not appropriate unless you know the person very well AND there is a level of affection that is understood by both parties. If you want to be more effective in how you communicate, you have to know this and modify your style starting from today. I absolutely believe you

will see a direct correlation to an improvement in how women who are your clients, your colleagues and your suppliers relate to you.

So, today I am going to give you my take on good communication for plumbers from a woman's perspective. You don't have to agree with me, but I would love it if you gave it a shot and report back on your findings.

### HERE ARE MY TIPS

#### **Call someone by their first name: Always**

I'll tell you why it's so important – because if your service is bad, calling a woman by a patronising name will infuriate them. If your service is good, you may have still left a bad impression by calling them a patronising name, so they may not call you back or recommend you as they may feel you have been condescending towards them. Meanwhile, you may think you have been perfectly nice – and this is where the problem lies. It's a disconnect between intention and delivery. You don't intend to offend anyone but sometimes we do in the delivery.

Remember their name when you first meet them, and you will not forget it. This acknowledges that you care enough to know their name. Even if you can't pronounce it. Ask them. It shows better customer care to take the time to understand than to pretend a name doesn't exist and instead call them by some generic, outdated, stereotypical, patronising term.

If you can't remember their name – admit it! It is better to say, 'I am Brett, I am so sorry, but I have

forgotten your name since we last spoke.' (Then, don't forget it when they tell you again).

In the office, please don't refer to her as 'the office lady', 'the marketing girl', 'the payroll lady', 'the accounts chick', etc, etc. Sound familiar? Again, a first name is fine, a nickname is fine (if you are familiar enough). Being respectful enough to call someone by name will build rapport and will show the other members of your team the professionalism in your business.

On a similar note – I have never understood why tradespeople call an apprentice 'the boy', and I would encourage you, if you want young men to grow up respecting you, to call them by their name.

#### **Swearing is best left in the field**

If you don't swear in front of your grandma, don't swear in the office. That's my rule. I used to have a boss who would tell me that swearing showed a lack of creative thought. I try to keep this in mind when I get cranky or frustrated! As business owners it's up to us to show the type of business that we want and how we want people to relate and communicate at work. If you get frustrated and lose your cool easily, you still need to calm down before you can think of a solution. So, try to cut to the chase and hold it when you are about to let loose in the office with a few choice words. Make sure your people know this too. If you don't already have this rule, it's going to take a bit to bring it in. Swearing is aggressive. By keeping it out of the general office vibe, it keeps things on a more even keel and helps everyone feel more comfortable.

...calling a woman by a patronising name will infuriate them.

These days also, everyone has a mobile phone and a CCTV camera. Don't get caught out behaving in a way you wished you hadn't afterwards, and then it's on camera for all to see and rerun.

**Pause**

Pause between when you would normally react and when you now 'respond'. Just take a breath and consciously note to yourself you are taking a pause. This will give you time to check yourself. If you implement

my first name rule and no swearing rule above, this rule will be a cinch. If you don't, this is where this rule can be hard to implement. Toning down the swearing and micro-aggression, toning down the patronising names that you don't realise are patronising, will help you have a level of self-awareness in your communication – both verbal and non-verbal – that you didn't before. As tradies we can put the airs and graces on for clients but then show our true colours when something goes wrong, or we can throw our weight around constantly without having an impact when something actually is serious with the team. Having some self-awareness teaches us to be more deliberate and consistent with all the team.

Good luck with your communication journey. I am still learning but I find it really rewarding when I can train myself to do things differently and get a better result, and I hope you do too. **TMP**



Joanne Tonks is General Manager of Watertight Group Pty Limited, specialising in Facilities Maintenance Plumbing. Visit [www.watertight.com.au](http://www.watertight.com.au)

# National Backflow & Legionella Convention

Water for Health and Environment

Twin Towns Conference & Function Centre  
19th-20th October 2023

- Workshops**  
Learn from the experts on Backflow testing (Ashmore TAFE 18th October)
- Guest Speakers**  
Presentations from dynamic speakers on Backflow Prevention, Legionella, Trade Waste & the ABCB
- Delegates and Sponsors**  
are welcomed to attend



For more information on how to book tickets visit: [www.bpaa.org.au](http://www.bpaa.org.au)



## DIRECTIONS

In this first part of a two-part feature, MPA NSW President **GREG McELROY** offers some practical tips about how to enhance the public profile of your business, starting with the use of professional vehicle livery and well-presented uniforms.

# Establishing your brand in the customer's mind... at a low cost

In a world dominated by digital advertising and online campaigns, it's easy to overlook the subtle yet impactful techniques that companies use to solidify their brand presence in the minds of customers. Direct and indirect physical marketing strategies, such as vehicle livery, branded uniforms, and creative promotional materials like fridge magnets, continue to play a vital role in reinforcing brand awareness and fostering customer loyalty. Let's explore the power of these 'soft' marketing techniques and how they contribute to building a lasting connection between businesses and their customers.

In the following two-part feature, we'll examine the basic four points to remember and implement in order to foster a strong, low-cost brand awareness for your new and existing client base.

### #1 – DRIVING BRAND RECOGNITION WITH VEHICLE LIVERY

Vehicle livery, the application of logos, and branding on company vehicles, is a visually compelling form of advertising that reaches a broad audience on a daily basis. Whether it's a delivery truck, a service van, or a company car, the use of vibrant graphics and eye-catching designs transforms vehicles into moving billboards. Vehicle livery, the art of branding company vehicles with logos and eye-catching designs, offers a

powerful means of making a lasting impression on potential customers. Let's dig deeper into how vehicle livery contributes to brand visibility and establishes trust and reliability, ultimately shaping customers' perception of a business.

#### (a) Memorable First Impressions

As a company vehicle adorned with vibrant graphics and captivating branding passes by, it has the potential to capture the attention of onlookers. Vehicle livery stands out in traffic, at intersections, and in parking lots, creating a visual spectacle that piques curiosity and leaves a lasting imprint in the minds of passers-by. The striking design and consistent branding elements help the vehicle become a memorable representation of the company, making it more likely for potential customers to recall and recognise the brand in the future.

#### (b) Increased Brand Visibility

With a branded vehicle on the road, a company significantly expands its reach beyond its physical location or online presence. Every kilometre travelled exposes the brand to a wide range of potential customers who may not have been aware of its existence otherwise.

Vehicle livery acts as a mobile billboard, delivering brand messages and generating impressions in a diverse array of locations, effectively increasing brand visibility within the community and beyond. The more frequently

individuals encounter a branded vehicle, the more likely they are to associate the company with its products or services.

#### (c) Establishing Trust and Reliability

A well-designed and professionally branded vehicle instils a sense of trust and reliability in potential customers. When people see a vehicle with consistent and visually appealing livery, they perceive the business as being established, professional, and committed to its brand image. This perception is particularly crucial for service-oriented businesses, where reliability and trustworthiness play vital roles in decision-making. A branded vehicle signifies that the company is invested in its image and is dedicated to providing a high level of service, thus instilling confidence in potential customers.

#### (d) Strengthening Brand Recognition

Consistent and cohesive branding across multiple touch points reinforces brand recognition. When potential customers repeatedly encounter a company's logo and brand elements on its vehicles, in conjunction with other marketing channels, it creates a sense of familiarity. This familiarity builds trust and allows customers to quickly associate the brand with the products or services it offers. By using vehicle livery as part of an integrated marketing strategy,

businesses can reinforce their brand messaging and ensure that it remains prominent in the minds of their target audience.

In summary, vehicle livery serves as a powerful tool for creating a lasting impression, increasing brand visibility, and establishing trust and reliability among potential customers. By crafting visually appealing and consistent designs on company vehicles, businesses can leave a memorable impact on passers-by, expand their brand visibility, and instil confidence in the minds of potential customers. Through these efforts, vehicle livery plays a vital role in shaping customers' perception of a company, ultimately contributing to its long-term success.

## #2 – UNIFORMS THAT SHOWCASE BRAND IDENTITY

Branded uniforms worn by employees can significantly impact the perception of a company. A uniform bearing a company logo not only provides a professional appearance but also serves as a walking advertisement. We will explore how uniforms contribute to brand consistency, convey professionalism and reliability, and make it easier for customers to identify and connect with employees, creating a sense of familiarity and trust. Branded uniforms worn by employees play a significant role in reinforcing brand consistency, conveying professionalism and reliability, and fostering a strong connection between customers and a company.

### (a) Brand Consistency

Uniforms provide a tangible representation of a company's brand identity. By incorporating the company logo, colours, and other branding elements, uniforms ensure



## Vehicle livery acts as a mobile billboard...

consistency across all customer touch points. Whether it's an employee at a retail store, a service technician visiting a customer's home, or a restaurant staff member, the uniform serves as a visual cue that aligns with the overall brand image. This consistency reinforces the brand identity and creates a cohesive experience for customers, increasing their trust and confidence in the company.

### (b) Conveying Professionalism and Reliability

Uniforms project a professional and reliable image, instilling confidence in customers. When employees wear a branded uniform, it signifies that they are part of a team dedicated to delivering high-quality products or services. The uniform sets a standard of professionalism, indicating that employees are knowledgeable, trained, and committed to upholding the company's reputation. This perception of professionalism and reliability influences customer

perceptions and builds trust, as they feel assured that they are dealing with competent individuals who take their roles seriously.

### (c) Ease of Identification and Connection

Uniforms make it easier for customers to identify and connect with employees, creating a sense of familiarity and trust. In various industries, especially those involving face-to-face interactions, customers often seek assistance or guidance from employees. Branded uniforms act as visual cues, making it effortless for customers to recognise employees who can assist them. This ease of identification establishes a foundation for building relationships, as customers feel more comfortable approaching employees for support or information. By fostering these connections, uniforms contribute to personalised customer experiences, enhancing satisfaction and loyalty.

### (d) Sense of Familiarity and Trust

Uniforms generate a sense of familiarity and trust in the minds of customers. When employees consistently wear a branded uniform, customers become accustomed to the visual representation of the company. This familiarity

## DIRECTIONS

breeds a level of comfort, as customers perceive the presence of the uniform as a sign of reliability and dependability. Over time, the repetition of encounters with uniformed employees creates a sense of trust, allowing customers to feel more at ease when engaging with the company and its representatives.

Uniforms play a crucial role in promoting brand consistency, conveying professionalism and reliability, and fostering customer connection. By featuring branding elements, uniforms reinforce the company's identity and create a consistent visual representation across various customer touch points.

Moreover, uniforms project professionalism and reliability, instilling confidence in customers. They also facilitate identification and create a sense of familiarity, making it easier for customers to connect with employees.

Ultimately, uniforms contribute to building trust and forming lasting relationships with customers, enhancing their overall experience with the company. **TMP**

*Editor's Note: In the upcoming Summer 2023 issue of The Master Plumber, don't miss Part II of Greg's practical tips about the importance of brand recognition, with a special focus on promotional items.*



Greg McElroy is a Small Business Culture & Accountability Trainer. He has been a member of the Master Plumbers Association NSW for some 40 years. He was active on the Executive Committee from early 2000 until 2009, serving as President for several of those years. He is now serving on the Executive Committee again in 2023, with a special focus on business training and knowledge.

## Keystone

As specialists in contracts and commercial law, our role is to help our clients navigate this often complex legal area. We deliver focused advice to address broader matters affecting your businesses so that you can achieve and surpass your commercial goals. This holistic approach is important as it means we can focus on prevention rather than cure.

### Bronze Package

Business Health Assessment

20-minute consultation over the phone to discuss Business Health Assessment

\$250.00 plus GST

### Silver Package

Business Health Assessment

20-minute consultation over the phone to discuss Business Health Assessment

Tailored Document (chose 1 from below):

1. Quotation Terms & Conditions
2. Purchase Order Terms & Conditions
3. Employment Agreement

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### Gold Package

Business Health Assessment

20-minute consultation over the phone to discuss Business Health Assessment

Tailored Document (chose 2 from below):

1. Quotation Terms & Conditions
2. Purchase Order Terms & Conditions
3. Employment Agreement

\$700.00 plus GST

### Platinum Package

Business Health Assessment

20-minute consultation over the phone to discuss Business Health Assessment

Tailored Document (chose 1 from below):

1. Quotation Terms & Conditions
2. Purchase Order Terms & Conditions
3. Employment Agreement

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## APPRENTICE STORIES



Apprentice **OLIVER THAME**, aged 19, is about to commence his second year of training at MPA Training... which means he's well on the way to becoming a qualified plumber!

# Well on the way



Oliver is also a skilled fisherman, by the look of things!



Oliver gets stuck into some ground-level work.

### Q What level have you reached with your apprenticeship? Where are you doing your apprenticeship?

I am a couple of months off going into my second year of plumbing working at Joden Plumbing. I am mainly working out of the eastern suburbs and occasionally the Northern Beaches.

### Q Did you feel prepared for the first day of your apprenticeship?

Yes, I was prepared and was given all the info I needed to know by Master Plumbers. In saying that, it did take a couple of weeks for the nerves to die down and for me to feel comfortable working.

### Q Has it been hard to balance training and work obligations?

Being employed by Master Plumbers, which is also my trainer, makes the balance very good.

### Q Have travel requirements during your apprenticeship posed any issues?

Travel expenses tend to take a toll on a lot of apprentices, but I guess it's just a part of the job sometimes. But no travel requirements have posed a major issue so far.

### Q Have you learned everything you expected to during your apprenticeship? Or has it been more of an introduction to real 'on the job' instruction later?

I have learned more than I thought I would on my first year on the tools, and even in my first couple of months in the classroom.

### Q You must have had some great training mentors along the way – what makes a 'good instructor'?

A good instructor for me is someone I can get along with easily, and [to whom] I'm not afraid to ask the silly questions!

### Q What advice would you give to a new apprentice about to start day one?

My advice would be to get a good sleep; always stay busy; and when it's not busy, then *look* busy. Also, be yourself... and a couple of coffees throughout the day won't hurt to keep you going.

### Q Looking back, what have been the main highlights?

My main highlight so far would probably be getting my first set of power tools.

### Q Where are you working now? Main fields of expertise?

Residential new builds.

### Q When you're not working or studying, what are your favourite hobbies or pastimes?

Travelling and hanging out with friends and family. **TMP**



## REGIONAL RAMBLINGS

A short 'ramble' through the world of regional plumbing quickly reveals hot topics, ranging from Workers Compensation claims to leaking cylinders! Our regional expert **PETER RICHARDSON** doesn't hold back!

# Time is the enemy

**S**peaking to all types of construction workers, as well as nurses, hairdressers, doctors, police, it's clear that lawmakers make laws for various vocations. 'Yeah, ok,' but some of these lawmakers, politicians and bureaucrats may not have any knowledge about a specific vocation. So, those new laws should be drafted and sent out to the various master organisations to reply to the rights and wrongs of that law, so the draft law can be adjusted, if necessary, before it becomes law.

Our new CEO of MPA NSW, Nathaniel Smith, has had a meeting with Brian Seidler, CEO Master Builders NSW, and Dee Zegarac, Director of Media & Public Relations, Master Builders Australia, to talk about the above because together they have much more power. The construction industry alone is, if not the biggest employer of people in Australia, in the top three.

Luke went to get a hearing aid from a local/national hearing company. He only works five hours a day, three days a week (roustabout). He has not worked for the company before, nor is he in a noisy environment (office and stock shed).

The hearing aid people asked him: 'Do you want to claim workers compensation against your employer?'

'No,' he responded, 'because I have not worked for my new employer for very long and I am not in a noisy environment.' As Luke was leaving, they asked



again: 'Do you want to claim workers compensation?'

'No.'

The next day he got a phone call from a lawyer, who asked Luke: 'Are you sure you don't want to claim workers compensation?'

'No.'

In this modern climate of litigation, is the hearing aid business working in conjunction with a lawyer? Because if they deal with the workers compensation insurance company (and both have more money than the business owner), then both make more money for the same job.

So, boys and girls, this is for your information... and maybe not all the scammers are from overseas. Question: How did the lawyer get the name and number of the customer? Do people who advise customers to claim workers compensation know (or not care) that the business owner, depending on their history and size of claim, can increase next year's Workers Compensation Policy?

I know this next section is about builders in a Master Plumbers magazine, BUT plumbers, roofers, gasfitters, electricians, painters, tilers, concreters, and other trades work for builders as subcontractors, so if a builder has problems constructing and finishing a job, then those problems filter down to many subcontractors.

Here are some discussion points from builders I have spoken to. Builders have been hit with too many changes to home warranties, building class licenses and industrial relations red tape.

Instead of them just being able to go out and do what they do best (build), they have to spend countless unpaid hours to fill out paperwork, investigate contracts, warranties, and legislation changes, etc. Some builders have even reached out to see if they can hire someone to look after this part of the business for them, which also adds to their ongoing costs. Builders in more remote regional areas have faced significant delays (up to 3-4 months) in receiving building materials, while they also say the cost to deliver equipment is going up.

Master Builders Australia, which a few weeks ago was excluded from Workplace Relations Minister Tony Burke's union-employer meeting, has released polling claiming more than half of voters believe proposed 'employee-like' industrial relations changes will drive up costs and RED tape.

The survey of more than 1,300 Australians last month, including samples from key marginal Labor



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## Builders get locked into a chase for cash from project to project.

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seats, found 45% of voters rated cost of living as their primary concern, followed by the economy and taxes (23%), climate change (9%) and health (9%). Across top-of-mind issues, IR scored 4% with the majority of voters concerned about wages.

Residential builders tell us on a daily basis that the rapid increase in construction costs is crippling the industry and making it harder to deliver new homes in an affordable and timely way.

Tom Devitt, Senior Economist at the Housing Institute Australia, highlighted that the shortages are particularly acute in regional areas, impacting trades such as bricklaying, carpentry, and roofing.

However, he also noted that as more workers arrive from overseas, the industry can expect a gradual return to equilibrium, with home building and renovation timelines improving. While the rate of increase in the price of trades appears to be moderating, builders are still grappling with the rising costs due to the persistent skilled labour shortages.

Time is what's getting these guys, particularly in the volume residential market. So, homes that would usually take seven to nine months to build, builders are telling us that they are taking up to twice as long because they can't schedule the materials and the trades. And then that isn't flowing into cashflow forecasting.

Builders get locked into a chase for cash from project to project. The initial payments on the next job provide the cashflow to finish the previous one – and when the music stops, trouble arrives.

Builders' warranty insurers (this insurance is mandatory in most states) will often react to signs of cashflow issues by slowing builders down, requiring them to finish one job before starting the next. But struggling builders often find a way around this.

**H**ere's another job for CEDA (*Committee for Economic Development of Australia*) to look at because they want to reduce the skill level of trades so more people can get jobs.

Because we are the agent, we got a call re a warranty from a customer 50 km away about fitting a new heater under warranty because of leaking cylinders, which were installed about two years ago. (See the photo opposite: there is white



corrosion around the brass plug and the rust and/or dirt in the area).

Brad said, 'Have you got anyone that could pull the plug out, retape the plug and refit it?'

'Yes, I could do that.'

So, Brad explained how to do it safely and not lose all his hot water in the cylinder, and the reason is because if we get there and find the problem is the joint or the plug it will be your cost as that is not covered by warranty.

Yep, the customer did it, checked and not leaking from plug or from cylinder, so check in a week and a month that it is still not leaking. We will keep a record of what has happened so if it happens again from the cylinder, you could be covered by warranty.

Owner, 'Yep, all ok. Thanks.' **TMP**



Peter Richardson, from Sidney & Richardson in Ballina, NSW, is a lifelong plumbing professional with an intimate knowledge of regional affairs. Contact Peter at [admin@sidneyrichardson.com.au](mailto:admin@sidneyrichardson.com.au)



## REGULATION & SAFETY

# WORKING AT HEIGHTS SAFETY BLITZ

Last edition we highlighted the importance of working safely at heights and PCBU (person conducting a business or undertaking) duties to provide a safe working environment. Since then, SafeWork NSW has kicked off our zero-tolerance working at heights in construction safety blitz, with SafeWork NSW inspectors visiting building sites unannounced over the next 12 months.

Falls from heights are the number one killer on NSW construction sites, with the most serious falls being from roofs, ladders and scaffolds. And often it's falls from as little as two metres that can be fatal.

Inspectors will be taking a zero-tolerance approach, issuing on-the-spot fines of up to \$3,600, which can apply to both supervisors and workers.

Executive Director of Compliance for SafeWork NSW, Matt Press, said, "We want everyone on construction sites to treat fall protection as a 'non-negotiable'. That means that if you see an issue, speak up so that the supervisor is aware, but also make sure the fall risk is managed until it can be properly closed out through rails, boards or other prevention devices."



Accidents involving falls from heights continue to frustrate regulators and cause unnecessary trauma to families. Below, SafeWork NSW explains its latest initiatives to elevate safety.



**Do work safety right, at any height.**  
Prevent falls. Use roof guardrails or scaffold.



### Falls from heights are entirely preventable if you follow these steps:

- Plan for safety by thinking about the project-specific risks and how you will manage them by preparing and implementing a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) ([https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/107886/SW08268-0818-427125.pdf](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/107886/SW08268-0818-427125.pdf)) for work where a person could fall more than 2 metres.
  - Work on the ground or on a solid construction where possible.
  - Prevent your workers from falling by using a fall-prevention device, such as:
    - temporary work platforms
    - guardrails
    - scaffolding.
  - Use a work-positioning system, such as:
    - a restraint system
    - industrial rope access.
- If it is not possible to use a fall-prevention device or a work-positioning system, use a fall-arrest system, such as:
    - industrial safety nets
    - catch platforms
    - harness-based fall-arrest used with lifelines or individual anchors.

### Here are some additional tips:

- Hold weekly toolbox talks and ensure supervisors do daily checks to ensure safety systems are being applied by all workers.
- Foster a positive workplace culture towards safety.
- Use this safety checklist ([https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/559446/safety-checklist-working-at-heights-in-construction.pdf](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/559446/safety-checklist-working-at-heights-in-construction.pdf)) to ensure you are compliant.

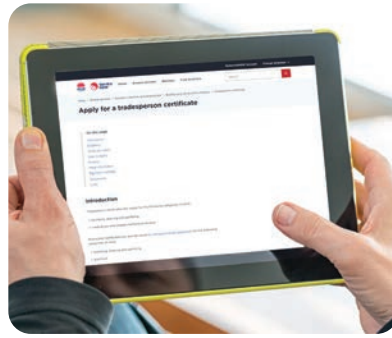


## HIERARCHY OF CONTROL

When working at heights, you must be able to demonstrate to inspectors that you are applying the hierarchy of control by installing a fall-prevention device such as roof guard rails, scaffold, skylight covers, crawl boards or by using an elevating work platform. Harnesses can only be used if it is not reasonably practicable to use a fall prevention device.

SafeWork recently held an Inspector Q&A session on working safely at heights. You can view it on the SafeWork website [safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/construction/work-safely-at-heights-in-construction](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/construction/work-safely-at-heights-in-construction).

**Head to our website to get more information on working safely at heights: [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au) or about our Speak Up app [safework.nsw.gov.au/advice-and-resources/speak-up-app](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/advice-and-resources/speak-up-app).**



## Tradesperson certificates now available online

**O**nline applications for tradesperson certificates are quick, simple, and no longer require in-person lodgement at Service NSW. Get time back in your day by completing your application at a time that suits you.

Don't forget, existing tradesperson certificate holders can renew their certificate online.

More digitised licensing processes are also becoming available for other building-related licences, including contractor licences and qualified supervisor certificates and renewals.

Learn more about the online application process on the Service NSW website; search: 'apply for a tradesperson certificate'.

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## Unlocking the secrets to successful waterproofing



**A** new learning module has been produced, which clearly shows the main design principles behind successful waterproofing jobs.

Water damage is the most common defect in buildings and dwellings. From leaking showers to flooded basements, water intrusion can lead to costly repairs and unhappy customers. There is a way, however, to look at waterproofing differently, achieve better

results, and prevent water damage in buildings.

The Office of the NSW Building Commissioner, in partnership with Ross Taylor Associates, has developed a learning module: Waterproofing Design Principles, currently on the Construct NSW digital learning platform (<https://store.training.tafensw.edu.au/product/waterproofing-design-principles>).

The course describes waterproofing as the "collection, redirection and drainage of water", simplifying water management down to how it flows around structures.

This unique course provides practical knowledge and skills that can be applied in projects immediately. A learner will gain insights and strategies to achieve better results in all wet areas, from bathrooms and kitchens to basements and balconies. By understanding the principles of successful waterproofing, the learner should be able to prevent water damage, enhance customer satisfaction, and save time and money on costly repairs.

People who have successfully completed the course describe it as one that "sets out the basic terms and phrases that are simple yet effective in understanding principles of waterproofing designs."

A follow-up course, Watershedding design principles in below ground structures, will be published this year.

# NEW PRODUCTS

As usual, Life Member **BILL ARMSTRONG** has been scouring the trade market for innovative products that make plumbers' lives easier or safer. Check out these recommendations.



## 'BASH' JETTER SAFETY PLATE

Use your phone's camera to access the 'Bash' Jetter Safety Plate website.



**When MPA NSW member** Dan Winning, from On the Job Plumbing, lost an eye during a water jetter accident in 2019 (see our Member Profile on pages 20-22), he was determined not only to overcome his disability, but also to help industry colleagues avoid similar mishaps.

The result: Dan invented the Bash Water Jetter Safety Plate, which is a portable plate designed to hold high-pressure hoses in place. The plate contains linear channels that allow hoses to move laterally – without the risk of erupting from pipes in a dangerous manner.

“My innate drive to help others sparked a vision to prevent further accidents that could cost someone's life,” Dan explains. “After countless hours designing and refining the product, I eventually gave it a name – the Bash – and had it tested out in the field. It was a huge success!”

The Bash is noted in the AS4233 Australian/New Zealand High-Pressure Water Jetting Standards and recommended for all jetting activities.

**For more information visit [jettersafetyplate.com.au](http://jettersafetyplate.com.au)**

[www.rinnai.com.au/jobs](http://www.rinnai.com.au/jobs)

# Rinnai

## Job Opportunity - Field Support Specialist (NSW)

- **Globally recognised and market leading organisation**
- **Utilise your technical trade and training skills**
- **Exciting opportunity that offers workplace flexibility**

Rinnai Australia is a national market leader in hot water, heating, cooling and renewable energy appliances within both domestic and commercial markets. We have a permanent full time employment opportunity for a Field Support Specialist to join the team.

### About the role:

- Providing on site technical/field support as required to support our Warranty Contractor network
- Resolving escalated product related faults, installation issues, service, or customer satisfaction enquiries
- Facilitating Hot Water, Heating and Lifestyle product technical service training to relevant technical stakeholders
- Completing product investigations and assessments as required with Field Quality Management
- Working with all stakeholders to drive the Company's Customer First philosophy

### About you:

- A current trade qualification and licencing in plumbing, and electrical connect/disconnect. A licence in refrigeration would be desirable but not essential
- Practical and theoretical background in the function, operation, installation, service and repair of gas, hot water, electrical and/or refig appliances
- Strong knowledge of relevant regulations including plumbing, gas, and/or refig product installation
- Ability to conduct technical product training
- Well-developed verbal and written communication skills

Rinnai Australia will support your efforts to achieve your goals and will play an active role in your development. We offer a supportive team environment, cross-training, excellent reward and employee benefits package, access to health and wellbeing programs, generous discounts across our entire product range and much more.

If you are looking for a role that will provide you with an opportunity for success, then we would love to hear from you.

To submit an application, please head to: [www.rinnai.com.au/jobs](http://www.rinnai.com.au/jobs)

## SUPREMA RETRACTABLE WALL SPOUT



**A world first design** launched by Suprema, the retractable wall spout is crafted from 304 stainless steel and features a pull-out, dual-spray nozzle.

The spray nozzle will automatically retract back into place when the water supply is turned off. As with all of Suprema's XpressFit retractable taps, there is no clumsy counterweight with the pull-out hose.

Installation of the spout is a breeze: simply secure the push-fit adapter to the wall, then push in the all-in-one spout and pull-out hose.

The wall spout can be pushed towards the wall when extra space is needed in the bath, spa or laundry tub.

The spout, being made of 304 stainless steel, already complies with new Lead Free plumbing standards for Australia, and has a water-efficient 5 Star WELS rating.

The wall spout currently comes in a high-shine, chrome finish to easily complement most wall tap handles or mixers. Ideal for new and retrofit installations in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry.

Visit [xpressfitmixers.com.au](http://xpressfitmixers.com.au) for more information.



Bill Armstrong has been a member of the Association for over 25 years. He has served on the Executive Committee for the last 21 years. He is a Past President (2003–2005), Guardian (2007–Present) and Life Member (since 2015).

Bill has always assisted new and current members. Bill has owned B&J Armstrong Plumbing since 1993.  
Email [admin@armstrongplumbing.net.au](mailto:admin@armstrongplumbing.net.au) or visit [www.armstrongplumbing.net.au](http://www.armstrongplumbing.net.au)



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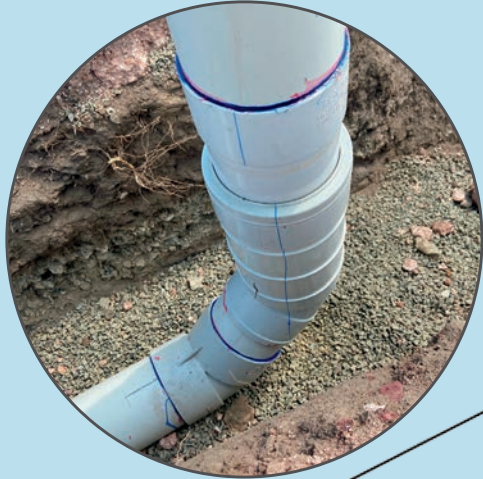
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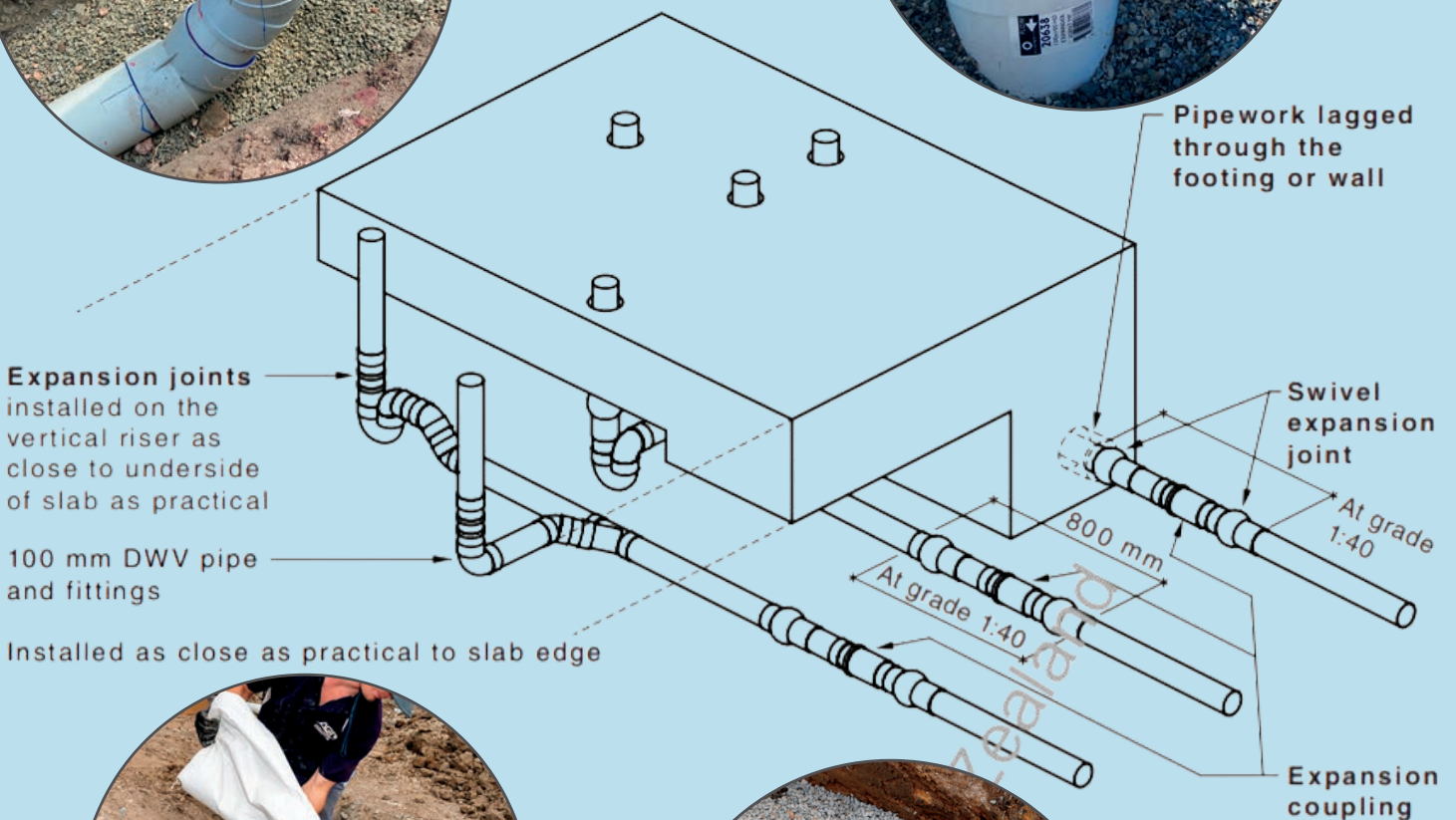
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# PLUMBING IN REACTIVE AND UNSTABLE SOILS?

Appendix G in AS3500.2 provides guidance on risk proofing your drainage system against the stress of ground movement



Expander Joints on the vertical risers protect fittings under the slab when experiencing heave.



The installation of a bentonite clay plug prevents the ingress of moisture under the slab via the plumbers trench.



Combination Joints provide movement in every direction according to the classification of the soil.

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