



MASTER
PLUMBERS
NSW

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE MASTER PLUMBERS
ASSOCIATION OF NSW

THE MASTER PLUMBER

SPRING 2024

HEAT PUMPS The importance of using quality products

INSURANCE New insurance agreement announced

BUSINESS Minimise your admin to maximise growth

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master-plumbers-members-conference-2024](http://www.masterplumbers.com.au/events/master-plumbers-members-conference-2024)





12 COVER STORY

20k Guarantee

Customers and plumbers alike will benefit from the new MPA NSW \$20k Guarantee program. Under the terms of the program, residential customers who are left out of pocket due to faulty or incomplete plumbing work will be able to claim up to \$20k in reimbursements from MPA NSW. It's a financial backstop for mum-and-dad clients – and a great marketing tool for all MPA NSW member plumbers.

TO BOOK YOUR ADVERTISING CONTACT

Contact Julie Woods, MPA NSW Membership, Marketing & Events Manager, at julie@masterplumbers.com.au
(02) 8789 7000



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A new Licensing Agreement between MPA NSW and a major insurance company offers a comprehensive new solution for plumbers.





EDITORIAL

From the CEO's desk

As the warmth and renewal of spring envelops NSW, I am delighted to present the Spring CEO Report for the Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW). This season symbolises growth and new beginnings, a fitting metaphor for the strides and innovations we have witnessed within our industry over the past few months.

We were thrilled to announce the launch of the MPA NSW \$20,000 workmanship guarantee. This initiative underscores our commitment to excellence and quality in the plumbing industry. This guarantee gives consumers unparalleled assurance and trust in our MPA members' services. This move is expected to enhance our reputation significantly and set a benchmark for industry standards. *For more detail, see the Cover Story on page 10.*

We are also excited to introduce a new program – Industry Partners – to assist with forming Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs, which will be mandatory in the coming year. These partnerships will enhance the professional growth of our members by providing access to the latest industry knowledge, techniques, and innovations. By collaborating with leading experts and organisations, we are committed to maintaining the highest professional development standards and keeping our members at the forefront of industry advancements.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Annual Industry Awards Lunch on Friday 20 September. This prestigious event not only celebrates our members' outstanding achievements and contributions, but also serves as a vital opportunity to network, share insights, and learn from the best in the industry. We strongly encourage all members to attend and participate in this celebration, as it is a chance to connect with your peers and be part of our thriving community.

Don't miss our highly anticipated Fiji conference from 14–19 October. This event promises to be an enriching and exciting experience, featuring insightful sessions, expert speakers, and unparalleled networking opportunities. It is the perfect platform for gaining new perspectives, learning about industry trends, and connecting with peers in a Pacific setting. Tickets are nearly sold out, so secure yours today and get ready for an unforgettable experience.

Join us for our festive Christmas Harbour Cruise in November. This event is a fantastic way to celebrate the end of a successful year. Enjoy stunning views of the harbour while mingling with fellow members and industry leaders. It promises to be an evening of fun, relaxation, and camaraderie.

We look forward to your participation in these events and initiatives as we continue to advance and uphold the standards of the plumbing industry in NSW. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication.

Nathaniel (Nat) Smith
CEO



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Partnerships, professionalism, and more

As President of the Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW), I am excited to announce a groundbreaking initiative designed to elevate the standards of our industry and support our members' professional growth. The 'Industry Partners' program is a testament to our commitment to ensuring that our members and licensed contractors stay ahead of the curve with the latest technologies, techniques, and regulatory requirements.

Our vision for this initiative is ambitious, yet focused. We are upgrading to a state-of-the-art, multi-disciplinary training and event facility in Seven Hills. Spanning 1,375m² of industrial space, this facility will be the cornerstone of our efforts to provide top-tier training and host industry events. This mission aligns with our long-term goal of fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional excellence within our industry.

The new Seven Hills facility is designed to be the premier destination for industry training and networking. Key features include:

- **Spacious and flexible event areas:** The facility offers 1,375m² of open space and can host stand-up events for up to 300 people or seated fine dining for up to 150 guests.
- **Advanced training equipment:** The workshop is equipped with 20 meters of presentation board, 15 workbenches for practical training, and a 10m x 15m sandpit for demonstrations and hands-on training.
- **Dedicated classrooms:** Three fully furnished classrooms with modern audiovisual equipment provide an ideal environment for focused learning sessions.
- **Commercial kitchen and catering services:** Access to a commercial kitchen and a network of outside caterers to provide food services, from finger foods to fine dining.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In anticipation of the mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Points program for licensed trades next year, we are committed to developing a robust training program in collaboration with our industry partners. This program will include a series of 1-hour courses at our Seven Hills facility, ensuring that our members can conveniently meet their CPD requirements while staying abreast of the latest industry developments.

This initiative presents a unique opportunity for our partners to showcase their products and innovations directly to our members. We aim to create a dynamic learning environment that benefits our members and partners by integrating real-world applications and demonstrations into our training modules. Watch out for more information about CPD in the next issue of *The Master Plumber*.

SPECIALTY PARTNERSHIPS AVAILABLE

In addition to standard partnerships, we aim to offer several specialty partnerships tailored to specific needs:

- **Workshop Partner:** Prominent signage in the main workshop area, the most frequently used facility for practical training.
- **Sandpit Partner:** Signage on the sandpit will serve as a stage for major events and a focal point for training demonstrations.

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MPA NSW New Members 2024

Welcome to our new Members who have recently joined MPA NSW – it is great to see the continued growth of the Association – strength comes in numbers!

● **Tool Shop Partner:** A permanent setup within the facility for a tool retailer, providing continuous visibility and engagement with our members.

● **Innovation Corner:** This is a dedicated space for showcasing the latest industry products and services, available for rent by corporate members.

To ensure the success of this initiative, we have designed a pilot program offering 15 applications for available spaces, including areas like backflow prevention, copper pipe and fittings, guttering, hot water systems, and more. We invite potential partners to join us in this pilot phase to evaluate the financial and non-financial benefits before committing to a long-term program.

The Seven Hills facility is not just a training centre but a hub for the entire industry to gather, learn, and network. We are confident that with the support of our partners, we can make this vision a reality and significantly enhance the professional capabilities of our members.

I look forward to embarking on this journey together and witnessing the transformative impact of the Industry Partners program on our industry. **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 2024, with a special focus on business training and knowledge.

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to our Members who have joined us in 2024. Strength comes in numbers, and the continued growth of the Association will ensure Members receive additional business and lifestyle benefits, value services, essential support, and paramount advocacy.

We appreciate the support of all of our Members and encourage you to recommend the Association to your industry peers who have not yet taken advantage of membership.

NEW MEMBERS

Answer Plumbing Services
McPherson Plumbing Services
Mighty Plumbing
Pronto Express Plumbing
Plumb Group
Matt Guyatt
Matthew Neil Plumbing
Progressive Plumbing & Gas
Matt Korn Plumbing
Endure Plumbing
Same Day Hot Water Services
Pipedin Plumbing
Graham Brown Plumbing
Mint Plumbing & Relining
The Relining Company
Purified Plumbing
Nikas Plumbing
Monin Edwards Plumbing & Gas
Scotty's Plumbing Services Pty Ltd
Trust Plumbing & Consultancy
Werri Beach Plumbing
PK Plumbing & Gasfitting
Regg Group
Fenton Plumbing & Gas
Dando Plumbing Solutions
Triton Plumbing Group
Immerse Plumbing & Gas
Granger Plumbing Services
Northmax Plumbing
DJL Plumbing Pty Ltd
Lahene Plumbing
Highlands Gas & Hot Water
CJ Central Coast Pty Ltd

NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS

Since our Winter issue the following Corporate Partners have joined the MPA NSW community – welcome onboard and thank you for the support.

GOLD PARTNER

Watts – Enware / AVG

SILVER PARTNER

Fergus Job Software

BRONZE PARTNER

iStore

CORPORATE MEMBER

Enviroline



ASSOCIATION UPDATES

MEMBERS' GOLF DAY

Thank you to all of the Members, Sponsors and Corporate Partners who attended our recent Members' Golf Day at Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club.

The weather was amazing, the course spectacular, and the day was very well attended by a great group of people.

Congratulations to all the winners, and a special thank you to our sponsors for the day:

Major Event Sponsor

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MGA Insurance

Function Partner

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Golf Hole Sponsors

Rinnai
Halgan
Reece
ACIRT

There is always plenty going on in your Association! See booking details below for this year's MPA NSW annual industry awards luncheon! We also thank participants at the recent Members' Golf Day...



All smiles at Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club.



Great golf, great people...



Sponsors like Rinnai helped make the day memorable.



Now THAT'S a trophy!

2024 ANNUAL INDUSTRY AWARDS LUNCHEON

The President and Executive Committee of the Association request the pleasure of your company at the 2024 Annual Industry Awards Luncheon.

This major event of the year will take place from midday–4pm on Friday 20 September at Le Montage, 38 Frazer Street, Lilyfield.

This year’s luncheon event will be held at the exquisite Le Montage in Lilyfield, where you will be treated to a scrumptious three-course meal, beverages, and an afternoon of great entertainment with special guest host Vince Sorrenti.

This prestigious event is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements of excellence within our industry.

All awards carry a great deal of distinction and are contested on a statewide basis. Take this opportunity to network with your peers and meet

Scan the QR code to secure your tickets!



with suppliers and industry representatives in a social environment. You can also book a table(s) and bring along your team to be a part of this major industry event.

Tickets costs (incl GST):
\$175 per person; or
\$1,575 per table of 10

Comedian Vince Sorrenti will host this year’s event.

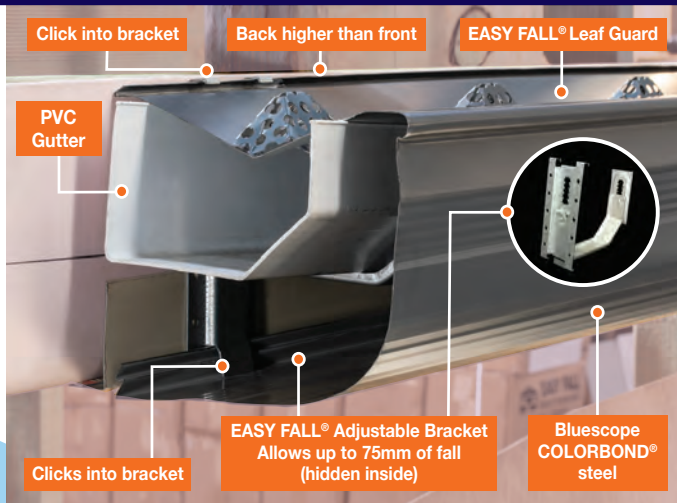


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COVER STORY: Assurance for homeowners

\$20k Guarantee

offers peace of mind

MPA NSW is introducing a \$20K 'safety net' to homeowners, providing financial protection against substandard or incomplete plumbing work, and giving all members a competitive edge. **NATHANIEL SMITH** explains the details.

INTRODUCTION: THE ASSURANCE OF QUALITY & SECURITY

In an industry where quality and reliability are paramount, the Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW) 20K Guarantee stands out as a beacon of assurance for homeowners. This Guarantee, offered by the Association, provides a comprehensive safety net for residential plumbing services. It covers advance payments and substandard workmanship, ensuring that clients of MPA NSW members receive the high standards expected from certified professionals.

PEACE OF MIND FOR CUSTOMERS

When engaging a member of Master Plumbers NSW, clients are not just hiring a plumber – they're securing peace of mind. The 20K Guarantee applies to all residential plumbing work performed by an MPA NSW member, offering a robust protection plan for 12 months post-service. This initiative underscores the association's commitment to quality and reliability, providing customers with confidence that their plumbing needs will be met satisfactorily.



MPA NSW GUARANTEE: KEY FEATURES

The Master Plumbers NSW 20K Guarantee is divided into two primary components:

1. Protection of Advance Payments
2. Protection Against Substandard Workmanship.

Each component is meticulously designed to safeguard the interests of homeowners, ensuring financial security and quality workmanship.

PART A: PROTECTION OF ADVANCE PAYMENTS

One of the most significant concerns for homeowners is the potential loss of advance payments if a contractor goes bankrupt or into liquidation. The Master Plumbers NSW 20K Guarantee addresses

this concern head-on. Under this Guarantee, if a member cannot fulfil their contractual obligations due to financial insolvency, MPA NSW will cover the loss of up to \$20,000, including GST.

This coverage includes:

- **Incomplete Plumbing Work:** Ensuring the work paid for in advance is completed to the pre-agreed standard.
- **Product Replacement:** Covering the replacement of products purchased for the job up to the guaranteed amount.

To claim this part, homeowners must provide supporting documentation, including proof of the contractor's liquidation or bankruptcy. This documentation ensures the claim process is transparent and fair for all parties involved.

PART B: PROTECTION AGAINST SUBSTANDARD WORKMANSHIP

Quality workmanship is the cornerstone of the Master Plumbers NSW ethos. The second part of the Guarantee covers substandard workmanship, offering protection up to \$20,000, including GST. This

This Guarantee, offered by the Association, provides a comprehensive safety net for residential plumbing services while offering customers substantial peace of mind.

Guarantee ensures that any work not meeting the high standards expected of an MPA NSW member is rectified promptly.

Key aspects of this coverage include:

- **Labour Costs:** Covering the costs of correcting substandard work.
- **Product Costs:** Up to \$5,000, including GST, for replacing defective materials, if necessary.
- **Investigation and Remedial Costs:** Ensuring that the investigation and any necessary remedial actions are covered.

Claims under this part must be lodged within 12 months of the work being invoiced. This timeframe ensures that any issues are addressed swiftly, maintaining the integrity of the service provided.

MAKING A CLAIM

The process for making a claim under the Master Plumbers NSW 20K Guarantee is straightforward and customer-friendly. Homeowners can visit the Master Plumbers NSW website to download the initial complaint form. This form and the required documentation must be submitted within the specified timeframe to ensure eligibility.

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The Guarantee is subject to several terms and conditions to maintain fairness and effectiveness. Key points include:

- **Eligibility:** The Guarantee applies only to residential plumbing work carried out by a certified member of MPA NSW.
- **Documentation:** Appropriate documentation must support claims, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- **Administration Fees:** A non-refundable administration fee of \$50, including GST, is payable upon lodging a claim, with an additional \$200 for claims under Part B. These fees are refunded if the claim is upheld.

COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER NON-MPA NSW MEMBERS

The Guarantee is a strategic initiative designed to attract more business and provide a competitive edge for its members over non-member competitors. This Guarantee offers customers substantial peace of mind by protecting their investment in plumbing services.

Such assurances significantly enhance consumer confidence. Homeowners are often wary of the risks associated with hiring tradespeople, particularly concerning the service provider's quality of work and financial stability. The Master Plumbers Guarantee directly mitigates these concerns, making members of this Association more attractive to potential clients.

Moreover, this Guarantee sets Master Plumbers NSW members apart in a competitive market.

Non-member competitors who do not offer similar protections may struggle to instill the same level of trust in potential customers. By emphasising this Guarantee in marketing and customer interactions, Master Plumbers NSW members can effectively highlight their commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. This drives more business and fosters long-term client relationships, cementing their reputation as reliable and trustworthy service providers.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The Master Plumbers NSW 20K Guarantee exemplifies the Association's dedication to quality and customer satisfaction. By offering this comprehensive Guarantee, MPA NSW protects homeowners from financial loss and substandard work and reinforces the high standards that members are expected to uphold. This Guarantee is more than a financial safeguard; it is a commitment to excellence, providing homeowners with the confidence that their plumbing needs are in the hands of trusted professionals. **TMP**



Nathaniel (Nat) Smith is the CEO of MPA NSW. Prior to joining the Association in May last 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



FEATURE: Heat pumps

Why quality is important

Heat pumps have gained significant attention recently due to their energy efficiency, reduced environmental impact, and cost savings and plumbers now, more than ever, have an opportunity to lead the way by recommending and installing quality products.

STUART MATHESON from iStore comments.

IDENTIFYING REPUTABLE UNITS & DEALERS

When researching brands, installers should consider the following factors:

1. EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE

COP (Coefficient of Performance):

This ratio indicates how efficiently the heat pump converts electricity into heat.

Variable speed compressors:

These allow precise adjustments based on demand, optimising performance.

Smart controls: Intuitive interfaces and programmable settings enhance user experience.

Compressor size: Larger compressors result in longer operational life and faster hot water recovery rates.

2. DURABILITY AND RELIABILITY

Materials: Quality components, such as corrosion-resistant coils and robust casing, ensure longevity.

Warranty: A comprehensive warranty reflects the manufacturer's confidence in their product.

Service life: Research the expected lifespan – longer is better.

Emergency breakdown function:

An emergency element bypassing the compressor as a backup in the event of a breakdown.

3. MANUFACTURER REPUTATION

Customer service: Investigate their responsiveness and commitment to customer satisfaction.

Warranty: A robust warranty indicates confidence in the product's durability.

4. RESEARCH AND REVIEWS

Online reviews: Check independent platforms for user feedback on specific models.

Ask peers: Connect with other installers – they often have valuable insight.

HAZARDS OF POOR-QUALITY UNITS

Low-quality heat pumps can pose several risks, which, as an installer, you don't want to deal with. These risks include:

Inefficient performance: Inferior components lead to reduced efficiency, resulting in higher energy bills.

Slower recovery rates: Slower recovery can result in poor customer outcomes.

Short lifespan: Substandard materials and workmanship may cause premature failure.

Environmental impact: Poorly designed units may have a much shorter lifespan, adding to increased landfill and wastage.

SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR INSTALLERS

MANUFACTURER SUPPORT

Technical assistance: 7-day access to experts for troubleshooting and guidance specialising in the iStore heat pump.

Training programs: Manufacturers often offer training sessions for installers.

Documentation: Comprehensive manuals and installation guides, as well as regular technical updates.

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS & NETWORKS

Local Associations: Join plumbing and HVAC associations such as MPA NSW for networking and knowledge sharing.

Online forums: Participate in online communities where installers discuss best practices and challenges.

DEALER RELATIONSHIPS

Become an Authorised Dealer:

Buy direct from iStore and receive full training and support as well as direct pricing.

After-sales service: Become the expert in your field, learn how to service and maintain products you install, be the best you can be for your customers.

Feedback: Seek input from fellow installers about their experiences with specific products.

PREDICTIONS FOR HEAT PUMP ADOPTION

As awareness grows, I anticipate increased adoption of heat pump technology. Factors driving this trend include:

Climate goals: Governments worldwide are pushing for cleaner energy solutions.

Consumer awareness: Homeowners are becoming more environmentally conscious.

Advancements: Ongoing research and development will enhance heat pump performance.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

I believe heat pumps are gaining traction as a renewable energy product among government policy makers and the end consumer. They are a win-win. To boost heat pump uptake, policy makers can consider:

Incentives: Financial incentives for heat pump installations – for example, the Victorian government has just announced new incentives for first-time home buyers who are building their own homes. In addition to a rebate for Solar PV, they will soon be able to access rebates for heat pumps, with other states possibly to follow.

Standards: Stricter quality standards to ensure reliable products, like the iStore range.

Training: Training and education programs for installers to maintain quality.

IN CONCLUSION

Remember, informed choices benefit both installers and end-users. By prioritising quality, we contribute to a sustainable and efficient future. High-quality heat pumps, exemplified by products like the 'iStore', offer a sustainable and efficient solution for hot water needs. As the industry evolves, informed choices will drive positive change. **TMP**



Stuart Matheson is the iStore Business Development Manager NSW & ACT. He has a long and distinguished career of 40 years in the plumbing industry, and 25 years specialising in environmental water heaters.
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FEATURE: Renewable gases

Hydrogen vs biogas

PART II: HYDROGEN

Australia's future energy supplies will have to be clean and varied. Hypothetical components might involve the 'green manufacturing' of hydrogen or the harnessing of biogas, which could be admixed into natural gas lines. Will such systems ever become mainstream? **JOHN CHAUMONT** concludes his two-part assessment with an analysis of hydrogen.

Many in the plumbing industry are cautiously optimistic about the future of the gas in Australia, even as various governments implement gas bans across the country. While the NSW government has wisely avoided this policy decision, many local councils have bypassed state law, and banned gas through their development control plans (DCPs) on the grounds of health risks and economic benefit. But why ban the use of traditional gases? What is hydrogen and biogas? Which is more potent, producible at scale, energy-efficient, and reliable?

WHAT IS IT?

Hydrogen is the most abundant chemical on the planet, though not in gas form. Hydrogen gas is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, flammable gaseous substance,¹ and an excellent clean burning energy source.

HEAT VALUES/ENERGY VALUE

'Heat value' is the raw energy output of each gas per unit of volume, how much energy it can produce when burned. See Table 1.

TABLE 1

Energy Source	Heat Value (Mj/m ³)	% heat value of LPG	% heat value of NG
LPG	96	-	-
Natural Gas	38.8	40%	
BioGas	21.5	22%	55%
Hydrogen	10.8	11%	28%

Many proponents of hydrogen will correctly point out that hydrogen has a higher energy content than other gases, but this is often misrepresented. Hydrogen has a higher energy content by mass, not by volume. Table 1 shows a much higher energy output by volume for traditional gases. According to AGL, it would take 3.3m³ of hydrogen to match the energy output of 1m³ of natural gas.²

HOW IS IT PRODUCED?

Hydrogen gas is created by splitting water into its singular elements – two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen (H₂O). There are two main production methods:

- Electrolysis (the most common method) uses a strong electric current passing through a tank of water.³
- A chemical reaction from a fossil fuel such as coal (coal gasification) or natural gas (steam methane reformation) and water.

There are nine classes of hydrogen, defined by their production method and emissions profile. Green hydrogen is the type that is most widely referred to when discussed in the public domain, as it is produced using renewable energy, and does not produce emissions. Other types include blue, grey, turquoise, brown/black, and yellow.⁴

RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR PRODUCTION

Hydrogen production requires two main ingredients: *water and electricity.*

Water: According to the NSW Government's Hydrogen Strategy, 9 litres of water is required to produce 1kg hydrogen (9L/kg).⁵ However, it is not just water that is required for electrolysis, but *distilled or purified water.* Undistilled water may damage the electrolyser or reduce its efficiency. Some industry professionals estimate producing 1L of purified water for electrolysis requires 2L of regular water. Therefore, the actual water

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Don't take the risk

Under the NSW Gas Supply Act, it is illegal to tamper with and/or remove a gas meter. A person must not alter or otherwise interfere with a meter that is connected to Jemena's distribution network unless authorised to do so by Jemena.

A penalty may be imposed of up to \$22,000 (200 penalty units) in the case of a corporation and \$5,500 (50 penalty units) in any other case.



Meter Removal Safety Announcement


Jemena
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FEATURE: RENEWABLE GASES

requirement for hydrogen production approximates 18L/kg (not including losses through wastage).⁶

Electricity: Electrolysers available on the market today operate at efficiencies close to 75%, consuming 52.5 kWh/kg hydrogen. This is not a great trade-off.⁷ Therefore, the energy trade-off looks like this: 52.5kWh electricity INPUT = 39.4 kWh hydrogen energy OUTPUT.

Wollongong-based startup Hysata’s new type of electrolyser boasts a 95% (41.5 kWh/kg) efficiency, smashing competitors. This has not been demonstrated at scale, however, only in a small capacity.

Comparing the electricity consumption for production of each renewable gas accurately, Table 2 shows how much electricity INPUT would be required for 100kWh energy output. You can multiply the below by 3.6 to convert to Mj. See below.

TABLE 2

Energy source	Electricity Input (kWh/kg)	Electricity Output (kWh/kg)	Electricity required to produce 100kWh power
BioGas	0.26	6.0	4.33kWh
Hydrogen	52.5	39.4	133.25 kWh

ESTIMATED FINANCIAL COST OF PRODUCTION

According to the NSW Government’s Hydrogen Strategy, green hydrogen costs AUD 0.72c per m³ to produce.⁸ This may be seen as comparable to other gases; however, hydrogen’s poor heat value must be considered. The

path to lowering this price literally hinges on a rapid downward trend of renewable energy costs.⁹ The Federal Government’s renewable energy roll-out is not reassuring for this downward trend.

PLANT & EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PRODUCTION

Presently, electrolysers make up 30–40% of the overall cost of hydrogen production. The cost of electrolysers has been predicted to decrease as electrolyser production sees an uptick in the coming years.¹⁰





INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS: STORAGE, TRANSMISSION, DELIVERY

Australia’s existing gas pipelines are unsuitable for the transmission of 100% hydrogen gas. Hydrogen’s chemical properties can detrimentally affect steel pipework (ductility, toughness, and fatigue life), known as ‘hydrogen embrittlement’.¹¹ There is optimism that existing pipelines can be upgraded to allow for hydrogen transmission, but only in theory.¹² Many states envision a 10% hydrogen blend in their natural gas supply by 2030, which should raise questions regarding hydrogen’s poor heat value. Blending hydrogen will deliver the consumer an inferior gas with a lower energy output. It is also extremely difficult for suppliers to calculate how much hydrogen may be in the consumer’s supply at any one time, according to the AEMC, “a 10% hydrogen blend would require approximately 7.28% additional volumetric

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supply of gas. If the heating value is not accurately and frequently measured, the customer could be over billed for the amount of energy delivered”¹³

Hydrogen has a leak potential, which increases the further hydrogen needs to be transported along the supply chain. Hydrogen is highly flammable and is susceptible to spontaneous combustion when released at high pressures, which can cause explosive accidents. Hydrogen flames are also invisible. To store, it must be compressed at 700x normal atmospheric pressure, or refrigerated to -253° Celsius.¹⁴

COMBUSTION PRODUCTS/EMISSIONS

When burned or used in a fuel cell, hydrogen produces no emissions. However, this is true regarding green hydrogen only, with each other type producing varying levels of emissions, and requiring various ‘unclean’ sources of fuel. There has been recent scientific research claiming that hydrogen gas on its own, released into the atmosphere, results in an atmospheric heating effect up to “100x more potent than CO₂ emissions over a 10-year period”¹⁵

SUMMARY

Hydrogen cannot be produced at enough quantity to meet Australia’s gas needs with existing technology yet to produce low-cost, or low-energy-input hydrogen. There are encouraging developments in this space though, through pioneers Hysata and their first-of-its-kind electrolyser. Hydrogen is something to be optimistic about and it is promising to see Federal, State, and Local Government pursue this energy source. **TMP**



John Chaumont is a licensed plumber and former hydraulic consultant, currently involved in industry research and training.

Footnotes

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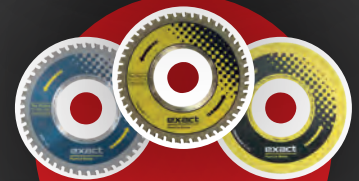
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FEATURE: New insurance entity

MPA NSW: NEW LICENSING AGREEMENT WITH MAJOR INSURANCE COMPANY

A new Licensing Agreement between the Master Plumbers Association of NSW (MPA NSW) and a major insurance company is in its final stages, offering a comprehensive new solution for plumbers.

The Master Plumbers Association of NSW's (MPA NSW) unwavering commitment to tackling the ever-changing insurance challenges plumbers face has led to an arrangement for a one-of-a-kind partnership with a major insurance company, which is in its final stages. This groundbreaking Licensing Agreement, tailored to meet the plumbing industry's unique needs, clearly demonstrates our value on the plumbing community. It's a game-changer, especially when many insurance companies hesitate to cover plumbers for work above three storeys and other specialised plumbing tasks.

The collaboration is set to bridge this coverage gap and ensure that plumbers are fully insured, regardless of the complexity or height of their projects. This partnership introduces a robust insurance package that is more than just a safety net – it's a profound sense of peace of mind for plumbing professionals, bolstering their confidence in their operations and financial well-being.



COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE COVERAGE

The insurance package includes a range of essential coverages that cater to the diverse needs of plumbers. The primary components of this package are:

1 Public Liability Insurance: This coverage protects plumbers from the financial consequences of third-party claims for property damage or personal injury resulting from their work. Given the inherent risks in plumbing projects, especially those involving high-rise buildings and complex installations, public liability insurance is crucial for mitigating potential legal and compensation costs.

2 Motor Insurance: The package includes comprehensive motor insurance, recognising the pivotal role of vehicles in plumbing businesses' day-to-day operations. This ensures that plumbers' vehicles are covered against damage, theft, and other risks, minimising disruptions and financial setbacks related to transportation issues.

3 Additional Coverage Options: The package offers a range of flexible add-ons to cater to the specific services provided by individual plumbers. These may include tool and equipment insurance and professional indemnity insurance. This level of customisation empowers each plumber to obtain a coverage plan that precisely fits their unique business requirements, giving them a sense of control over their insurance needs.

EASE OF TRANSITION FOR MPA NSW MEMBERS

One of the standout features of this new Licensing Agreement is the streamlined transition process for MPA members. MPA members can easily switch from their current insurance broker to our new entity, simplifying

obtaining comprehensive and reliable coverage. This transition is designed to be hassle-free, with dedicated support from our insurance entity to assist plumbers in transferring their policies and understanding the new benefits.

BENEFITS OF THE NEW ENTITY

The partnership brings several key benefits to the plumbing community:

- **Tailored Solutions:** The insurance package is designed for plumbers, addressing their unique risks and challenges. This targeted approach ensures that plumbers do not have gaps in their coverage.
- **Peace of Mind:** Plumbers can focus on their work without worrying about potential insurance issues by securing comprehensive coverage. This peace of mind lets them take on more complex projects, knowing they are fully protected.
- **Competitive Rates:** The partnership leverages the collective bargaining power of MPA members to secure competitive insurance rates. This makes high-quality coverage more affordable and accessible to a broader range of plumbing businesses.

It's a game-changer, especially when many insurance companies hesitate to cover plumbers...

● **Expert Support:** This Entity provides expert advice and support, helping plumbers navigate the intricacies of their insurance needs. This ensures that plumbers receive the best possible coverage and service.

The new Licensing Agreement marks a significant step forward in addressing the insurance challenges faced by the plumbing industry. By offering a comprehensive and tailored insurance package, this partnership ensures that plumbers are fully covered, regardless of the complexity of their work. With an easy transition process and competitive rates, MPA members can now enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing they are protected against the unique risks of their profession. This innovative solution underscores the commitment to support the plumbing community and promote the growth and success of plumbing businesses across the region. **TMP**

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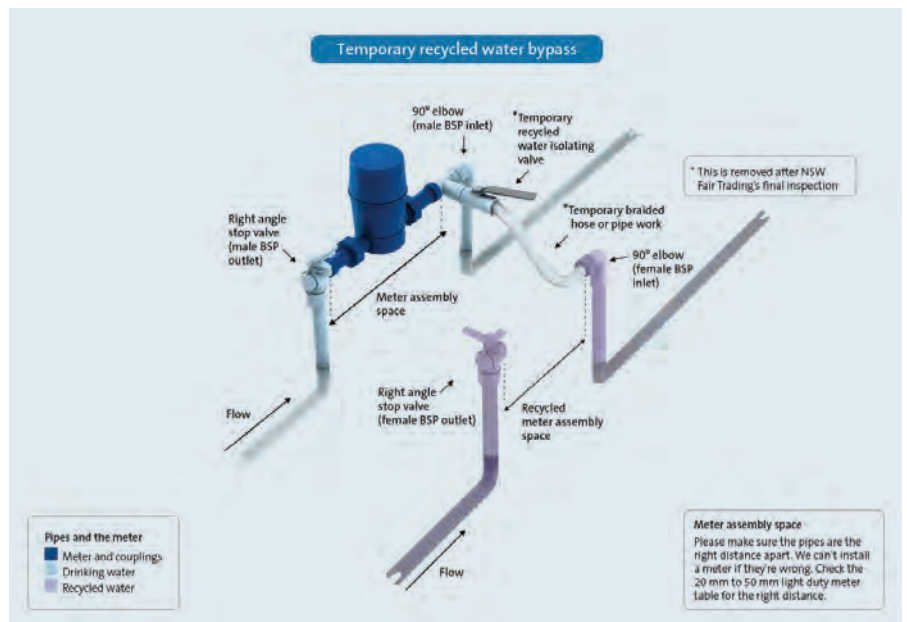
HAVE YOU GOT A CUSTOMER WITH COMMERCIAL TRADE WASTEWATER?

Commercial trade wastewater comes from businesses like retail food, the motor vehicle industry, craft breweries and commercial laundries. If you've got a customer setting up one of these businesses, they need our permission before they start trading. For general information on commercial trade wastewater requirements, head to sydneywater.com.au/commercial

When it comes to selecting pre-treatment equipment for businesses, we've done some of the work too. Visiting sydneywater.com.au/greasetraps will give you the requirements for different businesses and the approved equipment options. If your client suggests another pre-treatment product, you should let them know we'll consider them non-compliant, and they won't be able to discharge their trade wastewater. We only allow approved pre-treatment so that we are confident in the quality of wastewater entering our network and reduce potential blockages or other issues.

BACKFLOW IS NECESSARY FOR ALL CONNECTIONS

Whether you're a backflow accredited plumber or just looking out for your customers, it's important to remember that all connections to our water mains must have



backflow prevention devices installed. For low hazard customers with smaller connections, including most individual residential properties, the 20mm and 25mm meters have backflow prevention built in. For medium and high hazard properties, devices need to be installed and then tested every year. That also goes for fire services which require the installation of a Double Check Detector Assembly.

All registration and testing of devices is done by visiting sydneywater.com.au/tapin

If you're new to backflow, need a refresher or are thinking of getting accredited, we've got demo videos for how to use the lodgement

system. Just go to the How to submit a backflow test report section on sydneywater.com.au/backflowplumbing

THERE'S A GUIDE FOR THAT

When it comes to installing meters, there's a lot of numbers, configurations, and things to consider. We don't expect you to remember them all, especially not the less common ones like recycled water meter bypasses. That's why we have the water meter installation guide and why it has helpful graphics like the one above. Save sydneywater.com.au/meterinstallguide for an easy way to access the guide from anywhere, at any time. **TMP**

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FEATURE: Member Profile

Saving Newcastle one tap washer at a time!

ANTHONY GREEN, Director of DABS Plumbing in Cardiff, NSW, is a familiar and trusted professional servicing the Greater Newcastle area. Below he shares some insights into a successful career.

Q How and when did your career in plumbing begin? 20 years ago with Tom North Plumbing.

Q Were you destined to work in the plumbing industry from an early age? I was always around building sites from the age of 10 upwards, so it was safe to say a trade was on the horizon.

Q Have you worked in any industries apart from plumbing? Only in plumbing maintenance positions.





Opposite page

Top: The DABS Plumbing team.

Bottom: Anthony Green from DABS Plumbing.

This page

Above: Anthony and wife Donna enjoy the limelight at a recent Business Awards ceremony.

Q Have you had many mentors throughout your career? My father and uncle helped me to be the man I've become.

Q Would you describe yourself as a 'people person'? Yes, love being around people.

Q What have been the most significant changes in the industry throughout your career? The industry is always changing, but probably going to press copper and PEX systems.

Q What has been your most challenging assignment or project? This business haha!

Q What has been your greatest achievement? My family.

Q How important has your family been to your career? Extremely. My wife has helped build our business from the inside; I was just the good-looking rooster on the road. Without her help we would not have gotten to where we are.

Q Will technology ever fix all plumbing problems? I don't believe so.

Q Have you noticed any changes to the way society regards plumbers? Not really.

Q Is plumbing the best career in the world? I feel it is, it's very rewarding.

Q What will you be doing in five years' time? And then? Saving Newcastle one tap washer at a time! **TMP**

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WOMEN IN PLUMBING

Working in a male-dominated industry such as plumbing supplies for 17 years, writes **KRYSTAL HORISZNY** from Plumbers Co-Op, has provided her with a unique set of challenges and opportunities that have shaped her leadership style and skills.

Competence wins respect

I began my career at a plumbing supply branch at the age of 21. Fresh into the plumbing world I had no experience in the trade, but I was eager to apply my skills in a practical setting.

Entering the plumbing supplies industry as a woman required overcoming numerous stereotypes. Initially, my presence was often met with scepticism, and I had to work twice as hard to prove my knowledge and competence. This challenge pushed me to continuously expand my technical expertise, ensuring I was well-versed in every aspect of the trade. As a result, I gained deep respect from my colleagues and customers, proving that competence and dedication know no gender.

My first role was as a branch counter hand where I quickly learned the ins and outs of plumbing, from pipes to fittings to specialised tools.

After being in the role for seven years I wanted to expand my career and challenge myself to step into the assistant manager role. Taking on more responsibilities, overseeing inventory, managing staff, and ensuring customer satisfaction. My knack for organisation and my ability to build strong relationships with customers and suppliers did not go unnoticed.

BRANCH MANAGER

By my eighth year I had become a branch manager. When I first took over as branch manager, the branch was struggling with low sales and inventory issues. Determined to turn things around, I began by getting to

know my team and understanding their strengths and weaknesses. I believe that a motivated and well-coordinated team is key to success. I implemented new systems to streamline operations and improve efficiency. Under my leadership the branch saw a significant increase in sales and customer retention.

One of the most powerful ways to inspire and influence others is by leading by example. Throughout my career, I have strived to exemplify the qualities of a strong leader: integrity, determination, and a commitment to excellence. By consistently demonstrating these traits, I have earned the respect and trust of my colleagues and team members.

EVOLVING INDUSTRY

Leading by example also means being adaptable and open to continuous learning. The plumbing supplies industry is ever evolving, and staying ahead requires a willingness to embrace change and seek out new knowledge. This mindset has enabled me to stay relevant and effective as a leader, continually pushing myself and my team to achieve greater heights.

Then I received a phone call from the Plumbers Co-Op, a member-owned plumbing supply company. They were offering the challenge of managing a larger branch in my neighbouring city, which made me both excited and a bit nervous. My nerves disappeared during the recruitment process when I learned about the Co-Op's unique structure, which puts plumbers' interests first as opposed to private profits. It felt

like I would be joining a community and that proved to be the case.

Having decided to take on the new challenge, I knew it wouldn't be easy but with all my knowledge I was determined to get the morale of the branch to its highest level. I have always been dedicated to my role as a branch manager in the plumbing supply industry. My commitment to my job was evident in the way I led my team and managed my Co-Op branch.

Being a woman comes with greater challenges of juggling a work-life balance, and with the passing of time it has been one of my continuing challenges. Women in leadership positions often face stereotypes and biases, and this can be even more pronounced for mothers.

The assumption that motherhood detracts from professional commitment is a common misconception. Being a mother and a branch manager in the plumbing supplies industry is a demanding yet rewarding journey.

The challenges of time management, flexibility, overcoming biases, and leveraging motherhood skills are significant, but they also offer opportunities for growth and leadership development. By embracing these challenges and advocating for supportive workplace practices, mothers in leadership roles can achieve a fulfilling balance between their professional and personal lives. This balance not only benefits my own well-being, but also sets a powerful example for others, proving that it is possible to thrive in both roles.

Left: Krystal and Bill from Vanbill Plumbing Services discuss a project on site.

Right: Krystal Horiszny with Alan from Brownies Plumbing Services.



INNOVATIONS

Over the years I have witnessed many changes in the industry. New technologies and innovations have transformed the way plumbing supplies are manufactured and used. Bigger private-profit plumbing supply companies have come in and challenged our Co-Op plumbing member-owned approach. But despite the challenges my secret has been simple: I genuinely cared about my customers and my team. One of my greatest strengths has been the ability to build and maintain relationships. I have always believed in the power of a strong team and fostered a positive and supportive work environment. I have made it a point to mentor new hires, sharing my wealth of knowledge and instilling in

them the values of hard work, integrity and excellent customer service.

Seventeen years in the plumbing supplies industry have shaped me into a resilient, empathetic, and effective leader. The challenges of being a woman in a male-dominated field have been instrumental in honing my skills and perspectives.

These experiences have not only made me a better leader, but also a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion. As I continue my journey, I remain committed to fostering an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to our collective success. **TMP**

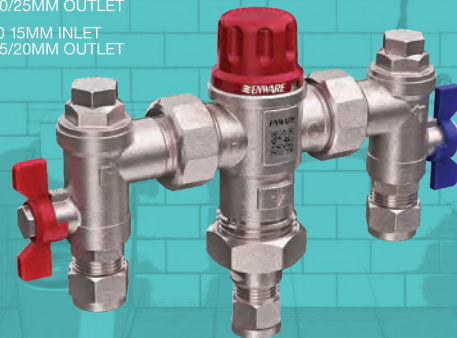


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REGULATION & SAFETY

SafeWork NSW and the Building Commission NSW have an abundance of useful programs and strategies in place to improve workplace safety. Familiarise yourself with these initiatives: you might just save a life or prevent an injury.

New portable workplace toilets in construction factsheet

SafeWork NSW has identified significant concerns across a number of construction workplaces relating to unclean, poorly maintained and potentially hazardous portable toilets.

The new factsheet provides information to ensure PCBU's are meeting their legislated duty to adequately provide and maintain

portable toilets, when included in workplace facilities.

Under Clause 41 of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulation 2017, a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) has a legislated duty to provide workplace facilities, including toilets, that are in good working order, clean, safe and accessible. Failure to provide adequate

facilities, including toilets, at a workplace may mean that the workplace cannot operate until a suitable alternative is implemented, or result in a fine or notice being issued.

Find our more www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/construction/portable-workplace-toilets-in-construction-factsheet

NEW AUDIOMETRIC TESTING REQUIREMENTS IN NSW

Clause 58 "Audiometric testing" of the NSW WHS Regulation 2017 requires a PCBU to provide audiometric testing to any of their workers who are frequently required by them to use personal protective equipment (hearing protection) to protect the worker from the risk of hearing loss associated with noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise.

See more at safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation/exemptions/audiometric-testing-requirements

INCREASED COMPLIANCE CHECKS – PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH & SAFETY

SafeWork NSW has launched a new strategy aimed at making sure businesses manage psychosocial risks in the workplace.

The strategy will see increased compliance checks on high-risk and large businesses and government agencies. SafeWork NSW Inspectors will be conducting psychosocial WHS checks during visits to workplaces with 200 or more workers, to ensure businesses are meeting their legal duty to identify and manage psychosocial hazards and risks.

The strategy also continues to support small- and medium-size businesses, such as ongoing access to free workplace coaching.

This focus comes as data shows psychological injuries are on the rise in NSW workplaces. Workers' compensation claims for psychological injury rose

30% in the four years to 2022–23, compared with 11% for physical injuries.

Common psychosocial hazards that businesses need to know about and manage include high job demands, exposure to traumatic events, and harmful workplace behaviours like bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment. Employers can learn more about your legal obligations on the SafeWork NSW website.

Read the new requirements (safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/mental-health#regulations) for managing the risks of psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Engage in free workplace programs, tools and resources for businesses – visit nsw.gov.au/mental-health-at-work

ENGINEERED STONE BAN NOW IN PLACE

The national ban on the manufacture, supply, processing, and installation of engineered stone commenced on 1 July 2024. The ban applies to benchtops, panels and slabs. The ban will not apply to engineered stone products that are not benchtops, panels, or slabs, such as jewellery, garden ornaments, sculptures, and kitchen sinks, as well as porcelain or sintered stone benchtops, panels, or slabs, provided they do not contain resin, or natural stone benchtops, panels, or slabs.

In NSW, there will be a transition period for engineered stone contracts that have been entered into before 31 December 2023 and include installation prior to 31 December 2024.

You can watch a webinar explaining the ban and find out more on the SafeWork NSW website.

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AKASISON SIPHONIC DRAINAGE SYSTEM

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The Akasison siphonic system offers maximum freedom for plumbers in designing and installing roof drainage systems. Ideal for industrial warehouses, aged care facilities, large commercial buildings and hospitals, Akasison efficiently drains large roof areas with minimal impact on building design. The system's pipework flows full without air at a higher velocity than conventional systems, allowing for smaller pipes and reducing installation costs.

Akasison's roof drainage system efficiently manages stormwater with fewer outlets and downpipes than traditional systems. Unlike gravity-based systems, Akasison's pipes are completely filled, creating a siphon effect that rapidly draws rainwater from the roof. This simplifies design and reduces construction costs. Specially designed roof outlets connect to a horizontal collector pipe, ensuring full and fast water flow. During intense rainstorms, these outlets prevent air entry by becoming submerged, quickly generating water plugs that flow through the downpipe. This creates a vacuum effect that efficiently siphons water off the roof, reducing outlet numbers and significantly reducing pipe sizes.

The Akasison siphonic roof drainage system is a turnkey solution for your next roof drainage project. The Akasison roof drainage system is supplied not only with the outlets and pipework but also the Akasison brackets and pipe rails coupled with full 3D construction drawings indicating pipe lengths & bracket + rail locations which means there is no guesswork when installing the Akasison Roof Drainage System. Akasison is backed by Vinidex - Australia's market leader in plastic piping solutions providing peace of mind to specifiers and installers alike.

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GAS INSTALLATION INSPECTIONS, COMMON NON-COMPLIANCES TO AVOID

The Building Commission NSW Gas Compliance Team continue to identify a number of non-compliant gas installations when conducting audits.

The top five gas non-compliances recently identified during audits can be seen in the table to the right.

Below are some useful gas advisory notes that may assist interpreting and complying with the requirements set out in AS/NZS 5601.1 and AS/NZS 5601.2.

Visit fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/trades-and-businesses/construction-and-trade-essentials/gasfitters/gas-standards-and-notes

Compliance Program on Prefabricated Building Manufacturers in NSW

The Building Commission NSW Gas and Electrical Compliance Team recently conducted a compliance program targeting Prefabricated Building manufacturers in NSW. The program focused on the following types of prefabricated buildings:

- Mobile Homes (tiny homes)
- Transportable Structures (classrooms, offices and site sheds)
- Transportable Homes (modular homes)
- Expandable Structures (granny flats).

Several issues were identified in connection with the installations of the gas, plumbing and electrical, such as:

- Non-compliant installations (including gas, plumbing and electrical)
- Non-approved fixtures and materials
- Non-approved imported products (including complete prefabricated building).

Installation of reversion fittings and ensuring they are accessible.	AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 5.2.12 – Reversion fittings for proprietary multilayer piping.
Bayonet fittings installed within one meter from an internal or external doorway.	AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 5.9.3 – Location of connection point for hose assembly.
Failure to ensure consumer piping external to the building is metallic and extends at least 1m into the building.	AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 4.2 – Materials for consumer piping.
Consumer gas piping installed with insufficient diameter (under sized) as per standards and/or manufacturer's technical data.	AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 5.2.4 – Consumer piping size. AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 4.5.2 – Installation of proprietary systems.
Failure to install a fire emergency isolation valve for a gas installation that contains multilayer pipe.	AS/NZS 5601.1 2022 – 5.2.11 – Provision of fire emergency isolation for multilayer pipe.

Non-Compliant Gas Installations

The gas installation must comply with the requirements set out in the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the AS/NZS 5601.1 and AS/NZS 5601.2.

AS/NZS 5601.2 – LP Gas Installations in caravans and boats for non-propulsive purposes is the applicable Standard when installing LP Gas in a Mobile Home (tiny home) and/or transportable structures.

The most common gas non-compliances identified were:

- Use of multilayer pipe and fittings
- Use of press fit fittings
- Inadequate ventilation of structure (high and low).

Note:

Mobile Homes and Transportable structures must be installed as per the requirements of AS/NZS 5601.2 (see definition – caravan)

Transportable Homes are excluded from AS/NZS 5601.2 2020 and must be installed to the requirements of AS/NZS 5601.1 2022.

Non-Compliant Plumbing Installations

Where the building is being plumbed with the intention of being connected to a water supply and or drainage system, the plumbing and

drainage installation must comply with the requirements set out in the Plumbing and Drainage Act, Plumbing Code of Australia, AS/NZS 3500.

The most common plumbing and drainage non-compliances identified were:

- Undersized drainage
- Inadequate grade on drains installed, and
- Inadequate pipe support.

CERTIFICATES MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE

Gasfitters must provide a completed copy of a Certificate of Inspection (CoI) or Certificate of Compliance (CoC) within 5 business days following any gasfitting work.

The gasfitter must also keep a copy of the certificate for 5 years.

Mailed or emailed CoIs or CoCs are not accepted.

A CoC or CoI must be in the approved form, and are only accepted when completed via the MyInspections gateway (applications.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/MyInspections/).

For further information, see the Gas compliance requirements page on the Fair Trading website (fairtrading.nsw.gov.au).



REGIONAL RAMBLINGS

Plumbers of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those in rural areas with limited technical support resources, are vulnerable to scammers and crooks. We all have to be wary, writes **PETER RICHARDSON**.

Scammers...and a snake

Hi Boys and Girls – a bit of a change of theme this time. To all plumbers, particularly those in the regions: just because you live in a nice country town where there is a lot of trust, doesn't mean you can ignore the threat of scammers, who can target you from anywhere in the world.

If you are not 110% sure about what you are getting on your computers, don't open it or supply personal data. If you have any doubts about where the email comes from, or if you're unsure that it's from a business you have been dealing with, check it out by going directly to that business to confirm that the email is legit. Sometimes the sender's message might look incredibly similar to the real thing – a scammer only has to change one letter, add a dot, or include a word, and before you know

it your response is going straight to the fraudster. They are very good their job.

'INVESTMENT EXPERTS'

Scammers posing as 'investment experts' are spending weeks on the phone with their victims. Scams aren't always 'hit-and-run' incidents, with fraudsters now spending long periods of time communicating with their victims.

An Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) report on scamming found investment scams accounted for more than \$1.3 billion in losses from Australians in 2023.

The report also found that people over 65 were the most likely to lose money, with the ACCC deputy chair, Catriona Lowe, stating that scammers are targeting people with retirement savings.

Monica Whitty, a professor in Human Factors of Cybersecurity at Monash University, has been reported as saying that while age is relevant, "digital literacy and a lack of support systems" are also key.

Scammers also use an array of psychological tactics to manipulate and con victims.

"One of the persuasive techniques that goes back to marketing is that if you [present] yourself as a person of authority, you're more likely to be trusted," Professor Whitty warned.

She said that when it comes to solutions, there isn't enough education for the elderly community, whom she says are "becoming a much more vulnerable group."

Moving forward, she says two key changes need to be made.

"One: education in the right places, because [victims of



Not your typical coil! TIME FOR SOME GUTTER HUMOUR!

On a totally separate note, it's good to have a sense of humour in this day and age. We sent a roofer out to a job to clean out the eaves guttering, as it was blocked and overflowing, and the owner had pulled off the downpipe.

The roofer looked at the outlet – not blocked – so he goes up a ladder to see what the problem is. Straight away he rang Brad and said, 'I'm not cleaning out that gutter,' and sent a photo of the blockage... see the accompanying photo. A large Carpet Snake!

We sent out an adult apprentice and he got the snake out, put it in a box and brought it back to the workshop.

Friday afternoon was the Real Estate office staff drinks. Brad took the snake in a tool box to show 'the blockage' to the Property Manager so he could give it to the owner. After a few squeals, runs and spilt drinks, the session settled back down.

The next day the grandkids took the snake to a treed bush area on the edge of town and let it go to find another home...

scammers] are not going to look at government websites. And so where do you get that education to them? That might be their community centres, libraries, things like that," she said.

"But secondly: it's about looking at who the guardians in society are, and let's train them to look after the more vulnerable, such as the elderly."

BECOME TECH-SAVVY

Cindy Burke is the head teacher of employability skills and career pathways at Broken Hill for TAFE NSW.

She said there was no doubt that digital literacy would be an essential skill in 2024, and thankfully, more and more people are signing up for the program.

"Given the fact there are quite a few issues around scamming and... just understanding myGov and Medicare... everything seems to be online. Even doctor's appointments," Ms Burke said.

Across the Far West, including Broken Hill, Menindee, Wilcannia, Coomealla and Cobar, TAFE NSW offers a completely free, 18-week Certificate I course in basic computer skills. The program teaches people of all ages how to manage their safety while using digital devices and accessing the web.

Plumbers are busy people; they're handling online enquiries from individuals and businesses all day long, many of them one-off contacts. Scammers capitalise on

tradespeople's hectic schedules and their need to respond to enquiries quickly. But don't let a hectic schedule ruin your livelihood – take a moment to make sure the contact is above board. **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

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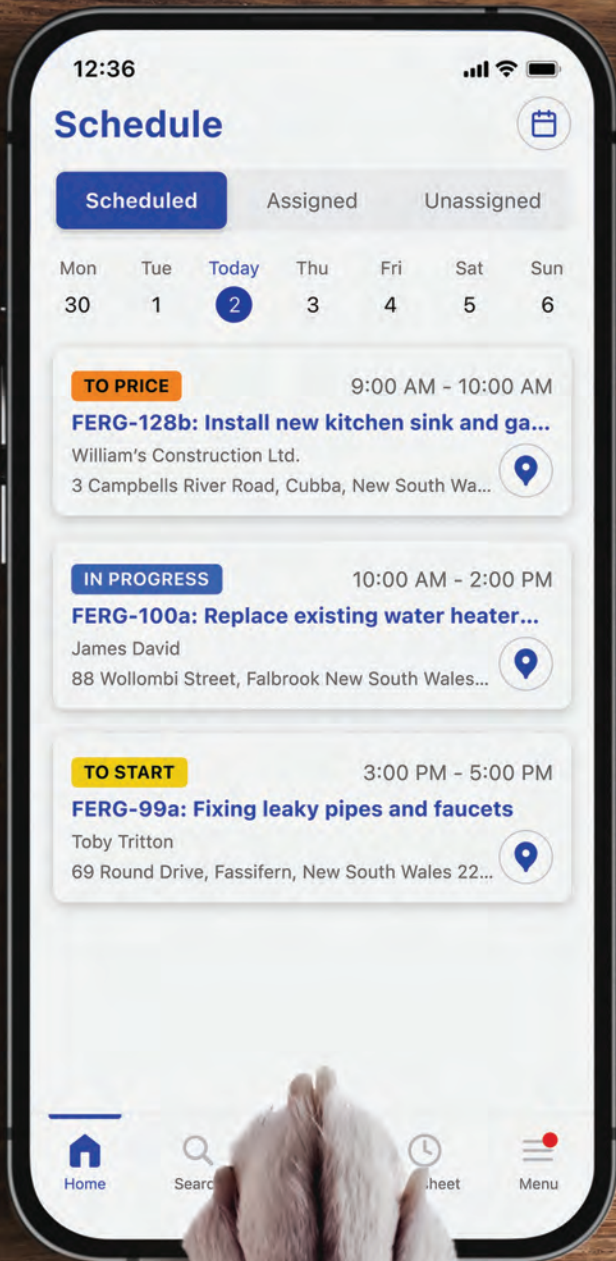
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APPRENTICE STORIES

JOSHUA FOX, a fourth-year apprentice with Central Plumbing Group, and trainee at Master Plumbers Training, says newcomers to the industry inevitably find tasks challenging to start with... but things do get easier!

Take it one day at a time



Josh Fox advises new apprentices to relax and not get overwhelmed.

Q What level have you reached with your apprenticeship? Where are you doing your apprenticeship? I am currently a fourth-year apprentice, working with Central Plumbing.

Q Did you feel prepared for the first day of your apprenticeship? I did feel prepared for the first day of my apprenticeship. I have several friends who were already in the industry, who gave me some advice before I started.

Q Has it been hard to balance training and work obligations? At times it has been challenging, yes, particularly when having to do TAFE course work and assignments during the evenings after big days at work.

Q Have travel requirements during your apprenticeship posed any issues? I've been really lucky throughout my apprenticeship in that I've never had to travel very far for work. A lot of the people I have worked with commute from the Central Coast, and even as far as the Blue Mountains, to the city for work, so I try not to complain when my commute is usually less than an hour.

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? Plumbing is such a multi-faceted trade, and I am constantly learning so I wouldn't say that I have learnt everything that I expected to learn during my apprenticeship. I would say, however, that I have a very good base understanding of most aspects within the sort of work that I do, which is commercial plumbing.

Q You must have had some great training mentors along the way – what makes a 'good instructor'? I have had some great mentors during my apprenticeship and have even made friends with a few too. I think that ultimately what makes a good mentor is patience and understanding. Patience to know that it takes time for apprentices to get to a certain level of proficiency, and to understand that everyone learns in different ways and at different paces. A good mentor takes the time to explain what they are doing, and why they are doing it.

Try to learn with your eyes.

Q What advice would you give to a new apprentice about to start day one? My advice to a new apprentice about to start day one is to be as much of a sponge as you can. Try to learn with your eyes. You will be bombarded with information, and it will be physically challenging at the start. You will make mistakes and at times it may be overwhelming. Take it one day at a time and you will surprise yourself at how some things, which once seemed hard, get easy.

Q Looking back, what have been the main highlights? For me the main highlight of my apprenticeship would have to be having worked on the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. The job was unique, as we had to use a boat to do the drainage underneath the wharf.

Q Where are you working now? Main fields of expertise? I am currently working in Kensington at a new Uni lodge student accommodation building. I would say my main field of expertise would have to be fitting off or silver brazing.

Q When you're not working or studying, what are your favourite hobbies or pastimes? I like watching sport, listening to music, fishing, and spending time with my friends and family. **TMP**



BUSINESS BANTER

For 40 years, the message has been simple: Do your admin! But what really sets apart a small business from a big one? This is the question every tradie should ask themselves, writes **DAN POLLARD** from Fergus Job Software.

Bridging the gap: From small business struggles to success

This question is something I asked myself many years ago. I remember being 27, juggling two vans and a couple of staff, and feeling like I was barely keeping my head above water.

One day, while working at a large electrical company's headquarters, I struck up a conversation with the owner – who managed a whopping 130 staff. I couldn't believe it. "How do you manage it all?" I asked. His answer was direct: "You've got to manage your business."

We talked about what management really means: setting up clear processes and policies for your team to follow, and then actually managing to make sure they stick to them. He called it the "abdication of management," something that keeps too many small businesses small.

It sounds simple, but figuring out how to apply it to my own business seemed impossible back then. But by the time I hit 38, I had figured it out in my own way. I had grown my operation to over 15 vans – a big deal for me.

So what did I do differently? Well, pretty much everything. But at the core, I stuck to managing the business myself and not just leaving it to the guys in the field.

Let me break down what I did to turn things around.

TIME FOR CHANGE

Picture this: I'm 30 years old, been in plumbing for over a decade,

I needed admin support.

self-employed for nearly as long, and feeling the weight of stress and mistakes. But I knew it was time for a change. What stressed me out the most? Paying wages, dealing with GST, and managing suppliers – always feeling like I was playing catch-up with my taxes.

I knew on paper I should be making good money, but the reality wasn't adding up. One thing I'm good at and enjoy is working with spreadsheets. I crunched the numbers, and everything looked fine on paper. The problem? The gap between theory and reality was still there, staring me in the face.

There's a lot I could tell you about what went wrong and how I ended up turning to software for help, but the short version is this: I needed admin support. You can't work on the tools all day and then come home to a mountain of paperwork; it was draining me, and the results were showing it.

On my third attempt, I made a crucial decision: I brought in part-time office help right from the start. They started with just a few hours a day, a few days a week, but quickly ramped up to 20 hours. This move didn't just ease my workload; it set the stage for pairing efficient admin with the right systems.

DAILY INVOICING

The real game-changer? Setting up a system where I could invoice daily. My office team made sure all the info – hours, materials, job details – was entered promptly so I could bill every day. That simple change unlocked the cash flow I needed to grow.

Here's the bottom line: if your customers don't have an invoice, they can't pay you. It's as simple as that.

I've learned a lot from my mistakes, and I share those lessons in regular webinars for other tradies. The key for me was combining Fergus software with dedicated admin support – it's what fueled our growth and efficiency.

Join me in making your business work smarter, not harder. Sign up with Fergus today and start unlocking your business's full potential. Together, let's get your business running like a well-oiled machine. **TMP**



Dan Pollard is the founder of Fergus, the #1 job management software designed specifically for tradies. Fergus software is used by over 20,000 tradespeople globally. Visit fergus.com

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Whether you're replacing an existing water heater or installing one in a new home, there'll be an energy efficient option from Dux.

Conventional water heaters account for almost a quarter of your household's energy bill. With energy costs on the rise, and cost of living pressures up, an energy efficient water heater is a great way to save money.

Designed and manufactured in Australia, Dux Ecosmart heat pumps feature the latest technology and combine both high efficiency & performance to lower household energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Available in 200L and 285L capacities, they feature a patented heating coil, anti-corrosive coatings and are designed for long service life with interchangeable major components.

With a smart controller and free app, they can be connected to the internet and configured to optimize usage. Coupled with a concessional solar sponge tariff, or scheduled to consume solar PV generation, they are very economical to operate and on days with excess PV, are sometimes even free!

There is a wide range of capacities including 17L, 21L, 26L and 32L/min to suit any size Aussie home. Large capacity models are needed if multiple hot water outlets are being used simultaneously.

The 26L & 32L models feature a Status Display Monitor. This indicates whether the unit is heating water, on standby and even its temperature setting. It's a fast diagnosis tool to troubleshoot errors.

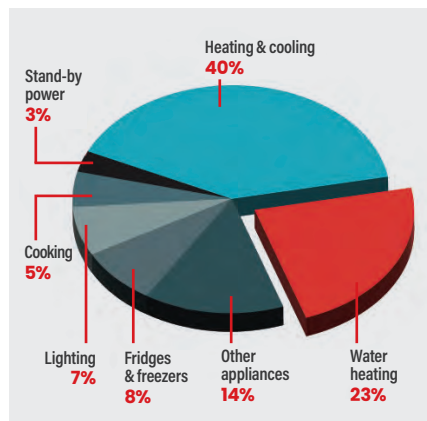
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The Dux Always Hot continuous flow range delivers endless efficient hot and are some of the most efficient on the market. When replacing conventional gas storage models, you can save thousands over the life of the water heater.



*Graph source: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/energy-and-environment/using-saving-energy/home-energy-use>

NEW PRODUCTS

Plumbing guru **BILL ARMSTRONG** is always scouring the market for hot new products; in this issue, it's all about hot water...



South Australian-based manufacturer

of electric instantaneous water heaters, ELWA, has introduced the latest technology in remote monitoring for all their Hotrun X electric water heaters.

Known as LoRa (Low Power, Wide Range networking), it can report all user data such as power and water consumption, run hours, and full diagnostics to a customer or installer dashboard. This monitoring reduces call-out costs and downtime, no more guesswork if ever something goes wrong, speeding up service on site to fix anything first time straight away.

ELWA's CEO, Jan Antonides, said, "Hotrun X is unique worldwide in offering this technology, on top of a 10-year warranty. It has enabled us to see and monitor large projects in Europe from Adelaide. Along with its automated legionella disinfection cycles, no need for TMVs or pressure release valves."

Hotrun X is the leader in hot water heating technology, is available in 1,2 and 3 phase models, and is a very attractive option to use when homes or apartments are disconnected from gas.

Contact ELWA for more info on 08 83776666 or email service@elwa.com.au



Reece is driving innovation in the

electric storage space with the release of Thermann Smart Electric – an electric hot water storage unit with smart technology that gives users more control to ultimately reduce their energy usage.

Available initially in two models – 250L and 315L – Thermann Smart Electric seamlessly integrates with solar electricity, offering consumers an easily adaptable and efficient hot water solution. By harnessing electric water heating technology, these units provide ample water storage capacity, transforming the hot water heater into a latent battery that maximises the benefits of solar power systems. For those who don't have solar, Thermann Smart Electric also can run without solar panels.

Thermann Smart Electric features app-enabled technology – Thermann Control App – which empowers consumers to monitor energy usage.

Thermann Smart Electric uses four distinct operating modes which can be selected via the consumer's smart phone – including Schedule Mode for solar PV optimisation, Eco Mode, Manual Mode for temperature control and holiday mode for cost savings when you don't need hot water.

The Thermann Smart Electric is now available online at reece.com.au and at Reece branches nationwide.



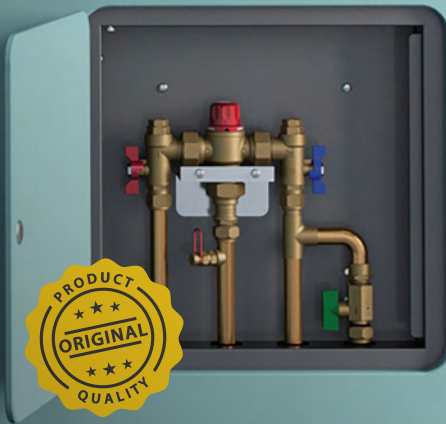
Bill Armstrong has been a member of the Association for over 25 years. He has served on the Executive Committee for the last 21 years. He is a Past President (2003–2005), Guardian (2007–Present) and Life Member (since 2015).

Bill has always assisted new and current members. Bill has owned B&J Armstrong Plumbing since 1993.

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