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PLUMBERS  
NSW

**SUMMER 2024**

**INDUSTRY AWARDS** Recognising excellence

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE** Highlights from Fiji

**BUSINESS** Thinking of selling your business?

# THE MASTER PLUMBER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF  
THE MASTER PLUMBERS  
ASSOCIATION OF NSW

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10  
COVER STORY

AI  
Are you ready?

We have all heard about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its enormous impacts on society. Well, the plumbing sector is not immune! AI is already influencing the way plumbing businesses in the US and elsewhere streamline their administration, optimise marketing, and design complex hydraulic systems using hyper-efficient designs. In fact, it's fair to say the full impacts of AI on plumbing have not yet been imagined.

TO BOOK YOUR  
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CONTACT

Contact Julie Woods,  
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## EDITORIAL

# From the CEO's desk

**A**s we enter the summer season, we must reflect on the changes and developments at the Master Plumbers Association NSW. We continuously update our services and remain devoted to enhancing the benefits available to our members. One exciting update is the addition of new templated contracts that are available on our members portal. These contracts, meticulously crafted to assist you in your business endeavours and align with current legal standards in NSW, will provide you with a solid foundation for your business operations. Moreover, our updated safety management system has been designed to streamline your operations, ensuring best practices are accessible and easily implementable, giving you the peace of mind that your business is operating at the highest safety standards. Rest assured, the safety management system and contract templates will be regularly updated to comply with evolving legislation, ensuring you always stay ahead.

I am thrilled to report on the success of our recent Annual Awards Lunch (more on page 16). This lunch marked a first for our Association as we transitioned from the traditional awards dinner format. This change proved an excellent decision, bringing a fresh atmosphere to the event. We were privileged to have Vince Sorrenti as our entertainer, whose humour resonated with everyone in attendance. His comedic approach ensured that 'nobody was safe', and he made the day unforgettable!

I congratulate all our award winners and finalists, particularly those recognised with our new awards categories. Your hard work and commitment to excellence inspire us all, and we commend you for your achievements.

Looking ahead, we are eagerly anticipating our schedule of events for 2025, which will be published in late December or early January. This lineup includes exciting activities such as golf days, World Plumbing Day, Plumbing in the Pub business sessions, the Annual Industry Awards Lunch, and various social events throughout the year. We can't wait to share these opportunities with you and hope you'll be as excited as we are to participate. Additionally, we thank everybody who attended our Annual Conference in Fiji, the first conference we have hosted in many years; we anticipate hosting a 2025 Master Your Industry Conference; stay tuned for that announcement.

In this summer edition, you will find a dedicated wall calendar for 2025, and we are pleased to announce that every financial member will receive a new Master Plumbers NSW 2025 diary for the year ahead. These tools, designed to support your planning and organisation, are just a small part of the resources and support we provide to our valued members.

Finally, as we approach the festive season, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to an exciting year ahead! **TMP**

**Nathaniel (Nat) Smith**  
CEO



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# Introducing Rinnai Efinity

Electric Continuous Flow Hot Water

Engineered with the reliability and performance that you've come to know from Rinnai, the new Efinity Electric Continuous Flow hot water systems offer superior user comfort and energy efficiency.



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## Simple Control

Easy to use touch screen display allows users to easily customise water temperature and flow.



## Design

Slimline construction makes this perfect for residential apartments and offices.



## Quality

Built with market-leading components for unmatched reliability.



Learn more

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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## The importance of self-training & accountability for bosses

In late October 2024, I joined with many other Australian plumbing company leaders in Florida (USA) for a week of business coaching. With over 4,000 attendees from around the world, we learned about effective leadership and software that can enhance plumbing, electrical, and air conditioning businesses. When you are a boss of a plumbing company, like it or not: you are a leader!

A key takeaway was that effective bosses must become true leaders, fostering a culture of continuous learning and accountability. One vital way to achieve this is by investing time in their own training and development, creating a framework that promotes consistent training and accountability throughout the organisation.

### WHY SELF-TRAINING MATTERS

Self-training is crucial for leaders for several reasons:

- **Adapting to change:** The business landscape is constantly evolving with new technologies and trends. Leaders who invest in their own development can stay informed and adjust their strategies, enabling their teams to innovate and adapt.
- **Building credibility:** Knowledgeable leaders earn the respect and trust of their employees. This credibility is essential for motivating teams and creating a positive work environment. When leaders commit to their own growth, they inspire their teams to pursue development as well.

### CREATING A TRAINING FRAMEWORK

To integrate self-training into daily routines, plumbing company leaders should establish a structured framework that includes:

- **Goal setting:** Identify specific skills or knowledge areas to develop. Clear, measurable goals help track progress and maintain focus.
- **Resource allocation:** Dedicate time, budget, and materials for leader development.
- **Regular training sessions:** Incorporate ongoing training through workshops, seminars, or online courses.
- **Peer learning:** Foster mentorship and collaboration among leaders. Sharing experiences enriches understanding and problem-solving.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Encourage a culture of feedback to gain insights into performance and areas for improvement.

### FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY IN LEADERSHIP

Creating a culture of accountability is just as important as promoting self-training. Leaders should:

- **Set clear expectations:** Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations.
- **Monitor progress:** Regularly review goals to maintain accountability. Implement systems to track performance for timely interventions.

- **Encourage transparency:** Foster open communication about successes and challenges.
- **Recognise achievements:** Celebrate successes to reinforce accountability and motivate individuals. Recognition can be formal or informal, like shout-outs in meetings.
- **Address challenges constructively:** When expectations aren't met, focus on problem-solving rather than punishment.

In summary, a commitment to self-training is essential for fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

If you would like to know more about this type of training and have a desire to attend next year's USA conference, please call me or the MPA, as I will be happy to discuss next year's opportunity to attend as part of a larger group. **TMP**



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.



# MPA NSW Milestones 2024 / New Members

As an industry Association, we believe that it is important not only to welcome new members, but also to recognise the membership milestones of longstanding friends. Whether you've been with the Association for one, 10, 20 or even 40+ years, you are part of a growing and supportive community. Congratulations to all our members, young and not so young!

## NEW MEMBERS

- Gilbert Plumbing & Gas
- Byron Plumbing & Gas Services
- Dream Plumbing & Gas Pty Ltd
- Diamond Plumbing Solutions
- Daniel Hamilton Plumbing
- Monin Plumbing
- G & W Hydraulics
- Croweys Plumbing Services
- Barmac Plumbing
- Narooma Plumbing & Gas
- Bimbilla Plumbing
- What the Flush Plumbing
- All Direct Plumbing
- P24 Plumbing & Relining
- Jim Freeman Plumbing
- Jakes Plumbing & Gasfitting
- Markwater Plumbing
- Parlah Group
- Rescue U
- Richard Langham
- Professionals Pty Ltd

## NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS

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

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## MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES

Every Trade Building Services Pty Ltd	10
Goodwin Brothers Pty Ltd	10
Hinchcliff Plumbing	10
JPD Plumbing (Aust) Pty Ltd	10
Kawalewski Plumbing Pty Ltd	10
R A C Plumbing	10
Sureplumb	10
Trade Wind Pty Ltd	10
West Pennant Hills Plumbing Pty Ltd	10
About Time Plumbing & Civil Construction P/L	20
Andrews Fire Protection	20
Aqua Assets Pty Limited	20
Atlas Plumbing Pty Ltd	20
Bonnyrigg Plumbing Services	20
Col English Plumbing	20
Coldflow Refrigeration Airconditioning & Electrical	20
D & N Plumbing Services P/L	20
DJE Building Services Pty Ltd	20
Frontrow Plumbing Pty Ltd	20
GF Hand & Sons Pty Ltd	20
Ingleburn Plumbing Service	20
Linnegar Plumbing Pty Ltd	20
MT Plumbing	20
O'Brien Plumbing Services	20
Principal Plumbing Pty Ltd	20
Rob Powell Plumbing Pty Ltd	20
Straightline Plumbing & Guttering	20
Tai Irwin Pty Ltd	20
Terry Oehm Plumbing Services	20
Egelton Plumbing Pty Ltd	30
Ellis Plumbing Pty Ltd	30
J & N Plumbing Pty Ltd	30
Michael Graham Plumbing Pty Ltd	30
Mountford Plumbing Services Pty Ltd	30
Queenscliff Plumbing Pty Ltd	30
Scott Bartley Plumbing Services Pty Ltd	30
Chiswick Plumbing Group Pty Ltd	40
JPS Plumbing and Property Pty Ltd	40
Rudds Plumbing & Excavations Pty Ltd	40
Southern Cross Plumbing Pty Ltd	40

YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP



## ASSOCIATION UPDATES

The MPA NSW team offers its heartfelt, best wishes to Nada Daou upon her retirement – she has helped build the Association into the strong entity that it is today. We also express a warm welcome to Derek Raney, who has just joined the team.

### FAREWELL & BEST WISHES:

#### A tribute to Nada Daou

After 35 remarkable years as a vital member of the Master Plumbers Association of NSW, Nada Daou has decided to retire. We want to take a moment to reflect on and celebrate the tremendous impact she has had on our team and the Association over these years.

Since joining us in 1989, Nada has become indispensable to the MPA NSW family. Her infectious enthusiasm and positivity have played a crucial role in shaping the welcoming and supportive environment we are so proud of today.

What truly sets Nada apart is her unwavering dedication to teamwork. Always willing to go the extra mile, she has constantly supported her colleagues, never hesitating to lend a hand beyond her assigned duties. Her commitment has made her an invaluable resource and a dear friend to many.

Our members know Nada well, as she has been on the front lines for years: answering calls, resolving

inquiries, and offering expert assistance whenever needed. Her exceptional customer service skills and ability to truly understand and address our members' needs have made her a beloved and trusted figure within the Association.

Throughout her career, Nada has weathered five office relocations and supported seven General Managers/CEOs – demonstrating her adaptability and resilience in times of change. Her contributions have been immeasurable, and her legacy will leave an indelible mark on MPA NSW.

As we bid farewell to Nada, we are filled with a mix of emotions. It's difficult to say goodbye to someone who has been such an integral part of our team for so long. Nonetheless, the MPA NSW Management Team and the Executive Committee wish Nada all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

Thank you, Nada, for everything you've done. You will be deeply missed, but your impact will remain with us always. Enjoy this exciting new chapter – you've truly earned it!

#### A FEW WORDS FROM NADA

*After 35 years of dedicated service, I have decided that it is time for me to retire and begin a new chapter in my life.*



*This decision has not been made lightly and I am very grateful for all the opportunities and experiences I have had during my time at The Master Plumbers Association of NSW.*

*I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Nathaniel and the entire team for all your support and guidance over the years.*

*Working at the Master Plumbers has been a rewarding experience, and I am proud of the accomplishments we have achieved together. I have worked with a lot of amazing people over the years, and I will miss everyone.*

*Thank you again for the wonderful experiences and memories that I have made during my time. **TMP***



### WELCOME DEREK RANEY

New team member Derek Raney brings a wealth of experience in Sales and Marketing, Retail Services, and Platforms to his role at Master Plumbers NSW.

As our Member Growth Specialist, he is responsible for expanding our community of plumbers and businesses in NSW.

Derek is focused on raising awareness of the Association's vital role in advocacy, value-added services, training, and social engagement. His goal is to ensure that new members immediately benefit from the resources and support we offer, helping them thrive in their businesses from day one.



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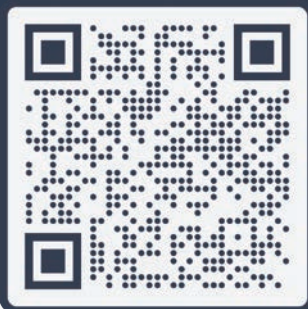


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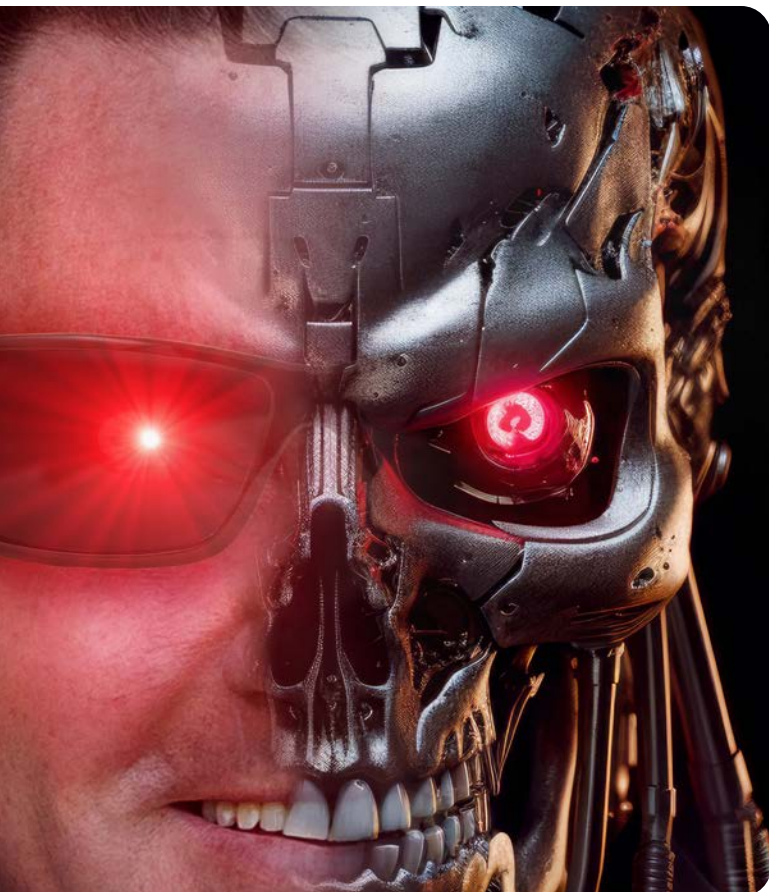
## COVER STORY: Artificial intelligence (AI)

# AI, technology and home services...

### Are you ready?

The home domestic service and commercial maintenance industry, comprising essential trades like plumbing, is undergoing a significant transformation driven by technological advancements and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI).

**NATHANIEL SMITH** comments.



**A**s 2025 approaches, plumbers are poised to face challenges and opportunities that will reshape their roles in an increasingly digital landscape. At the forefront of this evolution is integrating cutting-edge job management software systems, such as those offered by Master Plumbers Association (MPA) NSW partners Fergus and Birdeye, and the necessity for plumbers to adapt to changing market dynamics.

#### TECHNOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

MPA NSW recognises technology's vital role in enhancing operational efficiency among its members. Software solutions such as Fergus aren't just tools – they are game-changers. Fergus excels in job management by offering features like dispatch management services, real-time data analytics, payment collections, reporting, and comprehensive invoicing. Such capabilities allow plumbers to streamline their operations, minimise manual workload, and focus more on providing exceptional service to their clients.

Birdeye, another MPA NSW partner, is revolutionising how businesses engage with customers. Over 150,000 companies worldwide rely on Birdeye to shift to digital customer experiences. They provide businesses with an intuitive, innovative, and integrated solution with embedded AI and automation that's easy to use and scale.



AI can optimise various aspects of plumbing operations, from customer engagement to troubleshooting and diagnostics.

The support and guidance provided by MPA NSW in this technological transition should reassure plumbers that they are not alone in this journey.

Competing platforms like SIMPRO and American systems such as ServiceTitan highlight the increasing accessibility of these technologies here in Australia. By enabling functionalities that automate mundane tasks, these tools empower plumbers to shift their focus toward customer engagement and satisfaction. This shift in focus from paperwork and administrative duties to building strong customer relationships is a crucial aspect of our evolving industry. Proficiency with these technologies will be essential for plumbers aiming to remain competitive in this dynamic marketplace, ensuring they can provide the best service to their clients.

#### ADAPTING TO AI INNOVATIONS

While embracing technology is crucial, adapting to AI innovations will be equally imperative for plumbers in 2025 and beyond. AI can optimise various aspects of plumbing operations, from customer engagement to



troubleshooting and diagnostics. For instance, AI-driven platforms can analyse historical data to predict demand, inform dispatching strategies, and enhance resource allocation. This ensures that technicians are dispatched efficiently, making operations more streamlined and reducing operational costs. The positive impact of AI on operations should inspire plumbers to embrace these innovations with optimism and open-mindedness.

Moreover, the rise of AI will likely mention a cultural shift where the traditional plumber – who may have relied on instinct and experience – will need to become more tech-savvy. The professionals entering the workforce are generally more comfortable with

An advertisement for the Istore Heat Pump. The background is a dark green with leaf patterns. At the top left is the 'istore' logo. Below it, the text 'ISTORE HEAT PUMP' is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath that, the phrase 'Faster recovery | Longer life | Easy to install' is written in white. On the right side, there is a gold circular seal with a serrated edge that says 'COMPREHENSIVE 5 YEARS WARRANTY'. On the left side, two heat pump units are shown vertically; they are silver with black top sections and the 'istore' logo. On the right side, there is a list of features in white text: '• Simple one-piece design', '• Massive 4 kW output\*', '• Dedicated service department', '• 7-day tech support', '• Lay flat transport', '• Emergency function element', and '• Plug-in, no sparky required'. Below the list, a small line of text says '\* Available in 180L or 270L with 4 kW output'. At the bottom, there are three logos: 'PRODUCT REVIEW COM.AU' with a speech bubble icon, and '2021-24 AWARDS WINNER' in a white box.



AI can ensure that technicians are dispatched efficiently, making operations more streamlined and reducing operational costs.

technology; thus, they can leverage these new tools to maximise efficiency and deliver quality service quickly. Those who resist this shift risk losing out on lucrative opportunities and maybe outpaced by their more adaptive peers.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS TRAINING

The importance of business training cannot be overlooked in tandem with technological advancements. Trade organisations and coaching services like Trades Formation, run by Adrian Fadini, are now critical players in moulding future leaders in the plumbing industry. Training tailored to individual business needs can address plumbers' unique challenges, ranging from customer service to effective team dynamics.

The plumber's role will evolve as AI and technology take on more administrative tasks. The new plumber must be proficient in their technical craft and understand how to run a business efficiently, balancing profit margins, team management, and customer retention. Adrian's insights highlight that no one solution fits all; a customised approach ensures that tradespeople are equipped to navigate their unique business landscapes effectively.

### NETWORKING & COLLABORATION

Companies like The Level Group, led by Luke McCallum, further contribute to the ethos of collaboration and education within the plumbing industry. The Level Group encourages knowledge-sharing and mutual support by connecting plumbers and electricians in a nationwide network, which can foster growth and innovation. Leveraging collective wisdom will help newer professionals navigate their paths and refine their skills while benefiting from a broader range of experiences.

Furthermore, this network can provide insights into emerging trends, technological developments, and best practices, enhancing each member's thriving ability. Such collaboration will be essential for those striving to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

### OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

As with any significant transformation, some individuals will resist change, particularly those seasoned plumbers who have been successful without embracing new technologies. While their experience is invaluable, clinging to traditional methods may lead to stagnation. These professionals must recognise the shifting landscape and consider the long-term implications of maintaining the status quo.

The next generation of plumbers will enter an industry where efficiency, speed, and data-driven decision-making are paramount. Skilled plumbers can no longer rely solely on hands-on expertise; they must also be adept at using digital tools and innovative technology. Those who look towards the future and embrace these changes will put themselves – and their businesses – in a position to prosper.

### CONCLUSION

The convergence of AI and technology in the plumbing industry and the broader home service and commercial sector presents exciting opportunities for revitalisation and innovation. Plumbers who embrace these advancements will be equipped to meet the demands of an evolving marketplace. Through efficient job management software, tailored business coaching, and a collaborative network of peers, plumbers can survive the revolution and thrive in it.

As 2025 approaches, MPA NSW continues to advocate for integrating these technologies and training initiatives to ensure all members are prepared for the journey ahead. With the right mindset, tools, and support, the plumbing profession can evolve into a more sophisticated, streamlined, and thriving industry. By fostering a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement, the future looks promising for the new breed of tech-savvy plumbers ready to embrace what lies ahead. **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](mailto:nathaniel@masterplumbers.com.au)





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# 8 reasons why Rinnai Efinity is the smart choice for hot water



**C**hoosing the hot water system for a new residential apartment or office building requires careful consideration. Homeowner needs, energy efficiency, environmental impact and build requirements all need to be taken into consideration. More recently, there's been a shift towards electric hot water products being installed in commercial applications as an efficient and more environmentally friendly solution.

The Rinnai Efinity was developed in response to this shift and is the product of Rinnai's commitment to innovation and engineering excellence. As Rinnai's first ever fully Electric Continuous Flow hot water system, it offers significant benefits and is the smart choice for hot water. Here are 8 compelling reasons why:

## 1 EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

One of the standout features of the Rinnai Efinity is its energy efficiency. Unlike traditional hot water systems that continuously heat water, the Rinnai Efinity heats water only when needed. This on-demand heating method significantly reduces energy consumption, resulting in lower energy bills for users and a more sustainable solution for the environment.



What's more, 'ECO' Mode allows users to set a maximum flow rate, while the Water Usage Button displays the accumulated water consumed so that water usage can be monitored.

## 2 PRECISE TEMPERATURE CONTROL

The Rinnai Efinity offers precise temperature control, ensuring users get hot water at the exact temperature they desire. This system automatically adjusts the hot water supply to maintain the selected temperature, even when multiple

taps are in use or when there are changes in water flow. This feature enhances comfort and convenience for users.

## 3 ADJUSTABLE TEMPERATURE AND FLOW RATES

The easy-to-use touch screen display allows users to conveniently control temperature and flow rates. This flexibility makes it suitable for a wide range of applications ensuring that the hot water needs of different users are met effectively.

## 4 HIGH-QUALITY COMPONENTS

Rinnai is known for its commitment to quality, and the Rinnai Efinity is no exception. It was co-designed by local engineers and is built with market-leading components that ensure reliability and high performance. Its attractive matte finish complements modern bathroom, laundry and kitchen décor.



## The Rinnai Efinity offers precise temperature control

**5 SLIMLINE DESIGN** The compact dimensions of the Rinnai Efinity (471mm high x 227mm wide x 103mm deep) make it an ideal choice for discreet indoor placement such as in cupboards. This is particularly beneficial for residential apartments and office buildings where space is at a premium.

**6 ASSURED COMPLIANCE** Compliance with industry standards is crucial for any plumbing installation. The Rinnai Efinity delivers hot water in accordance with AS 3498, ensuring that it meets the required safety and performance standards.

## **7 ENHANCED SAFETY FEATURES**

Keeping user safety in mind, the lock function was developed to prevent accidental operation and alteration of settings. This feature is particularly useful in households with children or in commercial settings where unauthorised changes could disrupt operations.

## **8 PEACE OF MIND WITH WARRANTY**

The Rinnai Efinity comes with a 5-year residential warranty\* and a 1-year commercial warranty\*, offering users peace of mind and protection for their investment. Knowing that Rinnai stands behind its product with confidence. **TMP**

**More information about Rinnai Efinity can be found at [rinnai.com.au/efinity](http://rinnai.com.au/efinity).**

\*For full terms and conditions visit [rinnai.com.au](http://rinnai.com.au)

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## FEATURE: Annual Industry Awards

# 2024 Award winners

The recent MPA NSW Annual Industry Awards ceremony gave us an opportunity to recognise all the brilliant contributors to our industry. We congratulate award winners, thank sponsors and supporters, and commend all attendees for their enthusiasm for plumbing in NSW.

**O**ur recent Awards event at Le Montage was a resounding success! Attendees enjoyed delicious food, refreshing drinks, and plenty of laughter, thanks to our special guest host and Master of Ceremonies Vince Sorrenti.

We were thrilled to announce the following 2024 award winners:

- Gold Medal – Apprentice of the Year: Matthew Campbell
- Excellence in Work, Health & Safety: PlumbLogic
- Master Plumber of the Year: JPS Plumbing & Property
- Commercial Project Award: Rescue U Plumbing
- Award for Innovation: Dux – Thermann Smart Electric Hot Water Unit.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR WINNERS AND NOMINEE FINALISTS!

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our major event sponsors: Reece, Rinnai, Plumbers Co-op, and Suttons.

We offer heartfelt thanks to all Members and Corporate Partners for attending and making the day truly special.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the next exciting MPA NSW Event. **TMP**



Vince Sorrenti: the centre of attention!



The Commercial Project Award went to Rescue U Plumbing – Nathan Wilson proudly holds the trophy.



Dux won the Award for Innovation for its Thermann Hot Water Unit.





The Master Plumber of the Year award went to JPS Plumbing – see our Member Profile of company co-director Julian Ugarte on page 20.



Matthew Campbell: Gold Medal Apprentice of the Year. Learn more about Matthew's journey in Apprentice Stories on page 33.



Jack Weston was runner-up for the Gold Medal Apprentice of the Year award.



Nathaniel Smith, CEO of MPA NSW, urges the crowd to Make Plumbing Great Again.



Vince Sorrenti was host and Master of Ceremonies for the day.



Members and their families had a tremendous time mixing with friends.



Members of Ingleburn Plumbing Service were all smiles!



MPA NSW President Greg McElroy, Dane Hutchens from Plumb Logic, the winners for Excellence in Work, Health & Safety, and Tim James, Shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building.





## FEATURE: Members Annual Conference FIJI

# FIJI 2024: A REMARKABLE WEEK

What an incredible week it was! The stunning backdrop of Fiji set the stage for our recent 'Master Your Industry' Members Annual Conference at the Shangri-La Resort on Yanuca Island.



The MPA NSW annual conference, held in early October, was a resounding success thanks to a fantastic mix of social events, engaging activities, and informative sessions. However, the true highlight was the opportunity for our members to connect, network, and build new friendships and business relationships.

Strong attendance at the business sessions ensured that delegates left with valuable insights to enhance their practices and grow their businesses.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our major sponsors – Press Tools and Jemena – and to all the presenters for their invaluable contributions.

Stay tuned for the announcement of our next exciting conference. Bula!







## MASTER PLUMBERS NSW

We would like to wish all of our members a wonderful festive season and take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO BEING  
HERE FOR YOU IN 2025!**

Our office will be closed from 2pm Friday 20 December and will re-open Monday 6 January 2025.







## FEATURE: Member Profile

# Julian Ugarte

Recently named MPA NSW Master Plumber of the Year, Julian Ugarte from JPS Plumbing & Property has a long family history in the plumbing industry. What are the secrets of his success?



The JPS team has earned a great reputation in the community.

**Q How and when did your career in plumbing begin?** I began my plumbing career in 1984 after a small stint at Wassle's Hardware because my father didn't want me to be a plumber; he soon relented.

**Q Were you destined to work in the plumbing industry from an early age?** Most definitely, I spent many school holidays working with dad from a young age. Actually, I was helping dad from the age of 11 on school holidays and weekends.

**Q Have you worked in any industries apart from plumbing?** I taught Plumbing at TAFE for 12 years on a part-time basis.

**||| I find most jobs exciting.**

**Q Have you had many mentors throughout your career?** My greatest mentor was my father, founder of our company.

**Q Would you describe yourself as a 'people person'?** Most would say no!!!! I tell it like it is.

**Q What have been the most significant changes in the industry throughout your career?** The technology of crimping both plastics and copper.



Three generations:  
Julian Ugarte (right), his grandson Hugo  
(centre) and his son Julian Jr (left).

**Q What has been your most challenging assignment or project?** Every project that seems challenging I start with trepidation, but by the end of the jobs it's usually a breeze and I wonder why I stressed about it. I find most jobs exciting.

**Q What has been your greatest achievement?** The Bicentennial Award for Excellence and all my TAFE awards, as well as the day my son (also Julian) told me he wanted to do plumbing.

**Q How important has your family been to your career?** Very important; we are a family run business, so we live and breathe plumbing.

**Q Will technology ever fix all plumbing problems?** No!

**Q Have you noticed any changes to the way society regards plumbers?** Yes, I think it is more respected, especially in the commercial sector.

**Q Is plumbing the best career in the world?** Most definitely.

**Q What will you be doing in five years' time? And then?** I'll still be here working (hopefully a little less). I don't think I'll ever completely retire. **TMP**

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## BUSINESS BANTER

If you wish to sell your plumbing business, there are some important matters to consider. Seasoned business expert **MATT JONES** from Tradie Web Guys explains.

# Thinking of selling your business?

**A**t the time of writing this piece, I am in Fiji attending the Master Plumbers Association of NSW Annual Conference. One of my sessions has involved an interview with a Sydney-based gentleman with many business acquisitions under his belt. The conversation was so impactful, and inspiring, that I felt obligated to share my summary and takeaways with you.

Why? Because the business you are building is valuable and I'd love to see you all one day get something back for all your years of hard work and dedication.

### SELLING UP: MYTHS & REALITIES

Many plumbing business owners believe selling their business is either too complicated or simply not possible. However, that's largely a myth. There's growing interest in well-established service businesses like plumbing, especially as buyers seek opportunities to expand or integrate into larger operations. The key is preparing your business to be attractive to the right buyer.

### SELL OR SHUT DOWN?

When it's time to exit, some owners feel shutting down is the easiest option, especially if they doubt their business's value. But if your business is profitable and stable, selling can be a rewarding way to turn years of hard work into a financial return, rather than letting it disappear.

## You might be surprised by the range of potential buyers.

### BEING ACQUIRABLE

To be appealing, your business must be able to operate without you. Buyers are interested in companies that function smoothly with established systems in place. They want to know that the business will continue to thrive even when ownership changes. The more independent your business is from you, the more acquirable it becomes.

### SYSTEMS

Clear and well-documented systems are essential for any business sale. Buyers will look for operational processes that are already in place and can be easily transferred. This includes job scheduling, inventory management, and customer service procedures. Having these systems ready and functioning will give buyers confidence that the business can keep running seamlessly after the sale.

### DATABASE

Your customer database is one of your most valuable assets. A well-maintained, digital record of past and current clients, along with job history and preferences, can significantly boost the appeal of

your business. Ensure the data is up-to-date and segmented to help the buyer easily understand and leverage customer information.

### GOODWILL

Goodwill is often tied to your business's reputation and customer relationships. Buyers will want to know that they're not only inheriting a client list, but also a trusted brand in the community. Transferring this goodwill to the new owner can be a key part of the sale's success.

### BUSINESS VALUATION

Determining the value of your business is one of the most challenging steps. A professional valuation will consider factors such as annual revenue, profitability, and the stability of your customer base. Other important aspects include the condition of equipment, brand strength, and operational systems. Seeking expert advice from a valuation specialist can provide you with a realistic picture of your business's worth.

### WHO'D BUY IT?

You might be surprised by the range of potential buyers. Competitors looking to expand or diversify, investors, or even individuals from other trades could be interested. A buyer may see your business as a strategic opportunity to gain market share or enter the plumbing sector with an already established base.

### COMPLEMENTARY BUSINESS

A buyer could also come from a complementary industry like electrical or HVAC, looking to offer supporting services. Plumbing businesses are often attractive as bolt-ons for companies wanting to expand their service range or bid for larger contracts.

## PRIVATE EQUITY

Private equity groups are increasingly eyeing service-based businesses, including plumbing, due to their steady cash flow. They seek companies with growth potential that can be developed and eventually sold for profit. While private equity typically targets larger businesses, there are firms interested in medium-sized plumbing businesses with solid operations and a strong customer base.

## WHERE TO START

If you're thinking of selling, preparation is key. Begin by organising your financial records, ensuring they're clean and up-to-date. Aim for at least three years of accurate, transparent accounts. Review your operations to identify areas that need improvement, and streamline any inefficiencies before introducing your business to buyers. Engaging a broker or advisor with experience in plumbing businesses can also help you navigate the

selling process smoothly, from identifying buyers to negotiating the best deal.

## CONCLUSION

Selling your plumbing business is an opportunity to turn your hard work into financial gain. By preparing your business well in advance, ensuring your systems and processes are in place, and understanding the market, you can attract the right buyer and make a successful exit. Whether you're ready to retire or embark on a new venture, the right approach will help you get the best return on your years of dedication. **TMP**



**BUSINESS  
FOR SALE**



Matt Jones is a plumber-turned-trade-business enthusiast. He is the Director of Tradie Web Guys, a digital marketing and technology agency for trade-based businesses, and the host of The Site Shed podcast, one of the world's Top 5 business podcasts for tradies, boasting over 400 published episodes.

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## WOMEN IN PLUMBING

# Pure chance leads to lifelong passion

**W**hen I started plumbing in the late '90s, it wasn't exactly seen as something women did. Back then, there were no female mentors or role models in the industry; plumbing was a male-dominated trade, and the idea of a woman digging holes and getting dirty met with surprise or skepticism. But I've never been one to shy away from a challenge. After more than 26 years in the industry, I'm proud to have built a career that not only defied those expectations but also inspired other women to consider trades like plumbing as a viable and rewarding path.

### AN UNEXPECTED START

My journey into plumbing wasn't something I planned. After returning from overseas, I started labouring for my dad, who ran a plumbing maintenance business. I was just looking to earn a bit of extra money, but once I got my hands on the tools, I found I didn't want to leave. What started as a temporary job quickly grew into a passion, and I decided to pursue an apprenticeship, obtain my license, and take several diploma courses and have most recently started in a bathroom and kitchen design course.

Plumbing is a hands-on trade where you can see the results of your efforts by the end of the day, and this is hugely satisfying. Whether I'm fixing a broken water pipe, clearing a blocked drain, or putting the finishing

**LINDA ZIMBOS**, business owner and plumber from DY Plumbers, fell into plumbing by chance. Before long, what began as a passing interest quickly became a full-time, professional passion. Below, Linda shares her story...

touches on a bathroom or kitchen renovation, there's always a sense of accomplishment. The best part? People are always happy to see you when you arrive, and even happier when you've solved their problem.

### STRUGGLES & SURPRISES

I've faced my share of prejudices and misconceptions over the years. Even today, when I show up for a job, some new customers will say, "Oh, I thought you were the lady on the phone." In the early days, when my now-husband would tell people that I was a plumber, they would without doubt assume he was gay because they couldn't picture a woman doing this kind of work.

In fact, I've found that being a woman in plumbing has its own advantages. Many other women feel more comfortable having me in their home, especially when they're alone or have certain cultural or religious beliefs. They're more willing to share their ideas for renovations with me, knowing I'll listen thoughtfully and help them bring those ideas to life.

There's nothing quite like the feeling of stepping back and seeing a finished project, knowing that my skills and hard work made it possible.

### MENTORSHIP & NEXT GENERATION

Over the years, I've come to love not just the hands-on nature of plumbing, but also the opportunity to mentor others. I've always enjoyed teaching apprentices and helping them learn the ropes, and



I've trained five apprentices so far in the business and then many more through the Master Plumbers Training centre, where I worked for nearly four years. My latest recruit is a young woman, and she is not the only one in the area. It's a promising sign of change.

The best thing about working in the trades is that there is not the same glass ceiling that women can face in the corporate world. There is every opportunity to earn as much as the blokes.

I understand how daunting it can be for young women to step into a room full of men when they're just starting out. It takes a certain kind of resilience and confidence to thrive in an industry where you're often the minority. But there's a growing community of women in trades now, and I'm seeing more of them enter apprenticeships and succeed.

My advice to any young woman considering plumbing – or any trade for that matter – is to embrace the challenges and not be discouraged by the stereotypes.



## BREAKING CULTURAL & BUSINESS BARRIERS

I have seen positive shifts in attitudes over the years, and I believe we can push for even more change.

Thanks to changing attitudes on the work site, where the crass harassment of women is no longer accepted or tolerated, and with more women joining the industry, the acceptance of women in our trade will only strengthen.

Over the years I have participated in TAFE open days with schools, spoken to careers guidance counsellors promoting the trades as a viable pathway to both genders, and most recently sat on a panel at the Master Plumbers promoting just that.

There's still a way to go, but if we can make pathways into trades more visible and accessible to women – whether through apprenticeships or leadership roles – we'll open up this industry to a whole new pool of talent.

Back then, there were no female mentors or role models in the industry.

## LOOKING AHEAD

My story is one of perseverance and passion for a trade that I fell into by chance, but grew to love. There's a lot more to plumbing than fixing things; it's about connecting with people, solving problems, and making a real difference. I want to see more women in trades, not just because it would be great for the industry, but because there are so many rewarding opportunities here for those willing to give it a chance.

To the women out there considering a career in plumbing, I say, go for it. Don't let anyone tell you that you don't belong. Your

presence in this field doesn't just shape your own future; it changes the industry for the better. I didn't set out to be a trailblazer, but if my story helps someone else pick up the tools and see where it takes them, then it's been worth it. For me, plumbing isn't just a job – it's a commitment to challenging norms, mentoring others, and proving that what truly matters in a trade is the quality of the work you do. **TMP**



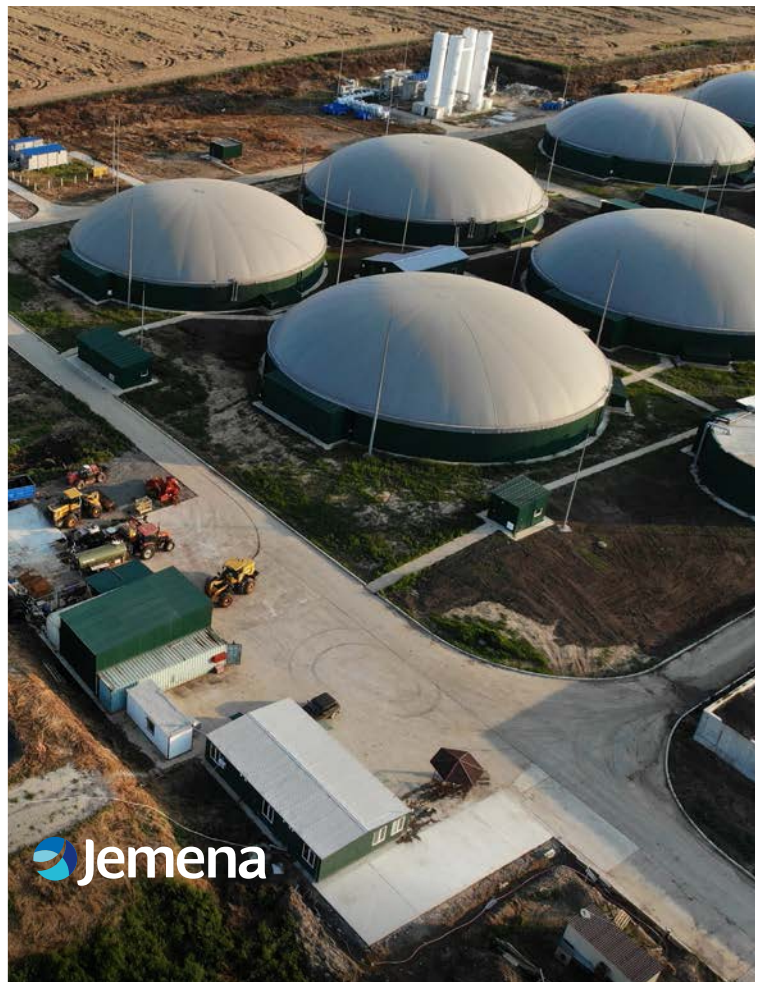
Plumber Linda Zimbos is the owner of DY Plumbers – Maintenance Plumbers on the Northern Beaches of Sydney.  
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 **Jemena**



## REGIONAL RAMBLINGS

Our expert on regional plumbing affairs, **PETER RICHARDSON**, has a lot to discuss in this issue! From trailer and roof safety to the lack of tradie consultation in government regulation, there are plenty of topics worth a closer look!

# Safety & professionalism matter

In the Spring issue of *The Master Plumber* there was an item on Regulation & Safety; these rules and regulations are necessary (though sometimes overdone) to protect our workers in the construction industry. In my early days of Plumbing Roofing & Civil Plumbing & Gasfitters – and I am backed up by my mates of similar vintage (I am old) – if some job looked dangerous, then you worked another way to do the job safely. Nowadays, however, there is a percentage of younger apprentices who just can't see the dangers in front of them. So, I ask the senior members to pay particular attention to their younger colleagues' safety.

### TRAILER TERROR

Speaking of safety... in our business we have five trailers of different applications, and I have a couple of personal trailers as well.

Two weeks ago one of our staff connected off the jetter trailer to take to a job, and within 20 meters of leaving the business site the trailer broke off the ute and fell down on the road. The mechanism in the coupling that connects to the tow ball had broken, but luckily our trailer tradie had connected the safety chains to the tow bar (good job).

I took the broken coupling to our trailer supplier and asked how the hell this kind of thing could happen, as I had never seen it happen before.

The trailer company responded by saying they have trailers coming in sometimes with couplings that have broken off or fractured when someone backs up the tow

vehicle. The coupling either breaks off or fractures.

Safety! So, when connecting a trailer: (1) Make sure it's undamaged and fitted correctly; and (2) Make sure the safety chains are connected. I use two chains, as per the trailer people's instruction, to ensure they are cross-connected.

My reason for bringing this up is that if the trailer comes off it can cause a horrific accident. I have been riding motorcycles since I was 16 years old, and a motorcyclist and even people in a car could be killed by a wayward trailer.

### MORE ON SAFETY

Here's some information on safety from Master Builders Australia.

Did you know that in 2022, 195 workers were fatally injured at work and more than 127,000 Australians were seriously injured in their workplace?

In the construction industry you have to think safety 100% of the time because of the many different jobs that we do.

As an example, a roofer tradie with an apprentice were replacing some rusted sheets 2,500 to 3,000 long on 40 roofs, with the distance





from ridge to gutter about 8 metres. All appropriate Safety Protection was in place. Both were removing the roof screws, but the sheet the apprentice was removing was the last screw holding that sheet... and the apprentice was still standing on that sheet. The tradie yelled at the apprentice to stop; a severe injury might have been moments away.

The Classes and Training and Notifications on some jobs are there to alert workers to potential dangers! Read the safety sheets and don't just tick and flick the checklists.

### HEAT PUMP COWBOYS

In the Winter 2024 issue of *The Master Plumber*, the cover story was a Heat pump warning (Beware of heat pump Cowboys) by Nathaniel Smith.

The government sometimes embraces projects to help the general public and perhaps the environment, BUT they don't take advice from the tradespeople who work in that profession! How bad was Kevin Rudd's 'Fruit Batt' Installations (ceiling batt insulation) scheme! How the crooks scammed that system!

The same problem may well apply to cheaper heat pump installations, particularly with non-trade practitioners installing inferior heat pumps with no warranty. And if faults arise in the installation, good luck getting a call back or government support.

This article was a reminder of the importance of heat pump quality. There was also a timely recent article by Stuart Matheson from iStore explaining why the installation of quality heat pumps for hot water heating (HWH) should be accompanied by a full warranty and installed by qualified tradies, i.e., plumbers and electricians.

In the last two years cheap heat pumps with no warranty (and no

requirement for tradies to install them) have been developing faults. Often the customer has no contact details for the original installer so they have to ask local tradies to fix the problem – and the fixers can't get parts.

Warranties from reputable companies like Dux, Rheem, and iStore are very important to us tradies, particularly in regional areas, because tradies may have multi-generational relationships with their customers.

Furthermore, I've been told that the same sorts of deals are now being offered for the installation of air conditioning units.

During my time in business over the last 67 years, all businesses in the construction industries that I have dealt with have been serviced for their trade, had necessary insurance, and received training from their occupation associations. After all that, and with a bit of luck, they have worked hard and paid tax and succeeded. And because we work out in the environment, we've also been subject to inspections by Fair Trading, Work Cover, and any number of other government departments.

Which begs the question: where are Fair Trading, Work Cover, and other government departments who should be stopping these unqualified, uninsured and 'not even tradies' from doing this work? I've been told by Work Cover inspectors that if plumbers, electricians, or air conditioner tradies stuff up, then someone could die! Settle down boys and girls from Fair Trading and Work Cover: in 67 years I have never had a problem with you.

As I mentioned, the ceiling batts and heat pump HWH markets involving government subsidies are being scammed and abused by unqualified people who are not tradies. I have now found out that

Always use high-quality heat pumps, which have warranty protection.



the same government scheme is being used to upgrade the electrical usage and efficiency of air conditioning, fridges, washing machines, and TV for concession holders.

I asked a fully compliant air conditioning company if this was this correct, and the answer was YES. We looked into the system and did not want to get involved.

Maybe the government is thinking and trying to do the correct advancement, but their system is not mandating that qualified tradespeople, who comply with the Fair Work Commission and Work Cover, are authorised to do the installations. So, Australian taxpayers out there, keep working and paying tax because you are paying for this waste of money. **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)





## TRAINING

In recent years, the Australian plumbing industry has recognised that traditional guidelines for sizing cold water service pipes, as outlined in AS/NZS 3500.1, may lead to over-engineering, writes **MARK BROWN**.

# Are we over-engineering?

**D**eveloped to ensure systems meet high flow and pressure demands, these Standards often overestimate real-world water demand, which can impact costs and even public health.

### PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS OF OVERSIZED PIPES

Oversized pipes pose a serious health risk due to water stagnation. When pipes are too large for actual demand, water sits idle for extended periods, depleting chlorine levels and fostering conditions for harmful bacteria like Legionella. This bacterium can lead to Legionnaires' disease or pneumonia, posing serious risks, particularly to the elderly and immunocompromised. By unintentionally supporting bacterial growth, oversized pipes undermine public health by enabling potential pathogens to flourish.

### UPDATING STANDARDS WITH REAL DATA

The AS/NZS 3500.1 Standard has long provided a foundational framework for plumbing design, aiming to accommodate peak demand. However, as modern buildings increasingly adopt water-saving fixtures, the Standard's assumptions are often out of sync with today's lower demand. Addressing this, Dr. James Gong, Senior Lecturer in Water Engineering at Deakin University, has partnered with the Hydraulic Consultants Association of Australasia (HCAA) to update pipe sizing guidelines using real-world data.

Dr. Gong's research marks the first major revision to water demand estimates in over 50 years. This

updated approach, which the Australian Building Codes Board will include in the National Construction Code (NCC 2015), aims to reduce unnecessary oversizing by providing a more accurate method for calculating actual water use. By reflecting reduced flow rates and current fixture usage, this method aligns with the practical needs of modern buildings and mitigates the public health risks associated with oversized pipes.

### COST & EFFICIENCY BENEFITS OF RIGHTSIZING

Right-sizing pipe diameters to reflect real-world usage patterns delivers significant benefits. Smaller pipes reduce the risk of water stagnation, preserve disinfectant levels, and lower the likelihood of bacterial growth. Financially, right-sized pipes require less material, reducing both installation costs and labour. In many cases, Dr. Gong's methodology leads to pipe size reductions of 10–20% compared to the AS/NZS 3500.1 Standard, saving contractors on materials and installation time without sacrificing system performance or safety.

### CASE STUDY

A recent multi-residential development in Melbourne applied Dr. Gong's right-sizing approach. Initially, designs followed AS/NZS 3500.1 Standards, but after consulting with hydraulic engineers using the NCC 2015 verification method, the development team downsized cold water service pipes by approximately 15%. This change reduced material costs by \$12,000 and decreased installation time by 10%. Importantly,

the smaller pipes allowed better water flow, reducing stagnation risks and preserving chlorine residuals, which helps prevent bacterial growth and protects public health.

### IMPLICATIONS

For plumbing contractors across Australia, adopting the NCC 2015 verification method and Dr. Gong's approach presents opportunities to improve both cost efficiency and health outcomes. By tailoring pipe sizes to each project's actual demand rather than adhering rigidly to AS/NZS 3500.1, contractors can avoid over-engineering, creating systems that are more efficient, safe, and cost-effective.

### CONCLUSION

The shift toward right-sizing, championed by Dr. Gong and the HCAA, offers a pathway for Australian plumbing to evolve beyond outdated Standards. As NCC 2015 takes effect, this change has the potential to reshape plumbing practices across Australia, aligning building infrastructure with today's sustainable water usage requirements and strengthening public health safeguards. **TMP**



MPA NSW's Mark Brown is Training Facilities Manager.

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## REGULATION & SAFETY

There is plenty of information available to plumbers to make every day a safe day. Below, SafeWork NSW reveal their latest webinars and other resources outlining some practical, hassle-free advice.



### NEW CRYSTALLINE SILICA SUBSTANCE REGULATIONS

On 1 September 2024, new work health and safety requirements came into effect for all businesses that process

materials containing crystalline silica.

Crystalline silica is found in materials such as sandstone, concrete, bricks, and engineered stone. In its stable solid form, products containing crystalline silica are not harmful. There are some activities though, like cutting, drilling, and grinding, that cause dust to be created. This dust is known as respirable crystalline silica, or RCS, and is hazardous when inhaled. RCS can lead to serious illnesses such as silicosis and lung cancer.

When working with products containing silica you must keep yourself and your workers safe from the harms of exposure to RCS.

➔ Visit the SafeWork NSW website to find out more information and see how the new safety requirements apply to you and your business: [safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/hazardous-chemical/priority-chemicals/crystalline-silica](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/hazardous-chemical/priority-chemicals/crystalline-silica)

### WEBINARS TO KEEP WORKERS SAFE

As part of the 'Work shouldn't hurt' new campaign to prevent strains and sprains, SafeWork NSW has a new webinar series to help NSW businesses prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), the most common work-related injuries and illnesses.



Also known as sprains and strains, MSDs make up more than half of all serious workers' compensation claims in

NSW. In the construction industry, there were more than 16,000 claims for MSDs in the past two years, at a total cost of \$745 million. Take action to prevent sprains and strains by watching the three-part webinar series.

You will learn:

- What MSDs are, including common causes and impacts on your workers and business
- Legal duties to consider when managing the risk of MSDs
- How you can manage the risk.

➔ View the webinars on YouTube – search for SafeWork NSW Preventing Musculoskeletal...



### BE SAFE: UNSAFE SCAFOLDS CAN KILL

SafeWork NSW inspectors are targeting scaffold safety between August and December, as part of Scaff Safe 2024. Scaffolds that are poorly built or not managed properly by principal contractors/site supervisors can pose a serious risk to workers including:

- falls from heights
- being hit by unsecured falling objects
- being crushed by scaffold collapse
- electrocution, if unprotected from powerlines.

When SafeWork NSW looked at serious scaffold incidents reported in 2023, they found that most incidents included modular scaffold and were due to:

- missing scaffold components – from being built unsafely or because unlicensed workers removed components
- scaffold misuse by workers – by adding planks between the scaff and other areas, accessing incomplete sections, standing on boxes or ladders on the deck
- scaffolders not erecting or dismantling in a safe sequence.





## EMPLOYERS' DUTIES TO KEEP WORKERS SAFE

Employers must ensure scaffolds are in a safe working condition for the duration of the construction project/work, including managing alterations to the scaffold as the construction build progresses.

This means:

- inspecting the scaffold for missing components, etc, before accepting written confirmation (e.g. handover certificate)
- having a plan to ensure scaffolds remain safe and compliant as the build reaches each new stage
- ensuring scaffolds are checked by a competent person at least every 30 days
- ensuring scaffolds remain complete, with no missing components that make it unsafe or that workers could fall through
- ensuring workers on scaffolds are protected from powerlines
- stopping workers accessing incomplete or unsafe scaffolds
- stopping workers from removing scaffold components
- ensuring only licenced scaffolders erect, alter or dismantle a scaffold where an object or person could fall more than 4 metres.

Inspectors can issue on-the-spot fines of up to \$4,500 per non-compliance, for not managing the risk of scaffolds, falls from heights risks and alterations by unlicensed persons.

➔ Find more information, see SafeWork NSW's scaffolding webpage at [safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/scaffolding](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/scaffolding)

## NEW PSYCH RESOURCES

SafeWork NSW has published new resources to help employers meet their legal duty to create a psychologically healthy and safe workplace. Employers are required to consult with workers about work health and safety. Consultation is more than talking to workers; it is a two-way process where workers can have a voice to inform decisions on how to make their workplace healthier and safer.

*Preventing Psychological Harm: First Steps for Small Business* sets out three things you can do to help protect mental health at work:

- Talk to your workers
- Think about your experiences with your workers
- Make changes to work.

The resource is based on the principle of good work design, or 'fixing the work, not the worker'. This means changing things like rosters, deadlines and facilities to make work safer, rather than changing workers' behaviour.

The *Consulting your workers about psychosocial hazards and risks* fact sheet gives more detail on how to talk to workers about what's impacting their mental health at work.

It has tips to overcome common issues that come up during consultation, such as how to make workers feel comfortable to share their views.

It includes a checklist of what good consultation looks like, and a conversation guide with suggested questions you can ask workers.

Use the resources together with the *Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work*

➔ For information about a range of upcoming Events at SafeWork NSW, visit [safework.nsw.gov.au/events](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/events)



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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

  
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## APPRENTICE STORIES

**MATTHEW CAMPBELL**, recently named winner of the MPA NSW Gold Medal for 2024, is a young plumber who is going places... very fast!

# Life in the fast lane

**Q You have just completed your apprenticeship. Where did you do your apprenticeship and where are you working?** I studied at TAFE NSW Mount Druitt campus and am working for MGP Civil.

**Q Did you feel prepared for the first day of your apprenticeship?** I felt like I was as prepared as I could be with the knowledge I had at the time.

**Q Was it hard to balance training and work obligations?** I didn't find it too hard. I always ensured I had completed my TAFE work to make sure I didn't have to complete it after work hours.

**Q Did travel requirements during your apprenticeship pose any issues?** Travel didn't pose an issue for my first year – I got a ride with dad every morning as we worked together; for my second and third year I had my license and my own company car.

**Q Did you learn everything you expected to during your apprenticeship? Or was it more of an introduction to real 'on the job' instruction later?** I learnt everything I thought I would, plus a bucketload more. Every day is a learning day; I never stop learning.

**Q You must have had some great training mentors along the way – what makes a 'good instructor'?** A good instructor to me is someone who can pass down skills in a calm manner and guide someone through their learning years. Handing down knowledge they have acquired over their time in the trade. Also showing how to deal with situations and clients.

**Q What advice would you give to a new apprentice about to start day one?** Don't be late, listen, look neat and presentable, have a few basic tools, don't be a smart ass.

**Q Looking back, what were the main highlights?** I loved going to TAFE on Wednesdays, I would look forward every week to go to TAFE. Being a part of some pretty big project has been cool – to say I was a part of that. But the main highlight would be winning the Master Plumbers Association of NSW Gold Award.



Above: In his spare time Matt competes in the Australian powerboat series around NSW. Below left: Matthew Campbell proudly accepts his Gold Award at the recent Master Plumbers Association of NSW awards ceremony.



Matt's passions include motocross racing.

**Q Where are you working now? Main fields of expertise?** MGP Civil Contractors. Our main fields of expertise are water mains, sewer mains and stormwater.

**Q When you're not working or studying, what are your favourite hobbies or pastimes?** I race in the Australian powerboat series around NSW; I also enjoy riding motocross in my free time. **TMP**



## **SYDNEY WATER:** Working with plumbers

# Sydney Water needs you to care about backflow

Backflow prevention containment is critical to our network integrity in supplying safe clean drinking water, but the system relies on plumbers to ensure everything works correctly. Sydney Water offers the following advice.

**A**ll connected properties require backflow containment. While 20mm and 25mm water meters have low-hazard dual check valves in them, larger water meters that service low-hazard properties require low backflow containment to be installed at the meter outlet. If properties are rated as medium- and high-hazard, they require the installation of a testable backflow protection containment device. These devices need to be registered with us and tested annually. This includes unmetered connections such as fire services.

### **BACKFLOW CONTAINMENT DEVICES: FIRE SERVICES**

Fire services still pose a risk to our network, which is why we require a medium-hazard testable device installed, such as a DCDA (double check detector assembly) on dedicated fire services. These are usually installed at the fire booster assembly.

Devices like these should be registered and tested annually. If you attend a site that has a dedicated fire service, please check if there is a device present and ensure that it's registered in our system. There is a specific category in our database for fire service devices. If there are

multiple fire services, our system will automatically add numbers 1,2, and so on as you enter them. Please do not register the 20mm bypass device on the double check valve.

### **BACKFLOW CONTAINMENT MANIFOLD SYSTEMS**

If your client can't afford to shutdown supply while you complete their backflow testing, a manifold system may be the way to go. We define a backflow containment manifold system as two or more backflow devices that are installed in parallel on a single water service connection, allowing the supply to split between the two devices as it enters the property. An example of this can be seen in the accompanying image.

The advantage of this type of installation is the ability to isolate one device, to conduct a test or perform a repair, while keeping the other device active. This allows the water supply for the property to remain continuous. Backflow containment devices should be installed directly after the master meter. If there is no master meter, then the backflow containment device is installed at the boundary and registered as a boundary connection.

When installing backflow containment devices, ensure you

correctly include all ancillary fittings. These allow for devices to operate effectively and be maintained or repaired when required. Ancillary fittings include isolation valves, strainers and unions. When working with discharge ports on devices like RPZDs, remember to allow adequate clearance underneath the port (300mm).

Although the overall final pipework configuration for a manifold system will vary dependent on specific site requirements, you must ensure all installation complies with relevant plumbing codes/standards including the AS/NZS 3500.1 and any network utility installation requirements above or in addition to the plumbing codes.

### **DATABASE SYSTEM UPDATES**

We've made some changes to our backflow database to help improve clarity for backflow containment manifold systems. These updates will allow you to accurately record what makes up the manifold system at each property.

We've also given our Backflow prevention for plumbers page on the website an update. Head to [sydneywater.com.au/backflowplumbing](http://sydneywater.com.au/backflowplumbing) for step-by-step instruction videos for how to use the database and other useful information. **TMP**



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# NEW PRODUCTS



## DUX

Installed just like a normal electric hot water system, the Thermann Smart Electric water heater from Dux Hot Water provides plumbers with an affordable solution to help their customers save big money on energy bills. Its Wi-Fi connection and easy-to-use app allow homeowners to control the operation of the unit. They can optimise both when and how it heats to reduce energy use and lower energy bills. Benefit from pre-configured modes, schedule heating to coincide with PV generation, or heat during periods when electricity is cheapest.

## EASY FALL

The biggest problem with guttering is incorrect fall, as current guttering is installed to hide the edge of the roof; so it has very little fall (1mm of fall per metre). Therefore, the water does not flow quickly enough to the downpipes, leading to overflowing gutters.

The solution: EASY FALL® Adjustable Bracket ensures up to 75mm of fall

The recent MPA NSW Industry Awards ceremony included the hotly contested Award for Innovation. **BILL ARMSTRONG** presents the six shortlisted entries, including the winning product from Dux.

inside the EASY FALL® Roll Formed Guttering System while offering a perfectly straight appearance to the outside of the home, and available in a wide range of COLORBOND® colours.

## ISTORE

iStore's upgraded 270L Heat Pump Water Heater has improvements, including:

1. R290 Refrigerant Gas: A more environmentally friendly option compared to traditional refrigerants.
2. Larger Evaporator: Increases efficiency, reducing energy consumption.
3. Homegrown Monitoring App: Allows homeowners to control the water heater remotely and enables iStore to provide remote diagnostics and technical support.
4. Standard 10-Amp plug: Simplifies installation since any plumber can power up the unit without an electrician.
5. Horizontal transport capability: Allows the unit to be transported more easily.

## RHEEM

The Rheem AmbiPower 280e heat pump is among the most advanced heat pumps developed in Australia for Australian conditions in the 250–300L heat pump water heaters market. Features include:

1. Coefficient of Performance (COP) of 5.2.
2. Ultra Low GWP (Global Warming Potential) R290 refrigerant.
3. 2.4kW back-up element.

4. Side fan design for max. airflow and rain protection.
5. Durable outer shell in painted sheet metal.
6. LED touchscreen controller for optimal visibility.
7. Timer functions.

## TAPPR

Tappr is an app that makes complex drainage diagrams simple and quick – right from your phone, tablet, or laptop – in under 10 minutes.

Tappr is robust enough for any plumber to use in their day to day operations. New Build & Renovation Plumbers for drainage compliance into LGAs, Commercial Plumbers for adjustments and iterations from the plans provided, and also Maintenance Plumbers to significantly increase 'per job revenue' by providing high quality completion of works documents back to customer/homeowner.

## ZETCO

The Zetco Manifold allows each appliance or fixture connected to water in a kitchen or laundry to be individually isolated.

For the plumber, this capability greatly reduces installation time, eliminating the future need to shut off the mains to complete the job. A versatile three-way version of the manifold caters for scenarios where an additional appliance such as a water filter or ice-making fridge may need to be connected in addition to a dishwasher and sink mixer.



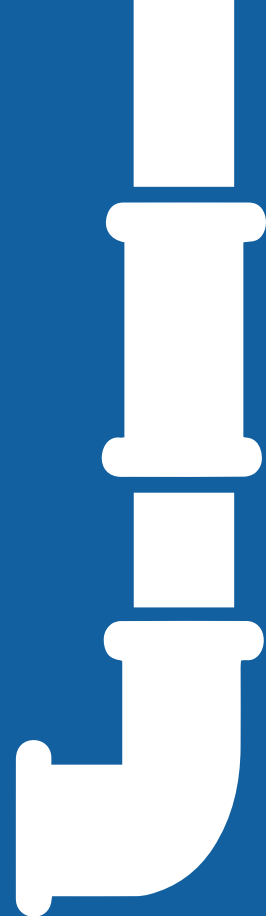
Bill Armstrong has been a member of the Association for over 25 years. He has served on the Executive Committee for the last 21 years. He is a Past President (2003–2005), Guardian (2007–Present) and Life Member (since 2015).

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

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