Look out for the Board’s Annual Report due out in late July 2012. It details the ongoing work undertaken by the Board from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 and the Board’s financial position.

2011/12 was a successful year for the Board. No significant matters have been raised by Audit NZ. We continued to make good progress in resolving the outstanding issues of the past.

The Board is in a position to report a good financial result with a surplus of $740,956. Operating with a surplus is good for two reasons. Firstly, the Board’s reserves had fallen to inadequate levels and the surplus will now alleviate this. Secondly, surplus funds are used to offset future years expenditure which is positive in relation to fees.

A number of contributing factors have led to our improved financial position. These include: tight financial control by the Board, more exam candidates last year than expected, fewer gas audits undertaken and recovery of costs associated with defending an employment issue.

2011 was a record year for candidates sitting the Board’s examinations. More candidates sat exams and passed in 2011 than in any previous year. This high level of achievement is reflected in higher levels of registration recorded in 2011.

The Board developed and implemented an extensive range of policies during the 2011/12 year including policies on: decision-making, supervision, provisional licenses, employer licenses, governance and a range of exemptions.

Earlier this year, the Board undertook its first stakeholder satisfaction survey. Overall, the Board was pleased with the results and would like to thank all those who took the time to take part in the survey. A summary of these results is presented in this issue of Info Brief.

A random sample of licensed tradespeople were asked to measure the level of satisfaction they had with a range of services provided by the Board. They were also invited to provide suggestions of changes/issues that they would like the Board to consider. The Board has considered the results of the survey including the suggestions for improvements and has set about implementing a number of these.

The survey is just part of our overall consultation programme with the industry. Later this year, the Board will hold a series of regional stakeholder consultation meetings during the fees review consultation period. This will provide a further opportunity for stakeholders to express their views in person to the Board, not only about its fees review proposal, but about anything they would like to discuss or bring to the Board’s attention.

Alan Bickers, Board Chair
In February 2012, the Board undertook a survey to measure the level of satisfaction that licensed tradespeople have with a range of services the Board provides. 406 randomly selected tradespeople were interviewed by the National Research Bureau (NRB) on behalf of the Board.

Overall, a relatively high level of satisfaction was recorded in terms of the Board's performance in the areas of general service, general communications and the Info Brief (ranged from 81.5% - 86%). Respondents were reasonably satisfied with the Board’s consultation (56%-65%) and licensing and/or registration processes (59%).

Results presented here show the measure of satisfaction tradespeople gave in response to each question. Results are expressed as a percentage of the total and figures in bar charts represent the percentage of tradespeople satisfied (combined total of those ‘very’ and ‘fairly satisfied’).

Respondents provided a wide-range of good suggestions when asked what changes would need to be made for them to be more satisfied with the Board’s performance and these have been considered by the Board. The Board has instructed staff to implement many of these suggestions. A more detailed summary of the survey results, including these suggestions, is now available online.

General service

36.7% of respondents when asked (q.1), confirmed they had contacted the Board in the last six months by phone or in person. Of these, the majority of tradespeople are satisfied with the level of general service that the Board provides. In fact 84% of respondents were satisfied with the overall level of service that they received (q.2e). 91% of respondents were satisfied with how they were greeted (q.2a), 87% were satisfied with the way the Board understood their needs (q.2b), 85% were satisfied with the accuracy of the information the Board gave (q.2c) and 80% were satisfied with the speed of the Board’s response (q.2d).

General communications

The majority of tradespeople (81.5%) are satisfied with the provision of information by the Board (q.4). 60% of respondents said they prefer to receive information by email but 35% still prefer to receive it by post (q.6). 78% of people indicated that they would find it useful to receive a text from us reminding them of important dates such as relicensing and upcoming consultation events (q.7).

Info Brief

Of the 70% of respondents who indicated that they read Info Brief, the majority (86%) were satisfied with the publication (q.8).

Issues suggested for the Board to consider

Respondents suggested a wide range of issues they would like to see the Board address in the future (q.15). Frequent issues raised included the Board's CPD scheme, the level of fees, prosecution of illegal workers and standard of communications.
The Board’s role

Respondents provided a wide range of views when asked what they believe the Board’s role to be (q.14). While most respondents appeared to have a fairly good understanding of our role (or partially), it’s evident from some responses that there is still a perception among tradespeople that we represent the interests of tradespeople and that the payment of the licence fee is akin to paying a membership subscription. That is simply not correct. Payment of the licence fee provides the authorisation to undertake the restricted work of plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

Quite simply the Board is the government appointed regulator for the trades of plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying. Our role is to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that tradespeople are competent to carry out their work in a safe and effective manner.

Many respondents felt that the Board’s role was one of discipline, enforcement and prosecution. While the Board carries out these functions, it does so in the context of ensuring competence. For example, discipline is undertaken in order to raise competence and not primarily for punitive purposes.

Consultation

When asked how satisfied they were with the Board’s recent consultation on CPD and the disciplinary levy (q.10):

- 61% were satisfied with the level of information provided by the Board.
- 65% were satisfied with the timeliness of the information provided
- 56% were satisfied with how the Board communicated their final decisions and their reasons for it.

Are you authorised to do the work?

The new licensing year began on 1 April 2012.
If you’ve not relicensed and you are working, relicense now to avoid the risk of prosecution!

Recent prosecution

On 5 June 2012, John Playter was sentenced in the Greymouth District Court. Mr Playter was fined $2,750 for carrying out sanitary plumbing when he was not authorised to do so.

Thanks to everyone who took part in the survey. The Board certainly appreciates the time it took to provide your feedback.

We are committed to improving communication with the whole industry and this survey is just part of our overall consultation programme with the industry.
Impending change to the Board’s online public register

The Board will soon implement a change to the online public register for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.

Why is the Board making this change?
This change is being made to ensure the register complies with the requirements of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.

Who will be affected by the change?
This change will affect registered persons, provisional licence holders, and employer licence holders who hold a current licence.

What information will be available on the online public register?
The online public register will contain:

- some contact information such as a business address (if any), telephone number, and email address (if any), for registered persons and provisional licence holders who hold a current licence
- the full name of a contact person for the body corporate, as well as the company number or incorporation number of the body corporate (if any) for employer licence holders who hold a current licence
- information about the status and history of registration(s) and practising licence(s), and any cancellation(s), suspension(s), or disciplinary action taken in the last three years, to the extent that the information is relevant.

If, as a registered person or provisional licence holder, you have a business address, it must be supplied. If you do not, you can choose whether to provide a residential address, but this is not required. You must supply a telephone number, whether it is a business or personal landline or mobile number. You must also supply an email address unless you do not have one.

When will the change take place?
The change to the online public register was originally scheduled to go live to the public on 25 June 2012. The Board has now decided to roll out the change at a later date and in two stages. Stage one will provide access to tradespeople. Stage two will provide public access. This will give tradespeople more time to understand the information that will be made public on the online public register and update their details accordingly.

Stage one – Access to tradespeople on 9 July 2012
On 9 July 2012, some of the names of the contact fields on your PGDB profile will change. The field names will be updated to clearly indicate the purpose for which the information is collected. From this date you can login to your PGDB profile and update your contact details.

Important: none of your information will be available on the online public register until 1 August 2012. This is simply an opportunity for you to login to your PGDB profile and update your information.

Stage 2 – Public access on 1 August 2012
On 1 August 2012, the change to the online public register will go live to the public.

What if you don’t want your contact information to be available on the online public register?
The Act requires the Board to have a register, and sets out the purpose of the register and the information it has to contain. The Board is required to comply with this law.

The Act provides discretionary powers to restrict public access to some information. A guide about how such decisions will be made will be available online from 1 July 2012.

In the meantime, if there is a reason why you do not want any information available on the online public register, please send an email to the Registrar setting out your request, clearly explaining the reasons for your request, and including any supporting documentation. Your contact information will be withheld from the online public register until your request has been considered and a decision made of which you will be notified. From 9 July you will also be able to submit an online request to withhold your contact information by logging into your PGDB profile under the ‘my details’ section.
In response to enquiries from gasfitters about the upcoming changes to the gasfitting certification regime, Energy Safety and the Department of Building and Housing are pleased to provide further information. Remember, there may be further adjustments to the new regulations as they are still being drafted. Final up-to-date information on certification will be posted at www.energysafety.govt.nz as soon as practicable after the regulations are Gazetted (anticipated in September 2012).

**Is government scrapping the certification regime?**

No. A certificate confirming that gasfitting work carried out is safe will be required for all work, including gasfitting work that is currently exempt from certification. Government wants to improve and strengthen the certification of gasfitting work through some operational and administrative changes. These changes will ensure the certification regime reflects current technological, marketplace, and business practices, while retaining safety outcomes.

**Will safety standards change?**

No. We expect that the changes will reinforce gasfitters’ compliance with the technical standards for safety. The safety requirements for gasfitting work and gas installations are prescribed in regulation and in technical standards, and these will not change as a result of changes to certification.

**What are the main changes proposed for certification?**

- Certification of design will be introduced and obligations placed on the designers for the safety of the completed design
- Gasfitters will be able to produce Certificates of Compliance (CoC) as part of their business processes, provided the required information is recorded
- A Gas Safety Certificate (GSC) will be required after the completed gasfitting work has been connected to confirm that the installation is safe to use. This may be added to the end of the CoC form
- Gas installation work will be separated into three categories with differing requirements reflecting the risks involved with the work
- Online registration of selected certification information will remain for work in the high-risk category.

**How does certification include design?**

A Declaration of Conformity (DoC) for design is introduced at the start of the work to cover the lawfulness and safety of the design and to clarify liability. This design DoC may be consolidated into the existing CoC.

**How will certification be extended to cover connection?**

A Gas Safety Certificate (GSC) will be issued after the completed gasfitting work has been connected to a gas supply. The GSC will certify that the installation is safe to use.

**What are the risk categories?**

Three formalised risk based categories will be introduced:

- **LOW RISK** - work currently exempt from certification
- **MEDIUM RISK** - work that includes a small range of gas appliances e.g. gas hobs and ovens, outdoor instantaneous gas water heaters
- **HIGH RISK** - most gasfitting work i.e. work that does not meet the low or medium-risk criteria. The work in each of risk category will be reviewed on an on-going basis.

**How does the certificate change?**

There will no longer be a set form for Certificates of Compliance (CoC). The information required to be included in a CoC will be specified in regulation, for example the location of the work, the type of work and the details of the gasfitter (or other person authorised to do gasfitting work). A statement that the gasfitting work has been done lawfully and safely will be part of the CoC. CoC information will have to be kept by gasfitters and a copy of the CoC given to the person who commissioned the work.

**Why will there no longer be a standard format for CoCs?**

Government recognises that businesses use a variety of business processes. Eliminating a CoC form specified by regulation facilitates business efficiency and allows workers to use their existing processes. For example, one business may prefer to email CoCs to their customers, while another may include it in a printed invoice and post it to the customer. Consistent information will be required for all CoCs, regardless of the format.
What is the new register of high-risk gas installation work about?

The information required for the high-risk register will be selected information from the CoC. The register will be freely available and searchable by both consumers and gasfitters.

The Register will enable Energy Safety and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (PGDB) to audit completed work and the competency of workers.

How do I learn to use the new register?

A ‘how-to’ guide will be available from Energy Safety’s website along with online help and information once the register is developed.

Gasfitters will be kept informed about the progress of the register through the Board’s Info Brief and through Energy Safety’s updates.

Will there still be certificate checks to identify unsafe installations and/or poor tradesperson competence?

Yes. The responsibilities and powers of regulatory agencies under the Gas Act 1992 and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2010 are retained.

Energy Safety will continue to undertake safety audits to address risk areas and to enforce compliance.

The competency of gasfitters to perform safe and compliant work will remain the responsibility of the PGDB.

When will the certification changes happen?

Certification amendments are expected in September 2012, and will come into force on 1 April 2013.

What do gas workers have to do?

In reality there is not a lot of change for certification. Energy Safety and the PGDB will be using various media to keep you up-to-date with the changes.

Further information

You may wish to read the following...

» Cabinet decision on certification
» Survey summary
» Summary of submissions on the discussion document
» Joint Ministerial release announcing the certification review

If you have any questions about gas certification please contact Energy Safety on 0508 377 463.