

Outcome of Consultation

Registration class names



July 2024

Consultation

In 2023 the Board sought feedback on the current registration class names and provided proposals for new names for the classes for consideration. The consultation was to seek feedback on issues that had been raised with the Board about the current registration class names, including:

- ‘Journeyman’ and ‘Tradesman’ were not gender inclusive and ignored that women and non-binary people are plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.
- Current registration names did not make it clear to consumers what work practitioners were allowed to do, and under what level of supervision.
- ‘Certifying’ was not reflective of the work done by ‘Certifiers’ because their main function was to supervise and oversee work, and in many instances they cannot certify work(s).

The Board considered several options for change in response to the issues before settling on the options that were consulted on. The Board looked to registration class names used in Australia, the UK, South Africa, and Canada to come up with alternatives that resolve the issues raised. In all these countries, a similar tiered system was used for practitioners to enter into the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying professions and then progress to higher classes of registration that come with more responsibility.

In summary:

- All countries reviewed had moved to gender-neutral terms (apart from Journeyman being in use in the UK, although by a membership body not a regulator)
- The concept of “certifying” work was not in use in the countries reviewed.

Consultation was open from 22 September to 13 October 2023, on the proposed options below.

Current	Journeyman Plumber	Tradesman Plumber	Certifying Plumber
	Journeyman Gasfitter	Tradesman Gasfitter	Certifying Gasfitter
	Journeyman Drainlayer	Tradesman Drainlayer	Certifying Drainlayer
Option one	Journeyperson Plumber	Tradesperson Plumber	Certifying Plumber
	Journeyperson Gasfitter	Tradesperson Gasfitter	Certifying Gasfitter
	Journeyperson Drainlayer	Tradesperson Drainlayer	Certifying Drainlayer
Option two	Restricted Plumber	Plumber	Certifying Plumber
	Restricted Gasfitter	Gasfitter	Certifying Gasfitter
	Restricted Drainlayer	Drainlayer	Certifying Drainlayer

Stakeholder consultation

As part of the consultation process the Board wanted to speak directly with industry members. A practitioner focus group was held on 25 October 2023 to hear if the proposed changes may affect them and/or their colleagues.

Consumer advisory group

The Board also engaged an external market research agency to organise a consumer advisory group to represent the public’s interest in the consultation. On 30 October 2023, the consumer advisory group met to discuss the name changes.

Feedback from the session supported changing to more gender-neutral names. The sentiment was that the current language might discourage women from choosing a career in plumbing, gasfitting and/or drainlaying.

Participants didn't realise there was different levels of registration and expected a practitioner booked to carry out work for them would "be able to do everything". Participants trusted the company to ensure that the right person was selected for each job.



Submissions received

The Board received 55 submissions on the consultation.

- Four supported Option One
- 29 supported Option Two
- 10 had no opinion or chose neither option
- Six supported no change
- Six chose a mix of options or submitted an alternative.

There were two responses from industry: Waihanga Ara Rau (see below) and Master Plumbers.

Master Plumbers submitted a proposal on behalf of their 1,400 members. They expressed concern over the timing of the review, stating "changing registration class names is a matter of priority for the industry in the current economic climate". Master Plumbers supported Restricted Tradesman, Tradeswoman or Tradesperson. They noted Certifier was previously changed from Craftsman "which would seem to remain more appropriate until such time as plumbers and drainlayers can actually self-certify".

Summary of responses that supported the proposed options

Those who submitted responses that supported a change to the names thought the proposed options were inclusive and clear for the public. Some specific comments included:

Support for Option One

- *Current should stay but option 1 makes more sense*

Support for Option Two

- *I vote for option two simpler and easier for the public to understand*
- *Option 2 is best as the word Restricted alerts customers to the fact there should be a supervisor the tradesperson in their house*
- *Option 2 not gender specific. Clear to understand.*
- *Option two is my preferred option - it is gender inclusive for all genders. It would be well received by all practitioners who may be more used to the old terms. It is also more understandable to clients. The use of "tradesperson" is long winded and will be a hard sell.*

Waihanga Ara Rau supported Option Two for the following reasons:

- It was important that the names of the registration classes gave a sense of belonging and created an environment of feeling respected and valued for all genders holding the title
- They demonstrated diversity and inclusion
- Customers would want to use services if they saw that a business was inclusive
- Countries overseas had seen the benefits of being more diverse and inclusive.

Summary of responses that disagreed with the proposal

The main themes of the submissions that opposed the proposed names or a change altogether were:

- Replacing Tradesman with plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer could cause confusion
- The consultation was inappropriate use of Board funds
- Too politically correct.

Summary

The Board thanks the individuals and organisations that took the time to read and make a submission on the proposed options for registration class names.