

Quarterly Advisor

Keeping key Government and industry stakeholders updated on the impact that the Board's functions have within the community

Industry snapshot



-  Plumbers,
-  Gasfitters and
-  Drainlayers Board



Enforcement action

Reducing risk in regions experiencing increases in new dwelling consents

Licence checks conducted nationwide are proving to be effective in reducing illegal operators within the sector. Predominantly, 2015 enforcement action has concentrated on the high activity areas of Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch.

Auckland has led the charge in terms of consent increases, and the demand for tradespeople in the region due to this construction boom continues to be strong.

This is a positive signal for the industry of work to look forward to. However, a key issue will be to reduce the risk for property owners by ensuring that those people engaged in the provision

of plumbing, gasfitting and drain-laying are competent to do so safely.

The Board is increasing planned random checks of building sites in the Auckland region amid council concerns of substandard work practices on construction sites around the city. To date, there have been six licence checking operations conducted in the Auckland region, and in the last 12 months the Board has prosecuted 20 operators for working unlawfully.

The consequences for having this type of restricted work undertaken by people that are not competent, are serious. Defective plumbing and drainlaying has the potential to cause disease and serious damage to the home. Defective gasfitting can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning and explosions.

The Board advises Councils when conducting licence checks on-site, to know supervision requirements of tradespeople at the first inspection. This gives assurance that when issuing the code of compliance the work is being legally carried out.

A new consumer guide has been published by the Board that provides clarity and guidance around supervision requirements and the individual licence types. Copies of the guide for taking the right steps when building and renovating can be uplifted from the Board free of charge by calling 0800 743 262 or by visiting www.pgdb.co.nz/consumer.

Peter Jackson - Board Chair

Chief Executive appointment

The Board appointed Martin Sawyers as its new Chief Executive and Registrar in June 2015. Martin is a lawyer who has considerable experience in both the private and public sector. Previously the Manager of Corporate Services for the Real Estate Agents Authority, Martin's governance experience includes Deputy Chairman of a state owned enterprise, Chairman of an electricity lines company and a term as Mayor for the Buller District Council.



Cost reduction

Positive change to complaints resolution

The Board has approved a significant change to its complaints process with the introduction of compliance advice and dispute resolution as a way of resolving many lower level complaints.

Previously, all complaints were investigated and in most instances proceeded to disciplinary or District Court proceedings.

Under the new approach, complaints that do not give rise to significant health and safety issues; have no significant history of non-compliance by the practitioner; the behaviour isn't of a type identified by the Board as a priority; and no wider public interest issues arise, the Board will work with both the complainant and the practitioner for resolution by way of a compliance advice letter or by way of agreement.

The new initiative will reduce both the cost to the industry, and stress to those associated with lower level complaints.

8%

Increase in
authorisations

The amount of authorisations issued during the 2014/15 licensing year was 8% higher than the year prior.

The annual number of authorisations issued has returned to the levels existing pre-introduction of CPD for plumbers and drainlayers.

From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, the Board received applications for, and granted, 15,448 authorisations to 945 people and one company.



Competence

72%

Board examinations are held in June and November each year. The overall average pass rate for examinations during the 2014/15 financial year was 72%; meaning 72% of all exams sat were passed.

The highest pass mark recorded across all examinations was 98.5% – the highest score ever achieved in the last 10 years.

Complaints

63

In the 2014/05 financial year 63 complaints were received, some of which were about more than one trade.

17 were for gasfitting, 31 for sanitary plumbing and 23 for drainlaying.

Prosecution action in respect of 34 defendants for 45 offences was completed during the financial year.