

E-INSTITUTE is an initiative of the Institute of Plumbing Australia with the aim to provide a vehicle for all members to participate in the workings of the Institute from the comfort of their desk.

E-INSTITUTE is written in Plain Text so as not to clutter your mailbox with large files written in fancy formats. We will keep each issue reasonably short and restrict it to only one or perhaps two matters requiring input by members. We hope that you will reciprocate by considering the issues raised and providing your comments and/or suggestions so as to allow your Institute to publish a consensus view.

LOST SUBSCRIPTION: >>>LAST CHANCE BEFORE I SPEND YOUR \$35<<<

Who are you? On 14 December 2005 You transferred \$110.00 for your annual subscriptions by Netbank but did not give a name or invoice number? Your Bank is Commonwealth with a BSB 062197 believed to be in Sydney. A trace through the bank system will cost \$35.00 (billed to you) so please check your records and notify the Secretary if it is yours.

BOUQUETS AND BRICKBATS:

I have been asked to include some of the comments received from previous issues, so here are a few (I have deleted names and direct references). In the past I have said that I will take constructive criticism on the chin but up to now all responses have been positive such as:

It was great to receive the first copy of the e-institute and look at the format that is used and I thought it was great I would like to give an opinion on the state of training as I currently see it

1 The training providers are having the same problems as the total plumbing & construction industry which is a big shortage of skilled people

2 That is evident by the results of candidates sitting exams for contractors licenses as pass numbers are at an all time low % of passing and after a lot of discussion from the exam panel we feel that the candidates are not doing what is required to study and do follow up work after attending classes

3 The average result that is obtained makes it clear that it is not only the private providers or tafe colleges that are having these problems as I believe it is a situation Australia wide

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I agree with all you've written about.

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I as do most of the other industry operatives I speak with are 100% supportive of the education issues and in particular the need to drive the plumbing industry down the life long career path with very clear steps that need to be identified and followed by all of industry in all of Australia. Apprenticeship, tradesman, licensed plumber, consultant, trainer.

Plumbing Licence Examiners see very clearly from the results of the exams we set and mark that training and experience both on and off site seems to be reducing on an almost yearly basis.

As a Panel of Examiners we are charged with identifying those applicants that are truly able and ready to become licensed plumbers capable of providing a safe reliable water supply and sanitary drainage system to the community.

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The basis of it all comes down to making the courses more attractive. Whether this is purely price driven or course content, I'm unable to say. But it is worth some consideration. It may also be the outlook of Apprentice Plumbers that this is a JOB with no career prospects. We need to change this mind set. But I guess this comes down from the general public's perception that we do not have a huge impact on the community. Well at least not as much as say Doctors etc...

Steve, I would also like to say that the concept of the E-Institute appears that it will work. Keep up the good work.

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Congratulations on the E institute Steve.

*** has made some good points but from a Victorian perspective in 2005 our 14 plumbing Colleges were FULL to overflowing with plumbing apprentices in training.

The skill shortage seems to be evening out with several projects that were Games related winding up and plumbers being stood down (some may be headed to WA).

This down turn may bring more experienced people into teaching but the main issue as I see it is that we must pay highly skilled Plumbers more money than they can get in Industry to attract them to Teaching also teaching is an end of the line job without advancement to a higher level. No career path.

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I strongly agree with all the points you have noted. ***** Plumbing has 30 Industrial Plumbers and the best all rounders we employ are the ones with years of previous housing experience, for all the reasons you have noted. We must maintain our level of education and time served for our plumbing apprentices, to preserve our trade.

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During this last month I received the first critical comment and it may have had more impact if it had come from a participating and financial member but maybe that is unfair. (I remind all members that your membership, other than Industrial Associates, is a personal membership and you and you alone are responsible for your financial status.)

My first brickbat, albeit constructive, came as a reply to a Chapter regarding the Institute AGM:

I received your flyer for an invitation to the special meeting of the institute. I fly out to *** on the 12th so hopefully I am free to attend. Over the past years I have been getting used to the correspondence from IOP coming in that has always meant gloomy predictions and nothing to excite membership. Even from Secretary Movley and his reporting. One must ask when is there going to be a positive thought let alone deed from the institute even though things are tough, negativity breeds failure and hastens collapse. Negative public statements will not lead to success nor an honourable recess within the industry. This has also been noticed by others around me in the industry. I would have thought even when the organisation has its back to the wall with no direction, that it would be nice to talk up to success than talk down to failure. Anyway take it as a constructive comment, and not criticism. Unfortunately, I have been too involved in ***** (edited) I will attempt to get along if it is at all possible.

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Well it made me stop and think and hold what I was saying at arms length for another view. Yes there has been a negative undertone to what has been said but what we must recognise is that plumbing is a profession under siege. There are those with vested interest that would relegate plumbing

to just another construction trade, an installer of pipes, and seek to reduce training and apprenticeships for short term gain. You may have gained the impression that I am a little bit passionate about plumbing and how important plumbing and plumbers are to the wellbeing of the community and the environment. My view is that plumbers are Health Professionals, sure they service the construction industry but just as many of them work in sectors of plumbing with little or no connection to construction, work ranging from maintaining or replacing household appliances to installing, maintaining or replacing complex equipment in hospitals or industrial premises without a builder in sight. Because plumbing installed in a residence is just as important to public health as similar plumbing installed anywhere else we cannot allow this insidious move to dumb down the craft with the introduction of residential installers of pipes and then call them plumbers.

But we need some positive input as my friend above has said:

For a starter your Institute has taken a positive approach to the future and decided that it is time to stand up and be counted, we have started to make a noise hence this publication.

Your Institute has gained places on various Committees and Advisory groups such as:

A member of the Steering Committee for a DEST funded initiative to look at the barriers, if any, to the Implementation of Plumbing and Services Training Package across Australia. This directly relates to the COAG Action Plan for Mutual Recognition of skills qualifications across Australia.

Prior to the COAG meeting in February this year your Institute had put in motion initiatives towards forming the Plumbing Coalition Australia a plumbing industry wide thinktank with aims of reducing inconsistencies in training and regulation of Plumbing across Australia.

As your Secretary I was recently invited to attend and take part in an information gathering session for the Plumbing Occupations Action Group (POAG)

I quote from the invite letter:

At its meeting in February 2006 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a number of reforms to help address skills shortages. A key initiative involves improving the mobility of skilled workers by providing for greater harmonisation of skill requirements between states and territories. As part of this agreement, COAG has provided for the establishment of occupation specific Action Groups to bring together regulators and industry stakeholders to undertake the necessary work. The Plumbing Occupations Action Group (POAG) is one of the first action groups to be established.

POAG is looking at national licensing but at the tradesperson level only, business licensing or licensed plumbing contractor level is a different issue. A national License at this level is already being discussed in various quarters. There are many issues to be addressed but COAG require it to be signed off by June 2007.

National Plumbing Forum 2006:

In conjunction with the Designbuild and National Plumbing Show being held in Melbourne 28 - 31 May 2006 your Institute will hold a series of Seminars and also an Institute Council / Information Meeting so pencil it in your

diaries as something not to miss. More information will go direct to members or information on Designbuild may be found at www.designbuildexpo.com.au I hope to see you there.

ELECTIONS:
Institute:-

Nominations - Institute President-elect:-
Nominations are called for Institute President-Elect 2006 (President 2007). Nominations close with the secretary at 12 Noon WST on 5 April 2006. Your Institute is on the move and now is an exciting time to be part of the team driving it, why not give it a go I am sure you will enjoy it.

HAVE YOUR SAY:

The Western Australian Government invites you to have your say about WA's apprenticeship and traineeship system. A Skills Formation Taskforce has been established as a committee of the State Training Board. The Taskforce is charged with providing advice to the Minister for Education and Training on the reforms required to the apprenticeship and traineeship system in WA to address skill shortages both in the short and longer term.

FOR REFORMS READ SHORTENED APPRENTICESHIPS AND FAST TRACK LIMITED TRAINING.

Have your say at public forums or in writing by 7 April 2006. See www.stb.wa.gov.au or telephone 08 9264 4225 for details.

WHAT'S ON?

The Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering in England is celebrating its Centenary with a Conference and Exhibition 1-4 June 2006 in Torquay, Devon, England. See <http://www.iphe.org.uk/conference/index.html>

1st National Hydropolis Conference to be run by the Stormwater Industry Association (WA) Inc in Perth Western Australia 8-11 October 2006. see www.promaco.com.au/conference/2006/sia

TECHNICAL BOOKS:

Did you know that the NSW Chapter of your institute runs a mail order bookshop supplying all manner of technical books and Australian Standards. Email Manager Ken Adams kadams@acenet.com.au for more information.

>>>> Comments on matters raised in E-INSTITUTE or suggestions for future issues may be sent to the Editor at:

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