

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.

Later in this issue, I am going to explore the strange world of coincidence:

WORLDSKILLS AUSTRALIA:

I have recently returned from representing the World Plumbing Council at the WorldSkills Australia National Competition and the Worldskills International General Assembly held conjointly in Melbourne. One of my roles at the Australian National Competition was to join the judging panel for a new skill category demonstrated for the first time, "The Design Team Challenge: Water - The New Gold". The name of the Skill is "Design" and the challenge is "Water is our most precious resource and we need to innovatively consider how we can better manage its efficient use". There were three teams each consisting of three members under the age of 25, one a university student studying design or engineering, one an apprentice plumber and one a secondary school student studying design fundamentals, technics or related subjects. The three teams competing came from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland respectively and designs ranged from a whole host of water saving devices packaged with grey water reuse and a innovative valve called a dead water valve that drained cold water from hot water dead legs into the grey water system for use in a sub-surface irrigation system; a solenoid operated valve with automatic controls used to shut off water supply to a property when not occupied so as to prevent leakage through taps and fixtures or bursts and the winning design from the Victorian Team utilising rainwater harvesting to provide make-up water to cooling towers on commercial buildings.

This new skill category is the brainchild of Mr Bob Puffett AM, Bob is the Chairman of Worldskills Australia and is passionate about all skills but his plumbing background still wins through. Bob Puffett is a prime example of the limitless opportunities for plumbers once they have graduated from a solid (not the scaled down versions being pushed at us today) apprenticeship. From apprentice to plumber to TAFE teacher to active Institute of Plumbing Member to author/co-author of plumbing and gas text books to life long learning and many academic achievements to director of the Sydney Institute of Technology to Chair of Worldskills Australia and not looking like slowing down yet.

WORLD PLUMBING COUNCIL TRAINERS SCHOLARSHIP:

To all trainers and those that know a trainer.

All those involved in plumbing industry training are reminded that the deadline for applications for the World Plumbing Council 2006 Trainers' Scholarship is 30 June 2006.

The Scholarship, which is worth US\$7,500 to the successful applicant, enables a plumbing trainer to travel outside their own country to learn about training practices in use in another country.

Previous recipients have come from Ireland 2003, Solomon Islands 2004 and USA 2005.

Applicants, who must be employed full or part time as plumbing lecturers/trainers with an appropriately accredited vocational training organisation should visit www.worldplumbing.org/trainers.html for further information and an application form.

WPR - WORLD PLUMBING REVIEW:

Something else that you may be interested in is the publication of a new Global Plumbing Magazine "World Plumbing Review" published by Connection Magazines Jeff Patchell and full of global plumbing engineering excellence and research, try a free pdf at www.wpr.com.au the WPR also includes some information about the trainers' scholarship and other World Plumbing Council News.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF PLUMBING AND SERVICES TRAINING PACKAGE:

In the last issue of E-Institute, I outlined the work of a Plumbing Occupations Action Group charged with harmonising the licensing of tradespersons in the plumbing vocation across Australia.

Your Institute, as I have reported previously, is also a member of the Steering Committee for the consultant review of National Implementation of Plumbing and Services Training Package a project, funded out of Canberra and looking at the barriers, if any, to the implementation of the new plumbing and services training package BCP03.

The consultants employed on this project have now conducted three forums as round table discussions with employers, teachers, apprentices and other interested parties. The forums held in Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney provided a wealth of information and included visits to TAFE Colleges. In Perth, the consultants met with Private Training Provider MPA Skills and also visited local TAFE Teachers.

The next milestone for the project is the report dealing with implementation barriers and possible solutions a draft of which is due for review by the Steering Committee in June with the final version of the report due on 30 June 2006.

Of course, to have fully harmonised and transparent licensing and training regimes across Australia you also need Nationally Consistent Regulations and Standards. On the one hand, we are told that all states and territories have agreed to adopt the Plumbing Code of Australia, which in turn calls up the National Plumbing Code AS3500 in its latest version as deemed to satisfy. However, when you talk to individuals from various states the waters quickly muddy with talk of reviews taking to, in some cases 2009! The need for state specific addenda also raises its head! Are we going forward or backward?

TIME SERVED APPRENTICESHIP:

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Action Plan to solve the skills shortage by shortening the duration of apprenticeships may work in occupations where skills above the basic are seldom used although even there they will eventually become unstuck as the fully trained skills base retires. In Plumbing the opposite is required as further training in an increasingly more technical occupation requires even more time to deliver. If as it seems we are to have a competency based progression through the new training package maybe the apprentice that is prepared to work at it and complete the basic competencies in shorter time could continue with additional training so as to finish their apprenticeship with additional accreditation in say Backflow Device Testing, Advanced Backflow Installation, TMV Maintenance and Testing, CAD Drafting. This would set the more dedicated into a stream of lifelong learning and easy progression in a career with no end. WHAT DO YOU THINK!

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.

The Seminars will be on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 May 2006 and include Backflow Prevention presented by the Backflow Association and talks on the new water Efficiency Labelling Scheme (WELS), Training and Apprenticeships, The National Plumbing Industry and more.

More information on Designbuild may be found at www.designbuildexpo.com.au
I hope to see you there.

COINCIDENCES:

At the start of this issue, I said that I would explore the world of coincidence. On my return home from the Worldskills events in Melbourne I found that my Wife had been doing some tidying up and found an old copy of Plumbing and Mechanical Connection from December 1995. On leafing through the pages and articles I was struck with a number of coincidences such as:
>> The Inside front cover had an advert for the World Plumbing Conference IV to be held in Chicago Illinois USA 3-6 October 1996, this year 2006 the World Plumbing Council will hold its Annual Meeting in that same city at end of September 2006.

>> A couple of pages over was a group of Institute members in a page written by Cliff Hensby (retired) with photo showing Bob Puffett (see lead article) receiving an award from then NSW Chapter President Don Ledingham.
>> After many pages of interesting articles still topical today was an advert showing the Master Plumbers Assoc in Perth hosting a meeting of the World Plumbing Council as part of a conference something this Institute replicated again in 2004.

>> A report on page 84 showed attendees at seminars at the Plumbing and Electrical Exhibition, a forerunner to the Plumbing Show at Designbuild at which this Institute is involved in presenting seminars. (see above)

>> On the next page was an article about the then newly formed Master Plumbers Australia an organisation set up to look after the National Industrial affairs of Australian Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors, unfortunately that organisation has ceased to operate but the leading Master Plumber Associations are once again rallying together in an alliance designed to spread their expertise, at the same time the Plumbing Coalition Australia of which this Institute acts as secretary is fully supported by that same alliance of Master Plumbers amongst the many other organisations that take part in Coalition activities.

>> A bit further and we see Bob Puffett again together with Honorary Fellows Alan Grasset and Len Hossack congratulating a Skills Olympics (now Worldskills) winner. The article also mentions Sean Andreas a former winner and then Skills Olympics Judge, I had the pleasure of meeting Sean in Melbourne at the current Worldskills and he is still volunteering as a Judge, another committed plumber!

>> The last coincidence was an article on Regulatory Reform. I quote the opening paragraphs: "This year has seen some fundamental changes in Australian plumbing regulation. In April, the Australian federal, state and territory governments signed the Competition principles Agreement, and issued a document setting out principles and guidelines for national standard setting and regulatory action by ministerial councils and standards setting bodies" SOUND FAMILIAR!

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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