
THE INSTITUTE OF PLUMBING AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

THE NATIONAL BODY FOR PLUMBERS AND PLUMBING

E-INSTITUTE

ISSUE 6

June / July 2006

PLUMBING COALITION AUSTRALIA:

The Plumbing Industry Discussion Group, Plumbing Coalition Australia (PCA), gathered in Melbourne 29 June 2006 for their third successful meeting. As always, the meeting was very interesting with a few new faces joining the stalwarts of the group. The COAG Action Plan on training and its offshoot POAG were both discussed and Mr Michael Kefford, representing NPRF was a welcome addition to the meeting table as he was able to enlighten the meeting on where government was coming from.

It was brought to the meetings attention that one Master Plumber organisation, unfortunately not yet represented at PCA, is advocating on-site theoretical and practical training by industry assessors apparently in place of off-site training at a College. The premise for this is a belief that much of what is taught in College should be taught on the site.

>>>>Editors Note>> I have often used the quote "what is being taught off-site should be taught on-site and no one is teaching what should be taught off-site (such as underpinning knowledge)". In recent times, with exposure to groups such as NPSTAG and Skills Councils, I have come to realise that the emphasis on teaching installation techniques as against underpinning knowledge in off-site training is brought about by the narrow band of on-site experience some apprentices are exposed to. Plumbing Teachers tell me of Apprentices showing up at College having had no exposure on site to some sections of the trade having spent years working with specialist tradespersons. TAFE in Western Australia tried on-site final year assessments some 15 or so years ago and found the same problem.

Training continues to dominate the national scene with a large portion of the PCA meeting dedicated to this discussion. The introduction of Certificates IV to VI in plumbing is causing some angst in some sectors due to the prerequisite of a Certificate III in plumbing prior to entry into certificate IV courses allowing progression to certificate V and VI and the Diploma of Plumbing and Services. Removal of this prerequisite may damage the overall career path that many in the Industry are trying to achieve, there is also the premise by many within the Industry that the better plumbing designers come from a trade background.

>>>>Editors Note>> This premise may have been true in the past where plumbers progressing their career into design had been exposed in their apprenticeship to the full gambit of plumbing work and taught the underlying principals of the craft at college. With the current emphasis of training apprentices as installers of plumbing parts, maybe there is room for a Traineeship in Plumbing Design with a suitably modified Certificate III to allow career choices to start at an earlier time?

The PCA at its meeting decided on a project to gather data on the plumbing industry into a single database to better identify the demographics, successes and failures within the wider plumbing industry.

The project will largely relate to the demographics of the current and projected workforce including apprentices and areas relating to training and trainers. A couple of areas that the Institute Members may show expertise is the problems of overlapping regulations by different

authorities and also any trends in installation failures/defects that may point to a requirement for changes in training requirements.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF PLUMBING AND SERVICES TRAINING PACKAGE:

As reported previously the Institute of Plumbing Australia is an active member of the steering committee for this Construction and Properties Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) project. The National Plumbing Services Training Advisory Group (NPSTAG) managed the project and external consultants conducted the process with input by the steering committee. The consultants issued a final report "Barriers to National Implementation of BCP03" to CPSISC on 28 June 2006. Once the report is made public it should be posted on the CPSISC website shown below but E-Institute will keep you informed.

One of the outcomes from this project is a Web Portal for information on Plumbing Apprenticeships and Training.

For further information go to www.cpsisc.com.au

To go to the Web Portal for training click on Industry Training / Plumbing & Other Services Training.

For information on the new Training Package for Plumbers, click on Training Packages / Plumbing & Services.

For information on the barriers project click on Projects / National Plumbing & Services TP Implementation.

Apart from the specific areas noted above the CPSISC website contains a wealth of information and is well worth a look.

PLUMBING OCCUPATIONS ACTION GROUP (POAG)

E-Institute has previously outlined the work of the Plumbing Occupations Action Group; this group is charged by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) with investigating and recommending on the harmonisation of the licensing of tradespersons in the plumbing vocation across Australia.

The Institute attended an information meeting earlier in the year and at that meeting, the attendees were promised a flow of information as the group progressed its investigation. To date no information has been forthcoming but at the recent meeting of the Plumbing Coalition a member of POAG undertook to see if that situation could be changed. The next meeting of POAG is to take place mid July 2006.

NATIONAL PLUMBING FORUM 2006:

In conjunction with the Designbuild and National Plumbing Show held in Melbourne 28 - 31 May 2006 your Institute held a series of Seminars and an Institute Council Meeting.

The Seminars held on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 May 2006 included presentations by the Backflow Association and talks on the new Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme (WELS), Innovations in Domestic Hot Water, Training and Apprenticeships, The National Plumbing Industry and more. Unfortunately, there was a very poor audience turn out brought about by circumstances outside our control. What are we doing about that?

Well firstly, we have thanked our speakers such as Tim Fisher AUSTAP, Rob O'Brien RHEEM, Mike Quade CPSISC, Fred Baltetsch NPSTAG, John Hopkins MEGT for their excellent presentations in difficult circumstances with the hope of maybe attracted them back as they all have very interesting information to impart. We are already planning the 2007 Australian National Plumbing Forum to be held mid 2007 in Sydney. Later this year we will through this newsletter start to tell you about it so as you the members can be our promotion team.

