

PIPELINE



PLUMBING



DRAINAGE



FIRE PROTECTION



AIR-CONDITIONING



MECHANICAL

WELCOME BY STC CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to a new year and the first edition of the Pipeline—your regular newsletter from the Service Trades Council (STC).

The STC is established under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* (PDA), and acts as an independent statutory body for the service trades of plumbing, drainage, fire protection and mechanical services. The STC is made up of members from service trades industry organisations, including the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland, Plumbers Union Queensland, National Fire Industry Association, Air Conditioning and Mechanical Services Contractors Association, Institute of Plumbing Inspectors Queensland, Local Government Association of Queensland and relevant government departments. The main purpose of the STC is to act as a voice for the service trades industry, and also to provide advice about the industry to the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister for Sport, the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP and the Commissioner for the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC), Brett Bassett.

We want to keep you up-to-date on what the STC is working on and what is happening in the industry. Last year, we started off by holding our Council meeting in a different region each time, and we intend to continue

doing this in 2017. Holding forums in regional locations gives STC members the opportunity to keep you informed face-to-face and hear from you directly about issues impacting on you and your local industry. It also gives us all the chance to network with other key members of the local industry and community. Networking is especially important in times of serious health issues, such as an outbreak of Legionnaire's disease. We look forward to meeting you at your local [STC event](#).

There are a number of key issues the STC is giving priority to this coming year. We will update you more on these in future editions.

Enjoy the first edition of our newsletter and please do not hesitate to contact the STC should you have suggestions.



Penny Cornah
Chairperson
Service Trades Council

SERVICE
TRADES
COUNCIL

PIPELINE

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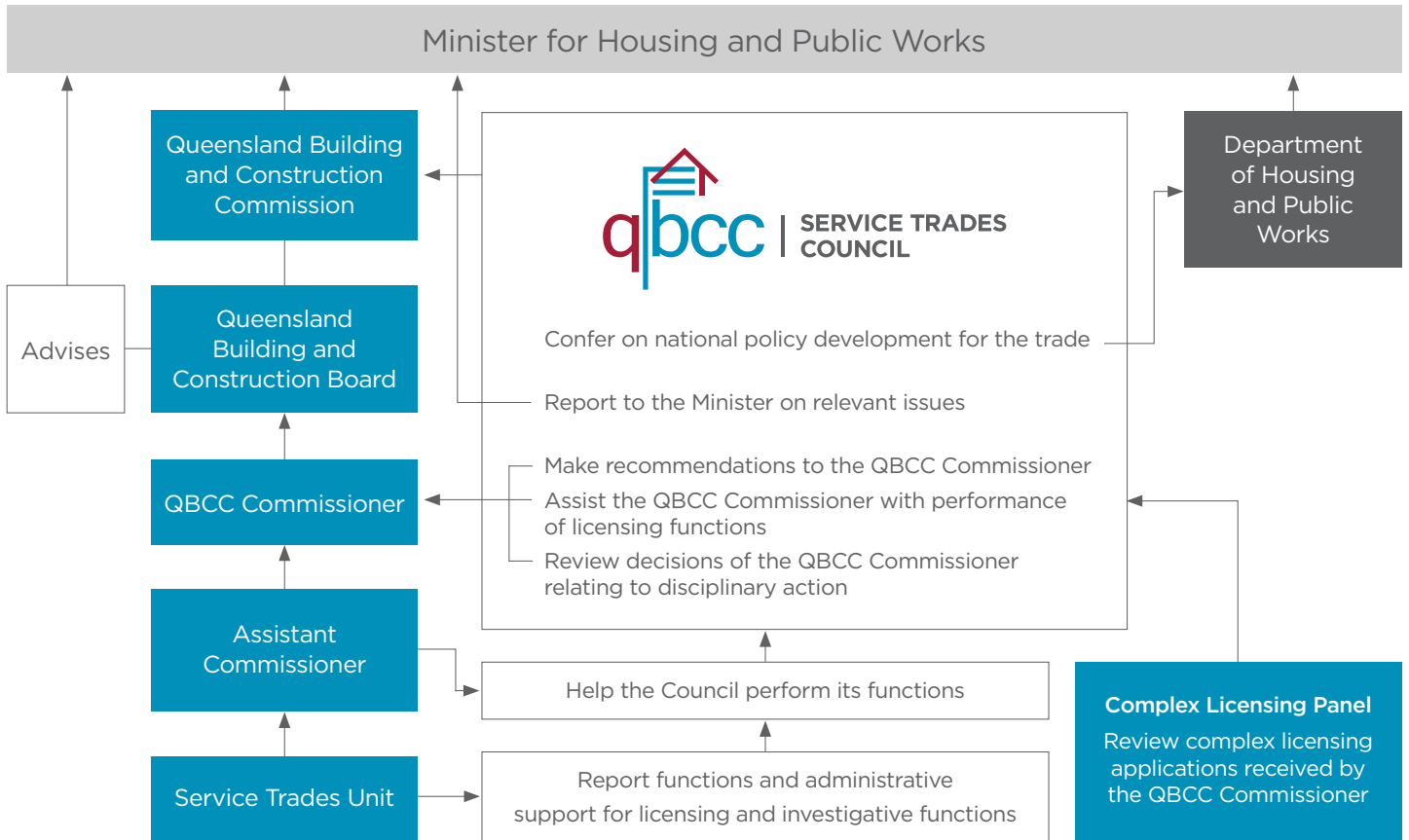
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NEW STC, NEW QBC BOARD AND NEW DIRECTION

Established through the PDA, STC kicked off with the Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Minister of Sport, the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP, in attendance at our first meeting on 4 August, 2016. The STC is an independent body providing a voice for the plumbing, drainage, fire protection, air-conditioning and mechanical services trades in the building and construction industry.

It replaces the Plumbing Industry Council, which was disbanded in 2014.

A new QBC Board was appointed in December, 2016, and, in the coming months, the STC will meet with the QBC Board to discuss how we can work together to offer direction and support to the QBCC.



The STC and where it fits into the organisational structure.

BUILDING PLAN – HAVE YOUR SAY

The Queensland Government has developed a Building Plan that outlines key reforms for our industry. Feedback on the discussion paper is due in March, 2017.

Proposed changes include improving plumbing installations, allowing the use of innovative products, restricting the sale of non-Watermarked products, reforming the requirements around temperature-control devices, and the orientation of solar panels for hot water systems.

New mandatory inspections for fire separation in duplexes and townhouse are being proposed as part of changes to the building certification scheme. Other initiatives being

considered include a licence class review for the service trades and an expansion of the STC’s functions to include allied trades, such as fire protection and mechanical services.

Find out how to have your say at the Department of Housing and Public Works’ [website](#).



INCREASING AWARENESS OF LEGIONELLA

In June 2013, an outbreak of legionella at the Wesley Hospital raised awareness about the dangers associated with this disease. While legionella is just one of many water-borne diseases, its high mortality rate means that it continues to get media attention.

QBCC Assistant Commissioner, Esther Blest, said that while many safeguards have been introduced to prevent infections since then, due to the high risks associated with legionella it remains an important topic for the plumbing industry.

“Legionellosis is a collection of infections that emerged in the second half of the 20th century.

“The severity of legionellosis varies from mild febrile illness (Pontiac fever) to a potentially fatal form of pneumonia (Legionnaires’ disease) that can affect anyone, but primarily affects those who are susceptible, due to age, illness, immunosuppression or other risk factors.”

Ms Blest said that legionella was a well-recognised problem in developed nations, although data was scarce.

“We know that water is the major natural reservoir for legionella, and the bacteria are found worldwide in different natural and artificial aquatic environments with a range of environmental conditions. For example, it may occur in water systems in hotels and ships, or even respiratory therapy equipment.

“The fact that legionella are found in hot-water tanks or thermally polluted rivers emphasises that water temperature is a crucial factor in the colonisation of water distribution systems.

“Legionella has been shown to be able to withstand temperatures of 50 °C for several hours, but does not multiply below 20 °C,” she said.

Ms Blest said that it is for this reason that the recommended temperature for storage and distribution of cold water is below 25 °C and ideally below 20 °C.

“It is important to be aware that mains water temperature in Queensland may be well above these recommendations during the warmer months, and the presence of legionella in an aquatic environment and warm temperatures are factors that can increase the risk of Legionnaires’ disease.”

She said that the presence of biofilms is also a factor in legionella survival and growth in water systems.

“Legionella are found in sources such as distributed drinking-water supplies, which then feed into water systems within buildings and cooling towers, accounting for the bacteria’s presence and subsequent growth in these artificial environments.

“The high risk of legionella has been recognised with hospital and residential aged care facilities now required to have a new Water Risk Management Plan (WRMP).”

Ms Blest said that the WRMP requirement was introduced as part of an amendment made to the *Public Health Act 2005* last year, and plans needed to be in place by 1 February, 2017.

“The purpose of the WRMP is to improve the management and control of health risks associated with the supply and use of water in these facilities, in particular, the health risks associated with legionella bacteria.

“The WRMP must include testing for legionella bacteria, and it is a requirement for reports on the testing to be provided to Queensland Health.”

She said that it was recommended that the team responsible for developing the WRMP included a person from building maintenance, who could provide expert advice on the water distribution system and water quality. This person may be a plumber.

If a plumber is approached by a hospital or residential aged care facility to assist with developing a WRMP and/or to undertake work associated with such a plan, there is useful information about WRMPs, including a template, on the Queensland Health [website](#).

Anyone with questions about legionella or seeking help to minimise the risk of legionella can visit the Queensland Health [website](#) or contact the QBCC Service Trades Unit at qbcc.qld.gov.au



PLUMBERS TO COMMISSION AND TEST PLUMBING WORK

AS/NZS 3500.1: Plumbing and drainage Part 1: Water services is a “deemed to satisfy” document listed in Part B1 of the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) that contains sections on “Sizing of water services” and “Testing and Commissioning”.

It is important for all plumbers to be aware that it is essential for each length of pipe within the system to be flushed to remove any debris, including excess flux that may have collected in the pipework during installation.

TO FLUSH OUT ALL PIPES:

- open all terminal fittings to produce as high a flow of water as possible
- allow water to run until visually clear
- continue to allow water to run for a further two minutes
- confirm that the water is visually clear by filling an appropriate clean container, such as a clear plastic bottle or washbasin, with at least one litre of water
- repeat the flushing process (if the water appears cloudy, discoloured or contains any debris).

STAGNATION OF WATER IN PIPEWORK CAN OCCUR IN:

- newly constructed properties, which are awaiting occupancy
- show homes on new developments, where not all parts of the system are in normal use
- ensuite bathrooms that are not regularly used
- infrequently used taps, for example, in cloak rooms
- redundant pipework, following modification to the plumbing installation.

It is not normally required to disinfect newly installed internal plumbing systems for private dwellings occupied by a single family. It is usually sufficient for the system only to be pressure tested and flushed out. However, disinfecting the internal plumbing systems is required before use for other types of new installations, and for major extensions or alterations to existing systems in properties of multiple occupation (for example, hospitals, offices, and hotels).

Details on methods for disinfecting plumbing systems are given in **AS/NZS 3500.1: Plumbing and drainage Part 1: Water services**.

CRACKING DOWN ON UNLICENSED WORK

The QBCC regulates the building and plumbing industry in Queensland, and, as such, is responsible for ensuring that plumbing, drainage and sprinkler fitting work is compliant and performed by appropriately licensed persons.

Unlicensed work is a major concern for the QBCC, and investigators appointed under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* (PDA) regularly visit domestic and commercial construction sites to make sure that everyone performing plumbing work holds the appropriate licence.

The investigation team has been very active of late, and have issued many penalty infringement notices (PINs). Since 1 July, 2016, the following fines have been issued in relation to unlicensed work:

- 68 PINs have been issued to people performing work without a licence
- 27 PINs have been issued to licensees supervising unlicensed people
- 2 PINs have been issued to persons advertising for work they aren't licensed to perform.

This is a great result for the plumbing, drainage and sprinkler fitting industry, by helping protect jobs of people who are properly trained and licensed, and also protecting public health and safety.

If you have any questions about licensing, please contact the [QBCC on 139 333](tel:139333) or email plumbers@qbcc.qld.gov.au



WORLD PLUMBING DAY

World Plumbing Day is held on 11 March every year to recognise and celebrate the essential role that plumbers and drainers play in protecting public health and safety and the environment.

The introduction of safe plumbing and sanitation services has been widely acknowledged as one of the biggest contributors to human health, with the provision of clean drinking water and safe waste management systems eliminating horrific diseases like cholera in most parts of the world.

Queensland has some of the highest standards in the world for training and licensing plumbers, and ensuring products and work are compliant with relevant standards. The QBCC is dedicated to ensuring these high standards are maintained, and protecting the important work of plumbers now, and into the future.

To celebrate World Plumbing Day, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland (MPAQ) in conjunction with Plumbers Union Queensland are hosting a Breakfast and Golf Day on 10 March 2017 at Hillstone, St Lucia in Brisbane. For more information about this and other events in your local area, visit the MPAQ [website](#).

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about technical standards, policy changes or other aspects of service trades you would like to ask, please email plumbers@qbcc.qld.gov.au and the answer to your question may appear in the next edition of this newsletter.



Need more information?

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