

PUBLIC WARNING

Brett George Hogan

16 May, 2017

This is a warning by the Commissioner of the QBCC to the public under section 20J(1)(h) of the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) has issued a warning to home and property owners who have contracted with plumbing-electrical contractor Brett George Hogan or company, Hot Water One, about a potential public health issue related to his work with hot water systems.

Brett George Hogan (occupational plumbing licence – 24958) or Hot Water One should not be confused with any other licensees of the same or similar name. If you are unsure, please call the QBCC.

QBCC Commissioner, Brett Bassett, said a QBCC investigation had confirmed the use by Mr Hogan of a soft-lead solder product with a lead content above the amount allowed by Australian Standards.

The solder is frequently used in electrical work but is not appropriate for plumbing work due to the potential risk of contamination of the water supply.

A QBCC investigation of 28 Wide Bay and Sunshine Coast properties where Mr Hogan performed plumbing work has found eight properties where the non-compliant solder was used.

Mr Bassett said the QBCC was continuing to investigate jobs done by Mr Hogan, who has worked in Wide Bay, the Fraser and Sunshine coasts, Caboolture, Logan, Bundaberg, Gympie and the Moreton Bay region.

“The QBCC records show that Mr Hogan has undertaken 796 notifiable works for the replacement of hot water systems since 2012,” Mr Bassett said.

“Yesterday I instructed my officers to contact each of the residents or owners of the 796 properties involved.

“The 796 properties may include commercial and industrial premises and may not necessarily be limited to homes or units.

The QBCC has contacted all relevant Local Government Authorities regarding the issue.

Queensland’s Chief Health Officer, Dr Sonya Bennett, said that while the risk of exposure was low, people with hot water systems where lead solder has or might have been used, should not consume hot water from the system or use hot water for cooking, and minimise ingestion when showering or bathing.

Lead can leach into drinking water in small amounts over time.

Dr Bennett said given our current understanding of the nature of the work undertaken, the amount of lead leached into the pipes was likely to be low. However, as lead has no beneficial use in the body, and can be a risk to health, exposure should be minimised.

QBCC and Queensland Health representatives will attend four of the properties today to obtain water samples for testing. The QBCC is currently making testing arrangements with residents at the other four properties.

If lead is detected in water samples from the system, the affected household will be advised on health risks, including any need for blood lead testing.

“It’s not possible to know the full risk until we understand the amount of lead solder used, where in the hot water system it was used, the likelihood of the lead being in contact with water in the system and the typical pattern of household hot water use,” Dr Bennett said.

People requiring health information on lead should contact their GP or call 13HEALTH.

If a home or property owner believes there could be an issue with work done by Mr Hogan, they can phone the QBCC on 139 333 to arrange for a free inspection by the QBCC or a Local Government Authority.

INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION TIMELINE:

Mr Hogan has been licensed in Queensland as a Restricted Water Plumber - Electrical licensee since December 2007 but had his licence suspended in February 2017.

He has lodged a review of the suspension with the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

The QBCC received a complaint in September 2016 about the competency of Mr Hogan’s work. The QBCC subsequently investigated 28 properties between September and December 2016 and confirmed the complaint, in relation to his use of a soft lead solder with a lead content above the amount allowed by Australian Standards.

On 9 February 2017, the QBCC took disciplinary action against Mr Hogan in accordance with section 64 (b) of the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* as a result of matters including defective work and the use of a non-compliant product. His licence was suspended for 12 months and he received a penalty of \$7,000.

On 17 February 2017 Mr Hogan reviewed the disciplinary action through the Service Trades Council (STC).

The STC upheld the original decision and notified Mr Hogan of this on 16 March 2017.

On 13 April, Mr Hogan sought an external review through QCAT. No review dates have yet been set by QCAT.

Mr Brett George Hogan’s notifiable hot water system work by LGA

Bundaberg - 137

Fraser Coast - 366

Gympie - 23

Logan - 1

Moreton Bay Regional Council - 8

Noosa - 60

Sunshine Coast - 201

ENDS

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