Service Trades Council
Strategic Plan 2016-17

Vision
As the independent regulatory body representing Queensland’s service trades, protect the public’s health and safety, as well as the environment.

Who we are
The Service Trades Council (Council) is established under section 5 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 and is part of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) pursuant to section 6(c) of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991. The Council provides an independent advisory function to both the Minister and the Commissioner in accordance with the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002.

The Council’s members and deputy members are appointed by the Governor in Council, who must decide the number of members. Pursuant to section 8 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, the Council’s membership includes:

- the Assistant Commissioner (as a representative of the QBCC); and
- at least 1 representative of each of the—
  1. Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors Association of Queensland Ltd;
  2. Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, Plumbing Division, Queensland Branch;
  3. Department in which the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 is administered;
  4. Department in which the Further Education and Training Act 2014 is administered;
  5. Department in which the Public Health Act 2005 is administered;
  6. Institute of Plumbing Inspectors Queensland Inc;
  7. Local Government Association of Queensland Ltd;
  8. Master Plumbers’ Association of Queensland;
  10. Department in which the Fair Trading Act 1989 is administered (an individual nominated as a representative of consumers).

Role
- To promote and enhance the licensing of plumbing and drainage, fire protection and air-conditioning and mechanical services tradespeople, which is administered by the QBCC
- To support the QBCC in investigating complaints relating to work performed by plumbing and drainage, fire protection and air-conditioning and mechanical services tradespeople and to take appropriate enforcement action where necessary
- To be a responsive regulator in addressing issues of concern raised by the Minister or industries represented on the Council
- To assist the QBCC in promoting acceptable standards of competence for the trades represented on the Council.
Functions
The Council has the following functions as provided for in section 6 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002:
(a) Conferring on national policy development and implementation for the trade
(b) Reporting to the Minister on—
   (i) Any issue relating to the trade the Minister refers to it; or
   (ii) Any issue relating to the trade the council considers the Minister should know about
(c) Making recommendations to the QBCC Commissioner about the performance of the Commissioner’s functions under the Act
(d) Establishing a panel of the Council to assist the QBCC Commissioner to effectively and efficiently perform the Commissioner’s functions under part 3, divisions 1 to 6
(e) Establishing other panels to assist the Council to effectively and efficiently perform its functions
(f) Reviewing decisions of the QBCC Commissioner made under section 68 of the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002.

Values
Council members, including deputy members, and QBCC staff including the Assistant Commissioner who support the Council, are committed to carrying out functions in a professional manner, with emphasis on:

- Treating clients and each other with respect
- Being transparent and accountable
- Observing the principles of natural justice in all actions, policies and procedures
- Striving towards best practise in everything the Council does.
Strategic Outcomes for 2016-17

1. A safe Queensland
   - Support the QBCC in ensuring trade services work is completed in accordance with relevant legislation and standards by promoting acceptable competence benchmarks for ongoing trade requirements
   - Protect consumers and businesses, including the vulnerable, against unsafe products, unlicensed labour and sub-standard work identified within the service trades industries.

2. Encouraging business growth
   - Ensure best practice regulation for service trades
   - Make it easier for service trades licensees to do business
   - Ensure the regulatory model encourages business growth while meeting community standards
   - Promote QBCC’s services and its rollout of additional online applications which go towards supporting licensees in the field
   - Confer on and report to the Minister about market reforms affecting the service trades industries.

3. Supports an effective proactive and reactive compliance program
   - Support QBCC staff undertaking compliance work within the service trades industries so that they continue to use best practice techniques to ensure the QBCC which comprises the Council remains a contemporary regulator
   - Providing recommendations to the QBCC Commissioner regarding compliance programs to effectively respond to consumer complaints
   - Ensuring the industries the Council represents achieve sustainable compliance through various compliance and education activities.

4. Collaboration
   - Partnership with industry stakeholders to ensure strategic alliances with industry
   - Foster valuable partnerships and agreed protocols with other regulatory bodies for effectively coordinated complaint handling and enforcement processes
   - Work with other relevant organisations to promote and encourage new projects or services which benefit service trades
   - Work with local, State and Federal government to achieve a consistent regulatory framework including:
     - Integrated approach to key areas of focus
     - Integrated and coordinated development of education materials
     - Consistent approach to enforcement and dispute resolution
     - Participation in policy reviews
     - Initiatives to respond to cross-jurisdictional issues affecting service trades
   - Ensure the Council provides a state-wide outreach to service trades across the State
   - Improve community engagement strategies to nurture networks among service trades

5. Supporting a best practice occupational licensing system which is rigorous, consistent, clearly communicated and administered efficiently.

Accountability
The legislative framework, licensing operations and service standards are regularly reviewed and Ministerial advice is provided to support best practice licensing.

Transparency
The pre-requisites, obligations, processes and pathways for service trades licensing in Queensland are effectively communicated and easily accessible.

Consistency
The pathway leading to, and decisions made about, licensing are consistent.
6. Fostering environmentally sensitive and consumer oriented plumbing outcomes
Practitioner skills and practices are developed and maintained to be sensitive to environmental needs and energy and water conservation. Sophisticated, cost-effective practices will be fostered that achieve a high level of consumer satisfaction.

7. Maintaining a consistent approach when undertaking internal and external reviews
- Processes are clearly documented and resources are put in place to effectively respond to reviews within the Council’s jurisdiction
- The Council maintains a consistent approach when assisting the QBCC in its enforcement of the legislation.

8. A focussed training program
- Competence-based service trades practices are supported by an accessible and clearly communicated continuing professional development program to maximise compliance
- Training issues are identified, prioritised, appropriately communicated and resolved to enable constant improvement of practitioner skills and protection of the health and safety of the community.

9. Raising the profile of the service trades to a level playing field within the construction industry
Awareness
The Council’s role, activities and achievements are effectively and continually promoted to industry and the community on a regular basis.

Delivering valuable services to our customers
The Council provides well defined and effective services that deliver tangible benefit to licensees and the community.

10. Responsive and high performing
The Council will:
- Regularly review QBCC’s effectiveness as a regulatory body to ensure the Council is structured to meet emerging challenges and issues
- Contribute to the development and implementation of new and review of existing policy about various issues affecting the marketplace.