

OUR COMMITMENT TO HIGH STANDARDS IN THE PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE INDUSTRY

In Queensland, we have some of the highest standards in the world for training and licensing plumbers, and ensuring products and work are compliant with relevant standards.

As the state's regulator of the plumbing and drainage industry, the QBCC is dedicated to ensuring these high standards are maintained, and protecting the important work of plumbers now, and into the future. It's not just about the 'easy wins' when it comes to our role as a regulator.

Our goal is to offer protection from harm, so we focus our efforts on the areas that present risk to our customers, as well as the broader industry and community.

1. Growth in focus and expertise

The QBCC now has a dedicated unit that deals specifically with plumbing and drainage complaints. The Plumbing function within the QBCC now comprises of dedicated technically qualified Plumbing Inspectors that sit within the newly formed Services Trade Unit (STU), to complement the existing Plumbing Investigations officers that sit within the Plumbing Investigations Unit (PIU).

The STU is headed up by a manager and has five Senior Plumbing Inspectors, one Mechanical Services Inspector and two Fire Service Inspectors. The PIU has two experienced investigators, managed by a qualified plumber.

The core function of the STU is to engage with industry, provide technical advice and assess the quality of plumbing work performed.

Specifically, the focus of this unit is to:

- provide education to those who undertake service trade building work including plumbing and drainage, fire systems and mechanical services
- engage with key parties ranging from sub-contractors and builders to local government
- perform licence audits/inspections on building sites
- attend industry trade forums and committees as subject matter experts
- provide early intervention when identifying non-compliant building practices during construction stages and curb industry behaviour through education
- provide continual regulatory presence throughout Queensland on live residential sites to ensure code compliance is achieved and that licensees are held accountable for staged building work, particularly as it relates to plumbing and drainage.

The QBCC is also committed to taking a statewide approach to recruitment of these key pivotal roles, aiming to have representation across both city and regional areas.



2. Compliance and enforcement

We are committed to improving the transparency of our compliance and enforcement activities, and take a statewide approach our compliance and enforcements efforts.

QBCC takes a firm approach to any finding of unlicensed contracting. Unlicensed contracting investigations currently make up 45% of all QBCC plumbing investigations.

Plumbing Investigation Unit

In the 2022/23 financial year, our Plumbing Investigation Unit (PIU) investigated over 100 matters relating to the Plumbing and Drainage industry. Of these investigations, 73 Penalty Infringement Notices were issued with almost one third (23) involving unlicensed activities, and over half (44) relating to notifiable works non-compliance.

The PIU have also undertaken a number of engagement activities focusing on Notifiable Works this financial year across Hervey Bay, the Gold Coast and SEQ.

The QBCC also developed a Notifiable Work Tool on the website in 2023 to support the plumbing and drainage industry's awareness of notifiable work.

Services Trade Unit

From August 2023 until the end of February 2024, the Services Trade Unit (STU) Senior Plumbing Inspectors audited 894 building sites. During these inspections:

- 76% of the plumbing work conducted on these sites was deemed compliant at the time of inspection.

Out of the audited sites:

- 16% exhibited non-compliant issues
- with 6% of these sites receiving Action Notices for defective plumbing work.

In addition, from December 2023 until the end of February 2024, the Senior Plumbing Inspectors conducted 78 educational site visits. Unlicensed contracting will be a primary focus area in the coming financial year and will prominently feature in our Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.

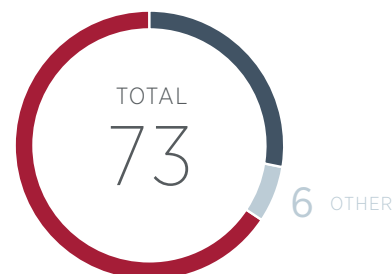
Do you have evidence of someone doing unlicensed work? Visit the QBCC's website to find out what to include when you make a complaint about unlicensed building or trade work.

45%

OF QBCC PLUMBING INVESTIGATIONS
FOCUS ON UNLICENSED CONTRACTING

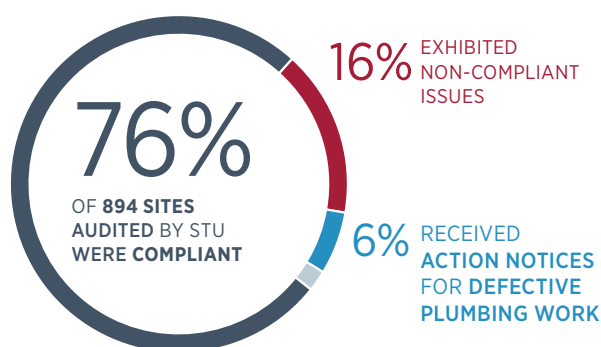
PENALTY INFRINGEMENT NOTICES ISSUED

23 UNLICENSED
ACTIVITIES



NOTIFIABLE WORKS
NON-COMPLIANCE **44**

SERVICES TRADE UNIT AUDIT
(AUGUST 2023 - FEBRUARY 2024)



78

EDUCATIONAL
SITE VISITS

FROM DEC 23 - FEB 24

3. Collaboration and communication

As part of the launch of QBCC's Compliance and Enforcement Strategy, we will be intensifying our efforts to communicate our regulatory focus areas to the industry. This includes better communicating the rationale behind our compliance and enforcement targeting strategies and the outcomes of our actions, ensuring accountability and fostering trust in our regulatory processes.

The QBCC has also recently created channels to foster more collaborative industry relationships including the:

- **Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)**
- **CEO Roundtable which is held with CEOs in the industry**
- **Services Trade Council (STC).**

The IAC, established in 2022, serves as a pivotal platform for facilitating discussions between the QBCC Board and the building and construction industry on current and emerging activities.

QBCC has plans to develop public-facing dashboards and will be consulting with the MPAQ on types of data sets that would be most valuable to stakeholders

The QBCC is also currently engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to participate in customer research to further build the QBCC's understanding of the customer journey and experience.

We are also seeking feedback on past and future initiatives to help inform future operational planning.

4. Consistency and assurance

Regulatory Academy established in 2023

Last year the QBCC established a new Regulatory Academy, which includes two externally facing units—Industry Education, and Customer and Stakeholder Engagement—and two internally focused teams dedicated to Policies and Procedures, and Internal Education and Accreditation. The Academy will further bolster the expertise, consistency and quality of decision-making and advice of the QBCC.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the focus of QBCC's Regulatory Academy will be on advancing the training and accreditation of our regulatory officers. The Academy will also extend its benefits beyond our internal operations, providing industry education through initiatives such as the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs.

The QBCC is also currently developing and implementing a Regulatory Assurance Framework to help guide good decision-making and elevate the standard of our decisions and ensure accountability and transparency in our operations.

5. Digital capability

The QBCC is committed to innovation and service excellence and has taken significant strides towards modernising our licensing processes. We are currently exploring opportunities to replace current paper-based methods with a digital licensing approach.

Moving to digital licensing will:

- improve the overall customer experience
- reduce processing times
- improve consistency
- enhance accessibility

The QBCC launched an online licensing tool on the website in 2023, to provide clarity around the type of licence required for different works.

6. Non-conforming building products

The QBCC has a dedicated Non-Conforming Building Product (NCBP) team who audit and take action against those in the chain of responsibility. This action can range from providing education to entering into an enforceable undertaking and will depend on the risk profile of the product being investigated.

The NCBP team previously launched a suppliers educational campaign in 2023, visiting regional towns across Queensland including Mount Isa, Longreach, Barcaldine, Charters Towers, Emerald and Goondiwindi. Overall, 115 businesses were visited and provided education about NCBP laws and their obligations as persons in the chain of responsibility. This program has continued into the 2023-24 financial year, where a further 143 businesses have been visited.

7. Queensland Home Warranty Scheme (QHWS)

Principal contractors, including trade contractors such as plumbers and drainers, must collect the home warranty premium from the homeowner and pay it to the QBCC for any insurable residential construction work they perform.

Work you do directly for an owner is insurable if the value of work is more than \$3,300 (including cost of materials, even if you did not provide them, labour, and GST). Examples include replacing or refitting fixtures in a kitchen or bathroom, guttering, wastewater or sewerage systems, water tanks that are the primary water supply for a residence, or a project that requires a plumbing approval. However, individual work on hot water systems is excluded. Work you do as a subcontractor is also excluded, as only the principal contractor has the obligation to collect and pay premium.

For more information visit Home warranty insurance obligations on the QBCC website.

More information

The QBCC is focused on improving and implementing proactive initiatives such as educational resources, campaigns and monthly regulatory reporting published on our social media platforms.

For more information: qbcc.qld.gov.au