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Legal Affairs Safety Committee
QLD Parliament
Government Office - George st
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SUBMISSION: Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

The Australian Tattooists Guild welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the proposed amendments to the *Tattoo Parlours Bill 2013 QLD* as have been outlined through the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill (the Bill).

We have taken this opportunity to present the Parliamentary Committee with an overview of the ongoing issues being experienced by the professional tattooing community in relation to the *Tattoo Parlours Bill 2013*, as well as putting forward a number of recommendations, which are perceived to be both workable and achievable for Government and will offer value to all stakeholders into the future.

The ATG is Australia's recognised industry appropriate body. It is concerned with the protection and sustainability of the tattoo industry as well as the maintenance of the high standards of its professional participants throughout Australia.

It is through this submission that the ATG hopes to initiate a transparent and responsible dialogue that facilitates the necessary consultation by the QLD Government that is needed prior to any amendment or future regulation.

On behalf of Australian professional tattooists nationally we would like to thank the Chair Mr Mark Furner and the broader Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for affording us the opportunity to represent the concerns of our industry. It is hoped that through this dialogue positive outcomes may be achieved.



Josh Roelink
President

Further information on our activities may be found at: australianattooistsguild.com.au

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Introduction

It remains an incredibly important time for the Professional Tattooing community Nationally as we now see various State Governments moving to introduce legislation which look's to address the infiltration of organized crime groups into the tattoo industry.

Much of the discussion being had by Governments touches on the perceived existence of organised crime within the industry, or on the potential for organised crime groups to infiltrate this lawful occupation.

The data supporting the alleged infiltration is however minimal and largely anecdotal.

Due predominantly to a gross lack of consultation prior to the introduction of the *Tattoo Parlours Bill* 2013 the professional industry continues to experience negative impacts as a consequence of both the direction and the policy of this legislation, which fails to recognize or reflect the established culture and practice of the tattoo industry.

The ATG supports efforts that are being made to remove any potential criminal elements that may exist within the tattoo industry or the wider community but would ask both the Parliamentary Committee and the broader government to consider this submission when drafting legislation that may potentially be invasive and or intrusive to tattoo artists lives and working practices, and which may ultimately threaten the future of this unique industry.

The ATG wishes to concentrate on a number of central aspects of the amendments Bill;

- The ongoing damage being done to the industry due to a lack of appropriate barriers for entry
- The ongoing damage being done to the industry due to restrictions on other artists to travel to the state to participate in the industry
- The collection of individuals finger and palm prints upon application for entry to industry
- The ongoing burden of record keeping requirements

There is also a concern that a number of the policy's within the *Tattoo Parlours Bill* 2013, which have not been covered within the Amendment Bill place an unnecessary burden upon industry participants and are no longer required for the Legislation to meet its new policy objectives.

Existence and extent of infiltration within the Tattoo Industry

Organised crime groups are often described as flexible and adaptive and as such present an ever-evolving challenge for law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

Due to the tattoo industry having evolved in Australia predominantly through an interest from organised motorcycle clubs in the mid 1970's the art form has retained, to some degree, a reputation that is synonymous with criminality.

Traditionally within OMC member owned studios, tattooists were trained and employed with individual tattooists often having no affiliation with the club nor intentionally profiteering from any criminal conduct said clubs might have been involved in.

Interest from OMCs in the art form has now greatly diminished over the last decade as more individuals who display a genuine interest in tattooing as an art form have joined the industry.

New perceptions also continue to evolve as an increasing interest in tattooing from both the media and the general public grows.

The extent of infiltration within the tattoo industry remains unquantified, with access to police intelligence being limited.

Victoria Police has stated that OMCs are involved in the tattoo industry in order to distribute amphetamine-type substances to a wide market.

(Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, Parliament Vic, above n9 359).

In response to this the ATG would speculate that participation in the aforementioned activities are likely to be conducted by smaller groups of individuals with distribution occurring out of random individual premises. These operations are perceived as not necessarily being linked to OMCs alone, but rather opportunistic ventures on the part of a small group of non-genuine operators.

It is widely known within the professional industry today that the practice of OMCs extorting money from professional tattooists continues. The majority of these OMCs are not however involved within the industry itself, but merely exert pressure on and extort money from legitimate operators.

Due to this many professional tattooists have chosen to operate from private studios, using social media to attract clientele. This leads to a situation whereby the difference between a real professional tattooist and an amateur operating from a 'private studio' is difficult to discern for most of the general public.

This ongoing situation has left many professional tattooists disillusioned with the licensing regimes in use.

Many feel that the fees and lengthy application process, as well as new issues that have arisen since the implementation of the licensing regimes, are placing further and unnecessary burden on both themselves and the broader industry whilst not effectively dealing with the presence of OMCs or organised crime.

It is perceived that what infiltration does continue to exist nationally, does so for the purpose of the intermingling of legitimate and criminal enterprises to enable the commission of crime or

concealment of the proceeds of crime with random use of professional facilitators in order to conduct criminal activities.

Policy Objectives of the Bill

The principal objective of the *Tattoo Parlours Bill* 2013 was to introduce a new occupational licensing and regulatory framework which eliminated and prevented infiltration of the Queensland tattoo industry by criminal organisations, including criminal motorcycle gangs and their associates.

The main objective of the Amendment Bill is to implement a new Organised Crime Regime in Queensland to tackle serious and organized crime in all its forms.

A further objective being to improve the clarity, administration and operation of particular occupational and industry licensing Acts.

Whilst any improvement within the administration and operation of the Act is welcomed, it is the opinion of the ATG that the proposed amendment Bill does not reflect the current needs of the tattoo industry.

Localised data collection and long term research is needed to gather reliable evidence as to the actual level of risk posed by organized crime to the tattoo industry.

In light of these factors the ATG object to the continuance of the *Tattoo Parlours Act* 2013 with its current or amended policy objectives.

Impact of the *Tattoo Parlours Act* 2013

The Explanatory notes accompanying the *Tattoo Parlours Act* justified the lack of community consultation on the basis that the laws were introduced as:

'part of an urgent package of reforms developed to deal with recent, unacceptable incidents of violent, anti social and criminal behavior of members of motor cycle gangs'

The professional tattooing community perceived this as a reactive move on behalf of Government, one which has had far reaching and damaging impacts upon the industry itself.

In recent years a growing awareness of the high level of skill and practice involved in the art form has grown within the public realm.

a. Amateurs Gaining Licensure

The introduction of the *Tattoo Parlours Act* and the media attention around it created the impression upon many individuals, whom had no ties to the professional tattoo industry that a "green light" was now shining for anyone, with even a vague interest in the art form to obtain a license to operate and or practice, regardless of whether any type of training within a tattoo studio had previously occurred.

This impression was made due to the policy of the Act, which ensured the public that the tattoo industry would now be free of any connections to organized crime, OMC's or their associates. Despite the industry not actually containing a high number of these individuals, the perception that they were there to some degree protected the industry and the public from untrained individuals opening business and operating.

Three years on from the implementation of the regime and amateur artists have now gained licensure and have flooded the industry. Professional tattooists are now reeling from the effects of what is perceived as being a plague of untrained and uneducated individuals who care not for the integrity of the art form, public safety or the sustainability of this unique craft.

The prevalence of untrained amateurs openly practicing has been actively encouraged through the licensing regime due to a gross lack of any appropriate barriers or pathways for entry to industry

According to the Department of Fair Trading 350 new applications, new meaning unknown and never before licensed to industry have been received in the last 12 months alone.

The Public health risk associated with untrained individuals entering the industry without any training in regards to the tools and practices specific to the trade is enormous. Despite the requirement for tattooists in QLD to obtain a cross contamination certification, this course alone will not provide an individual with the knowledge and training specific to the techniques and equipment that are relevant to practicing the art form. Nor will it educate individuals in regard to the high level of integrity that is necessary when placing artwork on members of the public.

This alarming situation continues to be exacerbated by the availability of tattoo supplies on the Internet. Individuals who are not professionally recognised and therefore not eligible to purchase quality supplies from legitimate industry Supply Company's can gain access to equipment to practice. Inks in particular being of concern due to Australia not currently having any restrictions on the import of untested and unregulated inks.

The availability of inferior untested pigments and equipment to the general public via internet commerce continues to be of a huge concern to both professional tattooists and health professionals/ organisations alike.

A growing number of reports from members of the public are being made not only to our organisation but also to Health Practitioners and the Police regarding the appalling level of work and poor standards now being experienced in licensed tattoo studios, by licensed tattooists in QLD.

Laser removal technicians are also reporting a high number of clients who have experienced receiving poor work in licensed premises.

b. Restrictions on Entry by out of State Tattooists

Further damage continues to be been done to the industry due to restrictions for tattooists from other states, and internationally to partake in the industry in QLD.

The important practice of tattooists traveling to work in other states and overseas has been imperative to the sharing and conferencing of knowledge and remains a strong theme within the

culture of the industry. This restriction has seen numbers of well-established studios verging on financially ruin as they struggle to attract tattooists from out side of the state.

The industry itself has also historically been quiet transient with tattooists often choosing to travel widely. It was once not uncommon for tattooists to move from state to state, working in various studios with little notice of their arrival or departure. The licensing regimes in both NSW and QLD have destroyed this long-standing cultural practice, which has also hampered the ability of established business owners to attract tattooists from other states.

Tattooists from overseas who wish to visit and work in QLD are also restricted under the regime. The Act allows for visiting tattooists to apply for two permits per year, each permit allowing for a maximum of 31 days. Overseas tattooists often arrive in Australia holding a visa to work for 6- 12 months or longer. Due to these restrictions numbers of internationally acclaimed artists who once visited QLD on a regular basis no longer do so. This restriction has placed a financial burden on established businesses as well as seeing members of the public from within QLD traveling to other states to be tattooed by these artists when they chose to visit Australia and work elsewhere.

Visiting overseas body art tattooists

Clause 45 prohibits the chief executive from granting more than 2 visiting tattooist's permits to the same individual in the same calendar year

The Australian tattoo industry and the tattoo collecting community are extremely fortunate to receive some of the worlds most highly accomplished tattoo artists who travel to Australia annually.

Not only do these international artists visit as guests in tattoo studios, they also attend our growing numbers of international tattoo conventions. International tattoo artists also facilitate the important feature of conferencing and expanding skill sets within the industry.

The restrictions and requirements of the Act have meant that international artists must submit their application 28 days prior to their proposed work period and yet have no guarantee their application will be approved before the commencement of their proposed stay. Lengthy periods for application processing and approval have regularly been experienced by applicants, to the point where most studios cannot viably offer international artists work with any reliability.

International artists are also restricted to visiting QLD twice a year, the permit being valid for a period of 30 days. This restriction does not accommodate for the transient nature of international tattooists, this coupled with the arduous process of application has seen the majority of international artists now not visiting Queensland or NSW.

Interstate visiting tattooists

Under the Act tattooists who wish to enter Queensland from interstate to work need to apply for a license. To do so individuals must travel to Queensland to submit their finger and palm prints as a part of the application process. Applicants must then wait often-lengthy periods to be informed as to whether their license has been granted or denied. Due to the expense involved with both the process and application itself numbers of tattooist who have traditionally traveled to both QLD and NSW to work no longer do so.

The practice of tattooists travelling both interstate and overseas plays an important role in the conferencing and sharing of knowledge within the industry. Due to the industry currently

having no industry specific accreditation, this element of the industry culture is of utmost importance.

This particular oversight in policy has created an even larger burden on tattooists from NSW who have already undertaken the entire process in their home state.

Whilst it is understood that the process of establishing mutual recognition of licenses between states is complex, the issue itself must be highlighted due to the enormous burden it has placed on established operators due to their reduced ability to give employment to tattooists from either inter-state or internationally since the introduction of the regime.

c. Loss of Business Insurance

Business operators nationally have also been faced with losing their insurance policies.

Numbers of Insurance Company's have chosen to back away from what is now perceived to be a high-risk industry since the introduction of the *Tattoo Parlours Act* in both NSW and QLD. This has seen many operators having to seek policies off shore with exorbitant fees attached and waivers with exorbitant excesses attached.

d. Application Process

The application process for licensure itself has been slow and arduous, burdened by red tape and bureaucracy due to the cross agency administration of the Act.

Due to the requirement for individuals who are applying for an operator's license to complete a close associates form, numbers of tattooists who were attempting to secure a lease to open a new premise have been rejected for the tenancy due to land lords or corporations not wishing to provide their personal details for scrutiny under the Act. Whilst this is undoubtedly illegal, it has continued to occur.

Many applicants for licensure have experienced waits upwards of 12 months to receive notification on their licenses. In an environment of fear, which has been created through the actions of a Government, which has been perceived by many within the industry to be acting in deplorable ignorance, the stress created by these lengthy waiting times has been unacceptable.

The lack of inter agency communication within the management of the regime as well as a basic lack of training and information being provided to customer service staff, has meant that individuals who seek information regarding the progress of their application have simply been turned away empty handed.

Policy within the act has placed an added ongoing burden on license holders with the requirement for procedural logs as well as regular visits from Police officers who reportedly threaten fines for not keeping logs and financial records up to date.

The industry has been burdened with a regime that holds no value to any of its stakeholders and which has seen damage to both the integrity and sustainability of the craft itself. Professional tattooists in QLD, if the current regime continues in its current form hold genuine concern over the sustainability and future of this small but thriving industry.

e. Record Keeping obligations

Record keeping obligations and the strict enforcement of these obligations may be an important tool in preventing or hindering the supply of goods and services to or from organised crime groups.

The use of such tools within the structure of the current licensing regime of the tattoo industry has predominantly been to determine if such connections are apparent or continue to occur.

The ATG, who are not privy to the criminal intelligence available to police agencies, would speculate that the use of record keeping as a regulatory tool over the last term of the Bill has indicated that the relationship between organised crime and the use of goods and services by the tattoo industry's professional participants does not exist.

The keeping and inspection of records is resource-intensive for business and regulators and should be phased back or eliminated from the licensing regime at this time. Taxation law and Health laws already requires documentation of amounts paid and clients' identification. Access to this sort of information by an appropriate authority is already written into law. Any further documentation required by the small businesses that are tattoo studios is burdensome, costly and unnecessary.

Division 5

Clause 24 – Requires operators of tattoo business's to allow authorised officers to inspect and take copies of financial records.

This requirement has meant that both tattooists, who operate as sole traders and business operators are required to keep their financial records up to date and on the business premises at all times, or provide duplicates for either police or OFT officers to inspect if these documents are with a bookkeeper or accountant. The ATO already has very extreme powers of access to this information both within their database and on demand at any business.

Clause 27 – Requires operators to notify the chief executive of changes in the employment of staff.

This requirement to update information in an industry, which is often transient by nature, places an added burden on operators within their business operation. It is a broadly held opinion within the industry that individual licensees' should be solely responsible for updating information to the regulator.

Clause 28 – Requires operators to display their license in a prominent place, viewable by the public,

The operator's home address along with other private information such as their date of birth is displayed on the license itself. Therefore tattooist's personal and confidential information is on display to the public. The ATG recommends a license that states only the name and address of the studio licensed be displayed for public viewing.

Clause 29 – Makes it a condition of the license that the license number be displayed on all advertisements for the business.

Tattooists regularly display their business logo and name in a variety of ways using a range of various media platforms. These include T-shirts, stickers, posters, online advertisements on platforms such as FB, Instagram, individual websites and print media. The requirement to display the license number on all advertising Media is excessive and unachievable for industry participants. It is also an added cost which is a burden to the industry. With the internet and social media making the traditional definition of advertising less obvious, either the term 'advertisement' in this particular clause needs to be more clearly defined in relation to any social media posts or PR merchandise, or the clause should be nullified.

Divison 7

Clause 36 – establishes that a licensee for an operator's license must ensure tattooing procedures log is kept. This log must be stored and kept for 3 years.

Tattoo operators in QLD are required under the *Public Health Act 2003* to collect and store clients information along with the details of the tattooist who applied the tattoo, the date and batch numbers of instruments used during the tattoo procedure.

The Australian Taxation Office also requires operators and individuals to keep extensive records of financial transactions.

The added requirement to keep a procedure log places an unnecessary and costly burden on the business operator.

Clause 37 – requires that every individual tattooist must ensure tattooing procedures log is kept.

This log must be filled in every time a tattoo is completed, recording the tattooists name, the date of the procedure, the tattooist license number, the amount paid, the method of payment and the receipt number.

The current log sheet provided to tattooists and operators by the DFT for this purpose requires the tattooist to complete all of the details listed above 18 times down the length of a sheet. The tattooist must write their name (which is also required at top of sheet) - 18 times on the sheet, their license number (which is also required at top of page) must be written 18 times down the length of the sheet, the method of payment and receipt number also being recorded -18 times. A client information sheet is stored by the studio which documents the clients details, their acknowledgement of information given about the care of the tattoo during the healing process and the potential risks involved about getting a tattoo. This same sheet often is also used to record sterilisation batch numbers of individual items used in the clients' tattoo.

Theses details are retained as is required under the *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003*

The requirement to fill in the currently required logbook as well as keep and record the information already required under the *Public Health Act 2003* is an ongoing costly burden to tattooists and operators.

Like any other small business, financial records are already required by Australian Taxation law. Whether any individual studio in question might offer a printable receipt or Eftpos receipt is entirely the prerogative of the business owner.

The ATG have made enquiries with both the DFT and the Police Licensing Unit as to the purpose of this log sheet. Neither agency has provided a reason or purpose for its use or the use of the information contained on it.

Criminal Intelligence Gathering Regime;

a. Finger and Palm Prints

The sole purpose of the *Tattoo Parlours Bills* in NSW and QLD has been as a mechanism for the gathering of criminal intelligence. This purpose continues to undermine individual civil liberties as well as create ongoing issues for both the general public and the professional tattooing community.

The ATG submit that the collection of private information such as finger and palm prints is incongruent with the determination of whether a person is a fit and proper person to be licensed to own or operate a tattoo business.

The establishment of a regime which compels all persons who own, operate, or are employed by a tattoo business to provide finger and palm prints for “*any purpose the Commissioner sees fit*” is a breach of an individual's civil rights and is unacceptable. e

The amendment Bill has indicated a move away from the gathering of criminal intelligence and yet the process of finger and palm printing upon application for licensure remains.

We submit that the sole purpose for the collection of finger and palm printing has been inserted into the *Tattoo Parlours Bills* in both NSW and QLD for potentially collecting criminal intelligence. The continued use of this collection goes beyond the scope of what is reasonable, necessary and proportionate. An individual in both NSW and QLD can get a gun license without being fingerprinted and yet artists who chose skin as their medium are subject to this draconian and Orwellian requirement.

It is also incongruent with the values of Australian Society.

The collection of private information should be quarantined for the purposes of ascertaining identity and criminal history of an applicant. If an application is refused, withdrawn or the license ceases to be effective, the private information must be destroyed. It is unacceptable that private information is indefinitely retained.

The ATG support the direction of the amendment Bill to restore appeal and review rights that were restricted by the 2013 Suite, as well as enhance procedural fairness in licensing decisions.

We also support the amendment to exclude the use of confidential criminal intelligence in licensing decisions. The ATG continue to maintain that it is an abrogation of the institutional strength of the judicial system to have allowed such processes to exist within legislation.

Reports reaching as far back as the 1979 Beach Inquiry in Victoria, the Fitzgerald Inquiry in Queensland and evidence produced by more recent interstate and federal crime commissions give rise to the legitimate concern that there are significant risks attached to investing too much power and control in the hands of policing agencies and too little oversight in the hands of independent industry specific regulators or independent anti corruption agencies.

Police Checks

The ATG agree that the Tattoo industry needs regulation. Tattoo business operators and their employees should undergo police background checks for the purpose of ascertaining their identity and criminal history. Due to the nature of tattooing, individuals who have been convicted of sexual or violent crimes present a potential public health risk. Furthermore the ATG agree that individuals who are connected to organised crime need to be identified.

The ATG Code of Conduct stipulates that

"Members must uphold the law in the conduct of their professional activities and must be removed from any affiliation with any criminal organisation"

The purpose of this industry-based standard is to protect the public from unacceptable risk.

Appropriate Regulation for the Tattoo Industry

Regulation being directed towards the tattoo industry should benefit the industries professional participants, members of the public and other stakeholders.

The professional tattooing community remains pro-regulation. It is recognised that the professional industry may be supported and benefit from responsible policy which looks to protect both the general public and industry participants.

In order to regulate the industry the Government would be advised to consider the qualities of a professional tattoo artist and base any regulation around this insight.

A fit and proper tattoo artist ought to be a person who:

- possesses the requisite artistic skill;
- possesses the requisite technical knowledge;
- possesses the requisite experience;
- is duly qualified; and
- possesses the requisite Occupational Health and Safety Certifications
- does not have a recent history of any violent or sexual crime convictions

In contrast, the above-mentioned Bill states that a fit and proper person is an individual who meets a defined measure of probity based purely on a criminal history.

A logical inconsistency exists.

The ATG are now seeking to develop dialogue with the QLD Government in regards to seeing the implementation of qualification based major amendments. The tattoo industry nationally currently has no industry specific accreditation. A syllabus, which has been drafted by the ATG in conjunction with broad industry consultation, is now nearing completion.

Dialogue with the Queensland Health Department around the development of an industry specific Health component is now also being sought.

It is the preference of industry that State Governments recognize the ATG as an industry appropriate body and the appropriate skills provider once a syllabus is approved through the AQF.

The ATG have researched numerous pathways suitable for tattoo license qualifications. These pathways would need government assistance and cooperation in both developmental and implementation stages. Industry would need resource assistance particular in relation to any risk that would be assumed.

The ATG submit that the core and primary competencies for a person to be a fit and proper person to be employed as a tattoo artist ought to be a person who is skilled and experienced at tattooing, possesses the requisite qualifications and knowledge, is certified to operate a business in conformance with Occupational Health and Safety and has no recent violent or sexual crime convictions.

Recommendations

The ATG recommend that improvements be considered for the sharing of information between government agencies for the purpose of regulation, or one primary agency be declared responsible for all application collection and processing.

Access to information is critical to the effective use of many of the regulatory tools described within the Bill. Regulators need to access information to determine whether a person is fit and proper to hold a license. Lack of access to information could lead to unsuitable people gaining entry to industry. Equally, difficulties in accessing information can cause unreasonable delays in processing applications of suitable people.

It is the observation of the ATG that information exchange between criminal justice and other agencies is highly constrained by legislation and thus results in lengthy and unnecessary delays in application processing.

The ATG recommend that a liaison officer be appointed within the OFT for the facilitation of information re the processing of applications, and that processing and information required by the agency remain within its jurisdiction.

The ATG recommend a license renewal system rather than the current re-application process.

The ATG recommend that record keeping obligations under the Act be eliminated.

The record keeping obligations that are currently enforced under the Act are perceived as being excessive and unnecessary as this information is already required within both Australian Taxation Law and the *Public Health Act 2003*. The keeping and inspection of additional records is resource intensive for regulators, business operators and individual industry participants and potentially holds no value to any stakeholder.

The ATG recommend current and future licensing of the tattoo industry would be best achieved through the provision of education to the industry and facilitation of government consultation with industry.

Any future licensing of the tattoo industry should require the applicant to obtain the current industry standard course qualification for cross-contamination and sterilisation, thus ensuring that all licensed tattoo artists have this important qualification.

The ATG are currently developing a skills package for the development of an industry specific cross contamination unit. It is perceived that national RTO course providers in the future may use this package to bring the current industry standard certification into line with industry practices.

The potential for an accredited industry arts based unit is also currently being examined.

The ATG is now nearing completion of a guideline for the training of new entrants to industry. This guideline will set out criteria for the minimum standard of knowledge to be taught in the training of new entrants.

The ATG is prepared to further engage in the consultation process with the Queensland Government as work on the guideline progresses and more detailed proposals are developed.

The ATG's Duty of Care stipulates that it is the tattooist's responsibility for their client's health and safety, and ensures that clients receive a quality of care and treatment that complies with both profession-specific and generic standards of practice.

The ATG recommend that the requirement for applicants to complete finger and palm prints be removed from the Bill.

The ATG submit that the collection of private information such as finger and palm prints is incongruent with the determination of whether a person is a fit and proper person to be licensed to own or operate a tattoo business.

The ATG recommend that all applicants for a license must provide a statement of professional practice.

Proof of a minimum 12 months experience in a council-registered studio would remove the problem of amateur tattooists obtaining professional licenses. This lack of requirement for proof/statement of professional practice currently poses a public health risk due to the nature of tattooing and as such leaves the Queensland Government in a position of not providing duty of care to the public.

An accredited cross-contamination course will provide individuals with an appropriate level of hygiene to operate and practice within the tattoo artist's industry. However, it will not prevent individuals from doing damage, such as Fibrosis / Hypertrophic scarring. It will also not prevent the psychological trauma that can be experienced by a client due to a lack of technical and artistic knowledge and integrity on the part of the tattooist.

The ATG suggest that proof of 12 months practice may be obtained through the application form which states the period of professional practice by an individual within a council registered studio and also lists details of the registered studio and operator who employed the artist.

Individuals who are in training but have not yet been employed in the tattoo studio for the full 12 months could be registered on probationary status, the information for which could be held on a register thus reducing the burden on the OFT to produce hard copy licenses.

Alternatively a logbook system may be employed to record hours of attendance within the studio with a minimum amount being required prior to the issuing of a full license. This would require extensive consultation with the ATG as the industry appropriate body.

The ATG is encouraging this position through its membership structure, which requires tattooists to provide proof of qualification and experience in order to achieve full membership.

Individuals applying for a tattoo artist or operator license must be required to work in council-registered premises.

The requirement for all individuals applying for a license to work in council- registered premises would eliminate the on-going problem of non-professional individuals practicing tattooing which continues to be a concern of professional tattoo artists and the general public. This requirement would also ensure that all professional tattoo artists have access to professional standard sterilisation equipment and have high standards of work environment hygiene as required by premises registration.

The ATG's Code of Conduct stipulates that tattooists must carry out their work in adequate professional premises that embody standard occupational and safety provisions as well as conforming to health department standards. The ATG's Duty of Care stipulates tattooist's obligations to refuse service if their ability to practice safely is jeopardized; this includes instances where unsafe premises or lack of access to proper equipment compromises the safety of the public.

The ATG recommend that visiting overseas tattoo artists be eligible for multiple permit/temporary licenses.

The ATG suggest that in order to accommodate the important role of international guest artists visiting Australia, multiple permits/ temporary licenses be made available to visiting international professional tattoo artists for this purpose.

The ATG is encouraging this position through it's membership structure, which makes provisions for international artists visiting Australia to be included in the ATG, thereby encouraging all tattooists operating in Australia adhere to the ATG's codes and standards.

The ATG recommend that any potential future Bill be named the 'Tattoo Industry Bill'.

The ATG, in conjunction with broad industry consultation, are of the opinion that the 'Tattoo Parlour Act' as is named in other states is inappropriately named. Tattooists nationally have taken offence to the word "Parlour" being used to describe a piece of legislation that aims to license and regulate the tattoo industry.

This term that may have been used to describe a tattoo studio nearly two decades ago is now considered out of date and offensive.

The ATG recommend that a registration scheme be used to accommodate NSW licensed tattooists

Mutual recognition is a common practice within many industries operating in Australia today. It is understood however that the process to facilitate this is complex.

Due however to the similarity of the Legislation it is perceived that tattooists from NSW who have already met probity (finger and palm prints taken and National Police criminal history checks done) should be entitled to enter QLD and work under their NSW license.

The requirement for tattooists who already hold a license in NSW to have to undertake the entire application process again is excessive and unnecessary and places a burden on both the industry participant and the relevant Government agencies.

A registration scheme, which requires an individual to list their name and other relevant information in order to enter QLD to work, would ensure that agencies were aware of when licensed artists were entering as well as having access to any information that may be required in order to monitor the movement of individual's.

Negative licensing for the industry, as has recently been introduced in S.A under the *Industry Control Act 2015* is also perceived as being a viable option.

The ATG's Code of Conduct stipulates members strive to contribute to the development of tattoo knowledge, culture and education. Freedom to travel and work from state to state stimulates and furthers the industry through healthy discussion and exchange of information.³

The ATG recommend that tattooists from unlicensed states enter QLD under a negative licensing regime.

Negative licensing is an alternative to a positive licensing regime. Under a negative licensing regime, no license is required to enter an occupation or industry but certain classes of people may be excluded from the occupation or industry unless they obtain the permission of the regulator.

The benefits of a negative licensing regime may include:

- exclusion of unsuitable participants from the industry with relatively little administrative burden, the exclusion may be automatic once a particular event occurs
- reduction in costs for regulators due to the removal of costs associated with a positive licensing regime
- lowering of barriers to entry for non-prohibited persons, which may benefit competition in the industry.

Negative licensing is currently in use in the State of S.A under the *Industry Control Act 2015*. It is perceived that this method of licensing will not have the same impact, nor create many of the ongoing issues being experienced by industry participants in QLD and NSW. It is also less resource intensive for agencies in endeavoring to meet the policy goals.

Conclusion

The Tattoo industry is alive and thriving in Australia today.

Within Australia there are some of the industry's most accomplished artists who are recognised both nationally and abroad.

Over the last decade tattooing has evolved globally, with an interest in this art form now becoming widespread. Many talented and refined artists have chosen to join this industry, and many tattoo artists are revered for the incredible skill they impart into their work, with many artists having lengthy client waiting lists.

The discerning collector may now choose from a variety of styles that for the most part were not available in the past in such a refined way. The tattoo artists responsible for these pieces work incredibly hard and the industry has become very competitive.

A culture within the tattoo industry now exists whereby the hosting and sharing of knowledge is paramount, with artists striving to achieve the highest standards. Tattoo artists travel regularly, both nationally and internationally to attend conventions and facilitate the conferencing of knowledge.

Many tattoo artists today extend their skills to outside of the traditional settings and mediums, and paint to exhibit their work in galleries around the world. Tattoo artists are known to regularly contribute their artwork to a wide range of media platforms and are regularly being sought to contribute to both private and community projects. There are tattoo artists who have exhibited within prestigious galleries around the world including the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney, the Japanese American National Museum in San Francisco and the Museum of London amongst others.

Standards within the industry are now rising very quickly and individual artists are having to seek out and apply ever-changing technologies to their work. Most tattoo artists now have expectations of themselves and the studios they work in to provide a professional and well-equipped environment, so as to achieve the best outcomes for clients and themselves.

It is partly due to this fact that the majority of tattoo artists who now practice within this industry do so independently of any known criminal organisations or OMCs that once owned some of Australia's tattoo studios.

The ATG believe this is a point that needs emphasising and clarifying due to existing schemes having a strong emphasis on identifying individuals and their connections to organised crime.

The response from tattooists, both nationally and internationally has been one of dissatisfaction at the direction in which the legislation regarding the tattoo industry in Australia has taken.

The majority of tattoo artists feel that an opportunity for the tattoo industry to have some responsible input into governmental licensing and regulatory systems has thus far not been offered by the Queensland Government. The overwhelming majority of artists are pro-licensing and regulation and would welcome responsible action by state government.

The ATG are now engaging in dialogue with state governments nationally into the development of appropriate regulatory tools that will not only protect the industry in the future but also see the sustainability of industry is preserved.

Through this work we will continue to develop a framework that we will publish to government in the near future.

It is hoped that through this submission some insight will be gained into what is required in order to promote and protect this ancient and unique art form, and the small businesses and employment opportunities that it entails.

The ATG is prepared to further engage in the consultation process as it progresses and develops some more detailed proposals.



MISSION, PURPOSE, VISION AND
VALUES



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

MISSION, PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

To protect the history, culture and future of Australian tattooing.

PURPOSE

The Australian Tattooists Guild exists to:

- Advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice
- Expand and advocate the value of professional tattooists, with the sustainable growth of our community, economy and culture.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Protecting the individual and collective rights of Australian tattooists.
- Liaising with government officials with regard to any further changes in tattooing regulation in individual states and within the Australian commonwealth.
- Helping guide any further standardisation or national accreditation standards within the tattooing industry with a consensus amongst it's members.
- Promoting high standards of cross contamination procedures within Australian tattooing.
- Promoting and helping resource further art and technical education for it's members.
- Increasing the confidence of the public in the profession.
- Helping link artists and studios with appropriate contact within and outside the industry (insurance, equipment, tax accountants etc.)
- Protecting the industry from exploitation by non-professional tattooists and suppliers.



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VISION

With the perspective of our stakeholders as paramount, we will create a Guild that members value, in partnership with organisations that are strong and aligned with our vision.

Our substantial and effective public policy on tattooing will influence governments, and the community will understand and value the importance of a skilled and professional industry.

We will have highly effective communication with all our stakeholders and exhibit exemplary employment practices and the highest standards of governance.

The Guild will be an innovative, learning organisation, which acknowledges its presence and responsibility in a global context.

We will secure the future of the tattooing profession through continuous learning and by ensuring that members are committed to life-long learning for the benefit of themselves and the community.

Financially, through effective, timely and transparent financial management, we will ensure accountability to our stakeholders.

VALUES

In meeting the needs of all our stakeholders we will operate in ways that promote:

- One community – embracing diversity and open communication
- Innovation – demonstrating leadership with courage and creativity
- Accountability – acting with integrity and responsibility
- Respect – relating with empathy and recognition of effort
- Collaboration – working together with trust, transparency and fun.

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CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT



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CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Australian Tattooists Guild (ATG) Code of Professional Conduct is based on principles of fairness, respect, integrity and responsibility. This code is a voluntary code which is self regulated by each signatory of this organisation. Ideally, this code can be used effectively in evaluation as a measure of quality, along with the Duty of Care statement.

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Tattooists Guild and its members are dedicated to the advancement of tattooing through involved and innovative practice, with the aim of raising and maintaining all standards of the tattooing industry across Australia.

Tattooists who are ATG members commit themselves to the attainment of high standards in tattooing, and to maintain general wellbeing by upholding commonly agreed values of:

- Ethical behaviour;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Social justice;
- Aspiration to excellence, and
- Competent professional performance

They are expected to:

- Serve and advance the public interest through appropriate involvement in civic activities, as citizens and professionals;
- Encourage informal public debate on tattoo, art, and health issues;
- Encourage and maintain responsible and healthy work space and;
- Strive to contribute to the development of tattoo knowledge, culture and education.

In their professional lives, members of the ATG are bound by this Code of Conduct to uphold the integrity of the profession and to ensure client and community needs are respected and well served. The code establishes principles to which ATG members are required to conform. The code defines ethical standards to ensure the upholding of principles that address obligations to the public, the client, the profession, and colleagues.



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Violation of any of these standards is grounds for disciplinary action, the potential consequences of which are detailed in the Guild's Constitution.

The Code of Professional Conduct of the ATG applies to all activities by its members in which tattooing is a component. It is intended to promote committed and responsible performance in tattooing and to ensure that the profession will acknowledge and meet the responsibility vested in it by the public.

PRINCIPLE 1

OBLIGATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

Members have obligations to the public to embrace the spirit and letter of the laws governing their professional affairs, and should thoughtfully consider the social, emotional and health impact of their professional activities.

- I) Members must neither communicate nor promote themselves or their professional services in a false, misleading or deceptive manner.
- II) Members must uphold the law in the conduct of their professional activities.
- III) Members must abide by the code of ethics and conduct of the ATG and laws enforced in the countries and jurisdictions in which they provide or intend to provide professional services.
- IV) Members must not be affiliated with any criminal organisation.
- V) Members must not use any form of persuasion or undue influence in securing and delivering services.
- VI) Members must refrain from physical contact that endangers, threatens, or harms the health or safety of any person, or behaviour that causes a reasonable person to fear such conduct.
- VII) Members must ascertain proof of age and identity to ensure the client is of age (see state laws regarding minors and tattoo age). Members must not tattoo minors under any circumstances.
- VIII) Members must not sell tattoo equipment to unlicensed or unprofessional persons, through an established supply company or privately



PRINCIPLE 2

OBLIGATIONS TO THE CLIENT

Members have obligations to their clients to carry out their professional work conscientiously, competently and in a professional manner. Members should exercise judgment with due regard to relevant technical and professional standards when performing all professional services. Learned and professional judgment should take precedence over any other motive in the pursuit of the art, craft and business of tattooing.

- D) Members must perform their professional work with due skill, care and diligence.
- II) Members must carry out their professional work without undue delay and, so far it is within their powers, within an agreed reasonable time limit.
- III) Members must keep their client informed of the progress of work undertaken on the client's behalf and any issues that may affect its quality or cost.
- IV) Members must disclose to clients significant circumstances known to them that could be construed as creating a conflict of interest, and must ensure that such conflict does not compromise the legitimate interests of such persons or interfere with the tattooist's duty to render impartial judgment in relation to services rendered.
- V) Members must at all times afford clients respect and equanimity, eschewing judgment and accepting differences in beliefs, values and perception.
- VI) Members must offer services to all persons irrespective of their ethnicity, age (tattooing of minors excluded), gender, religious or political persuasion. In engaging with others in tattooing work, artists should strive to create a climate of equality and openness in the client-professional relationship.
- VII) Members must communicate about tattooing sessions, offering clients a clear and concise description of what tattoo sessions involve and especially with respect to possible effects [focal and side effects] and professional fees.
- VIII) Members must be appraised of and utilize at all times the requirements of duty of care in all aspects of the relationship with clients. This includes attending to client needs prior to, during and post-sessions. Duty of care is or will be described both in state and federal legislation as well as in policy statements. See Australian Tattooists' Duty of Care Statement.
- IX) Members must ensure clients are aware of any potential effects on their health from the tattoo process should their current health be compromised by an existing condition which has been disclosed to the member. Members must not tattoo a client who is intoxicated.
- X) The services that a member delivers should be of a kind that preserves the dignity and autonomy of the client and in no way sully the privacy, physical, sexual, financial or psychological integrity of the client.



PRINCIPLE 3

OBLIGATIONS TO THE PROFESSION

Members have an obligation to uphold the integrity and dignity of the profession, and must in every circumstance conduct themselves in a manner that respects the legitimate rights and interests of others.

- I) Members must pursue their professional activities with honesty and fairness.
- II) Members must not take as a co-owner an unsuitable person such as: a person whose name has been removed from any ATG recognised register of tattooist otherwise than at his or her own request; a person disqualified from membership pursuant to the standards and process prescribed in the ATG's constitution; a person who is prescribed under current state legislation as a person or persons of a criminal organisation (or associate).
- III) Members must establish and maintain:
 - a) Adequate professional premises which are of appropriate size and facilities so as to optimise the delivery of services and maintenance of privacy.
 - b) Premises should embody standard occupational health and safety provisions as well as conforming to local fire and health department standards.
 - c) Care should be taken to ensure the public wellbeing whilst in professional tattoo premises, which can be hazardous at times. Particular care should be taken when allowing children in the premises.
 - d) Tattoo premises should be a sterile environment. Any outside elements that threatens the sterility of the tattoo premises, such as animals entering the premises should not be tolerated.
 - e) Appropriate written materials which describe the services offered and the fees required.
 - f) Records of client details and sessions in a form which is easily recoverable and which conforms to professional standards. These records should be safely stored and contained within the framework of confidentiality.



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PRINCIPLE 4

OBLIGATIONS TO COLLEAGUES

Members have an obligation to respect and acknowledge the professional aspirations and contributions of their colleagues.

- I) Members must not discriminate on grounds of race, religion, disability, marital status, or gender.
- II) Members must not maliciously or unfairly criticise or attempt to discredit another tattooist of their work.
- III) Members must, if approached to undertake a piece for which it is known, or should reasonably be known, that another tattooist is currently working on or preparing for, request for the client to notify the other tattooist.
- IV) Members must provide their associates and employees with a suitable working environment, compensate them fairly, and facilitate their professional development.
- V) Members must not claim ownership of another tattooist's original design of published work through direct and obvious reproduction of said work.

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Lennox Head [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern.

My name is [REDACTED] I am a tattooist and studio owner in Lennox Head, Northern NSW. I have been a professional tattoo artist for just over 24 years. I pay my taxes and I vote conscientiously.

I have been a licensed tattoo artist in NSW since July 2013, the first artist in NSW to be licensed. I am also President of the Australian Tattooists Guild. I am a firm believer in reform within our industry, and I think regulation is an important part of the job being recognised as a legitimate trade and career. When I first heard about the new legislation I was hopeful, but upon reading it I was very disappointed that the opportunity for a real license had been completely overlooked by legislators and the distinct lack of industry consultation was very obvious.

The license cannot legitimately be called a tattoo license in any real sense as the act of tattooing itself has not been scrutinised within the process of application, and no real effort is made to ensure the applicant knows anything at all about the trade. The potential for real physical harm through amateur applicants being licensed is enormous. The arrogance of legislators who obviously have no idea what the trade requires in terms of skill sets or technical knowledge is very apparent.

The opportunity was lost for the health dept to ensure all licensed tattoo artists have current cross-contamination knowledge in order to protect public health. This is a major concern for the industry, particularly with amateur applicants easily obtaining a license.

I was very lucky to have my fingerprints taken in a regional police station and was not turned away on the day because there was someone in the holding cell. This was not the case for many of my colleagues, and in some circumstances some were turned away numerous times before they could get their fingerprints recorded. Many police stations within the larger cities like Sydney simply refused to take

the records for the applicants. It's a ridiculous waste of police resources and taxpayers money.

Needless to say, there has been no real indication that the fingerprinting has been used for any real action in the way of prosecuting OMCG members, and it's ridiculous that someone who draws on people for a living has to have their fingerprints recorded on a national database, despite no criminal conviction. We do not carry weapons, we are not responsible for people's life savings. It's quite simply a breach of civil rights.

As there are no real qualifying aspects to the tattoo license in regard to technical knowledge, the need to re-apply for a license rather than have one renewed is again a massive waste of police resources and taxpayers money, as well as creating longer processing times. Fingerprints don't change, and surely the point system for identification purposes is adequate. A national passport can be acquired without fingerprinting, why on earth should a tattooist have to be fingerprinted a SECOND time?

The tattoo industry worldwide has long had a culture of information sharing through 'guest artist' spots - whereupon an artist will travel to a studio in another city/state/country in order to share technical information and collaborate artistically. It's essentially the same as an artists 'residency', and has played a very large part in the large evolution of the trade within the last 10-20 years. The licensing system as it now exists makes it almost impossible and as such is hindering the ability of Australian (NSW and QLD) artists to maintain standards on an international level. Australia has long been known as a place of high artistic and technical standards within the international tattooing industry and this is now at risk due to the limitations of visiting artists.

Our studio used to have at least 5-10 artist residencies from travelling artists a year, and since the introduction of the new licensing system we've had none at all. This is a real loss for our studio as clients look for international artists guesting as a real indication of professional enterprises, and it maintains a sense of artistic diversity within the industry.

I hate to say it, but I personally feel that the way these laws have been approached is so incredibly ignorant and a real reflection of the way bureaucracy in Australia views art in general - 'it's ok, it's just not that important!'. It's such an incredible shame that one small part of the

cultural and artistic diversity of this country has been shackled the way that it has. I, for one, will continue to strive for the changes within the Legislation that will enable the hard working Australian men and women within this industry to continue their careers without unnecessary barriers and breaches of civil liberties, and enable them to contribute to the Australian national identity and diverse artistic culture in the way they can.



-

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NEWTOWN, NSW

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a professional and licensed Tattoo artist from NSW, I work at [REDACTED] tattoo in Newtown and have been tattooing full time for 4 years. I am a sole trader; I pay my taxes and have never been convicted of a crime.

I applied for my NSW license as soon as it became available, I submitted my form and payment and it was almost 9 months before I received a letter telling me to arrange my fingerprint appointment and then another lengthy wait to collect my license.

I have recently applied for my QLD license (as I have a number of clients interstate and generally make a trip there at least twice a year) Previous to applying I contacted the licensing department and was told about the "Mutual recognition application" which meant that if you hold a license in NSW, that you may work in QLD whilst waiting for you application to be approved. This form does not work the other way around I was told.

It was an almost identical process and fee. Unlike NSW, I received a letter within a fortnight, instructing me that I had 28 days to go to QLD and complete the fingerprinting and background check process. (Although my fingerprints had already been taken in NSW and were unlikely to differ if I went interstate)

It seems like a great waste of government resources (even the officer who took my prints was surprised that I was completing them again) and also at great personal expense (Flights, hotels, car hire- on top of the fee) just to do an almost identical process.

I do agree that our industry should be licensed, like any trade, but the standard should not be whether you have a criminal past or someone in the licensing department deems you worthy or unworthy.

I believe the business-licensing department does not have enough

knowledge of our industry to make the decisions that can dictate the way we operate and that they need to be working in conjunction with the ATG to create a guideline for the licensing process that is streamlined, relevant and anti-discriminatory.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NEWTOWN.
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sydney, NSW
02/03/2016

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I've been a tattooer in NSW for 15 years and have been through the current licensing process. I found the whole ordeal to not only be cumbersome but inconvenient, I understand it was the first time that something like this was undertaken but it really seemed that no one at the government departments had any idea of what they were doing or what the whole licensing plan was.

Aside from this I know a lot of other tattooers that hoped the licensing may have a positive effect on who enters the industry in terms of new license holders but this was just not the case, it seems as long as you passed some ridiculous "association " test and volunteered your finger prints you could obtain a license WITHOUT any actual practical tattooing skill. This is just not acceptable, the industry already had enough artists that have little to no concern with their artistic abilities and the door has been swung wide open for more to work and open their own studios just because they hold a license.

Now to mention the other difficulties that come along with the individual state licenses, I have done numerous guest spots and conventions all over Australia during my 15 years and now that has been made much more difficult due to the state specific license. Not only does it make it hard for myself but it also makes it extremely difficult to attract guest artists to our studio as the license process has effectively put up a wall around our state.

Travelling, even in our own country, is the life blood of our industry in terms of keeping in touch with other artists and learning new techniques, to not have some form of interstate license is a joke.

I'm not even touching on the treatment of tattooers as criminals until proven innocent and the absolute trashing of our civil liberties through the whole process, I hope that the government will take on advice from the tattooers guild as these individuals are true professionals with knowledge of our industry with ideas on how to make it better for us all.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Newcastle, NSW

06.07.2015

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a Tattooist in Newcastle, NSW and am currently in the process of opening my own private studio. I have been tattooing since early 2010 and have been licensed under the NSW Tattoo Parlous Act since August 2013. I am a tax paying, law abiding citizen with no criminal associations and I always strive to contribute positively to the community; I am a Tattooist for no other reason than that I am passionate about the art-form.

Recently, I have experienced the great frustration of applying for a Tattoo Operators licence. Many people experience a number of hurdles to setting up their business such as finding a suitable premises, council approvals, insurance, fit-out, and the ever increasing costs associated with setting up and running a business. A Tattoo Studio Operator is expected to go beyond the standard process at great cost and inconvenience because of the outdated stigma associated with the Tattoo Industry, I do not see how this is justifiable. I also take great exception to having to prove my innocence to earn the right to operate my business because I chose a form of art that despite it's popularity is unconventional.

I followed the usual process of finding and securing a premises and applying for council approval and the necessary licences and registrations, I allowed a period of two months for these to be processed. I have not yet received my licence and it has been approximately one and a half months so far. After speaking to other Tattooists who have applied for their Operators Licence this year, I became aware that there is no logic or structure for the approval process. One Tattooist had to wait almost five months for his licence to be approved. That means five months of being unable to operate their business and earn a living, therefore putting their business at a great risk of failing. For myself, I am not in a financial position to wait this long to begin operating my business while I am paying the business costs. It is a basic human right that an individual be able to earn a living and in this country we are allowed to run our own business, so it seems incredibly unfair that I would be unable to operate my legitimate

business without first proving that I am not a criminal.

Despite already having a Tattooist Licence, having met the requirements and been fingerprinted within the last 2 years, I have had to go through the entire process again, and will have to do so once my licence expires. Not only is this a waste of my own time and money but it is a massive waste of tax payer money and police resources. Over the past few weeks I have made many phone calls and sent many emails chasing up my licence and have discovered that there is no communication between Fair Trading and NSW Police, and many people I have spoken to have not been able to give me any useful information regarding licensing, which is obviously a concern. Recently, I spoke to a lady from the NSW Office of Small Business who told me that these laws are in place because a Government report done over five years ago showed that the majority of Tattooists or Operators were themselves or were associated with criminals. So I am currently being inconvenienced and my business potentially harmed by a biased and outdated Government Report that assumes that I could be a criminal because others in my field might be. Are reports done on all industries to assess the percentage of criminals or associates among their ranks? The business of Tattooing has many parallels with Beauticians, Hairdressers, Graphic Designers and Illustrators; would it be considered acceptable to assume that they are criminals and subject them to the same invasion of civil rights as Tattooists? The Tattoo Parlours Act does not apply to Cosmetic Tattooists even though the process is essentially the same.

Many Tattooist and Operators in NSW and QLD have experienced a harsh blow to their business with the loss of interstate and international guest artists as a result of a licence that is irrelevant and unnecessary for this industry. Australia is home to some of the worlds best Tattooists and it is because of a tradition of traveling and guesing; but the experience, knowledge, skills and friendships that were once formed by visiting other studios is in jeopardy. In regards to criminal associations, I am aware of many studios run by people who are members of a declared organisation or who have a criminal record which have had their licence approved, so this entire exercise has been a great waste of everyone's time. And has also lead to an increase in "backyard" tattooists claiming they are legitimate because they are licensed by the Government. To recap, legitimate business owners

are being put at risk of losing their business, one of the industries main

forms of information sharing has been made extremely difficult, "backyarders" are being licensed putting unsuspecting members of the community at risk and the purpose for which the licence was designed has failed.

The time has come for the Government to listen to people within the Tattoo Industry and make the appropriate changes to the Tattoo Parlours Act so that we can all move towards a more positive future for Tattooists and their customers. I would wholeheartedly support an Act that helps us ensure a high standard of hygiene and safe practices by Tattooists who have proper training and experience and weed out those with unsafe practices and a lack of training, and respects our civil liberties.

Kind regards,



[REDACTED]
Townsville, Qld.

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I have been Tattooing for just over 59 years. In the beginning I actually welcomed the concept of a Tattoo License scheme but I have now changed my mind because in its present form it has very little to do with tattooing at all. As far as I am concerned, it is just a money grab by the state government.

Unlike most other Licenses that I know of, which have strict requirements of knowledge and abilities, but for tattooing there are no such requirement needed to show one's ability or skills in the art of tattooing.

Also in Queensland there is the requirement that you have to have passed your Infection Control Certificate to operate as a tattoo artist, this is not even a requirement of the tattoo license.

The one noticeable difference now is that persons who have been operating at home with little ability and skills are now getting a tattoo license and opening new studios with no regard to the health and wellbeing of the general public, this is like the local Council Environmental Health Officers issuing a license to operate a tattoo studio and having the general public thinking, "they must be good, they have a license".

Also now tattoo artists who have in the past worked as a guest artist in other studios and other states allowing for the sharing of ideas and skills, thereby raising the standards of tattoo art have now found that this has become unviable, this is also the case for overseas artists.

I found that the whole process of having to have my finger and palm prints taken was demeaning and time consuming both for me and the police, surely those police tied up doing this would be better out there catching criminals. Overall this has, in my opinion, been a piece of poorly constructed legislation and the people who have to administer it, seem to have limited knowledge of what is all about.

I do not look forward to the time when I have to re-apply for my licence in 2017, if this legislation has not changed before then.

Hopefully common sense will prevail.

[REDACTED] Tattoo Artist.

[REDACTED] Tattoo Studio 17.03.2016

██████████
NSW

(Operators License Number 010030)

17.8.15

I applied for my Tattoo Operators License around 6 months prior to the license cut off date (October 2013). To say it was a difficult process would be an understatement.

The first problem I encountered was the fact that each & every time I had a question regarding the process or the paperwork requirements, I had to make a call to the Department of Fair Trading. Every time I contacted them about a specific problem (there were numerous instances of this), I was shuffled from one person to another, with no one seeming to be able to answer even some of the most basic questions in regard to my application. Numerous times I was told different answers to the same question. My apprentice, during his application process was shuffled between 7 different operators & didn't get an adequate answer after that! Due to ongoing frustration with this, I even went to my local office of the Department of Fair Trading in person. After asking them a question about my application, the person disappeared for about 5 minutes & returned with a print out from their website as an answer. I had already had access to their website so this was completely ridiculous to me. The people who were implementing the license process couldn't answer my problems regarding the license application at all. How was I supposed to fill in the application correctly without having these issues addressed?

Another issue was in regard to the close associate forms. Apparently I had to submit the details of my landlords (since I rent my shop) so they could have police checks done on them. I rent through a real estate agent. At no point had/ have I met the owners of the building at all. So, now I have to ask for their personal details & their permission for a police check to be done on them, just because I rent their shop & I need a license to continue my business. I am faced with this again next year when the whole process must be repeated, since there is no simple renewal process at all.

During the time I have had my operators license, the police have visited my shop on 3 occasions to check on my license & those that have been

working for me. I have no problem with this & welcome any scrutiny. The only issue I have is the fact that during the last visit, they asked questions regarding sharps disposal bins, tattoo procedure and the like. We had, probably 3 weeks prior, been visited by our local Council (Health Department) & been questioned regarding all of our procedures & received a certificate (as we always do) proving our methods & procedures are acceptable to them. Why does the police need to be involved with that type of enquiry & are they even trained to know what they are asking? It kind of looked like they were checking off a list. Also, the police asked me questions regarding certain paperwork they said I was supposed to be using & I told them I had never heard of it. They back pedalled a bit & said that it must not have been brought in. I checked with the Department of Fair Trading website later & could find no reference to the paperwork they referred to at all. Also, they provided me with a written request to supply my financial records for the month prior to the visit, which was to be collected by them the following day. I had the records ready for collection, however, they never returned to make the collection & still haven't as of now. I have nothing to hide & all of my financial records are supplied to the Australian Taxation Office so why do the police need copies of them? Do the police ask for these details from licensed builders or plumbers for example? I'm sure they don't. Apparently, since I tattoo for a living, I am a criminal, despite the fact that I have never had any problem with the police & received a clear police check during the license process.

Next year, I am due to apply again for my operators license. Instead of having a renewal process, I have to resubmit all of the paperwork again. I could understand if some of the details had changed, although, according to the rules, changes have to be reported to the Department of Fair Trading. This is a very time consuming process. I have to re apply & submit all of my details even though nothing has changed since the last time I applied. I am still at the same address, I still have the same people working for me, I still rent from the same people, I even have the same fingerprints as last time, although I will have to submit them again as well. I find this to be absolutely ridiculous. Why is there not some form of renewal process rather than the whole re apply process?

Another problem with the whole process is the cost of the operators license itself. I wouldn't mind paying over \$2000 for 3 years if I thought the money was going toward the improvement of the industry as a whole but I do not see that being the case. During the license

application process, there is not one mention of anything to do with

disease control or the correct cleaning methods or the like. There isn't even any check on the standard of work that people are doing. So, it is possible for some home job tattoo 'artist' to apply for a license & continue working from their home, completely legally, despite the fact that they may know nothing regarding cleanliness/ disease control. They may not even have a steriliser or even know how to use one!! They almost certainly wouldn't know how to do a good tattoo either. It really seems to me that there should be some form of certified minimum standard in regard to the disease control matter. Is there something that could be offered through TAFE that had to be completed before the license was granted?

The whole application process took about 6 months from the time I initially applied until the time I received my license. I find that time frame to be excessive & I am sure there will be a similar amount of people who will re apply again next year since they all will be due again. I would hope that it is processed in a much more timely manner this time around but I won't be taking my chances. I will be re applying about 6 months before the expiry date.

I really think there needs to be a license renewal process rather than having to do everything from scratch & having us re apply for our license every 3 years.

If there are any questions regarding any of this, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards & thanks,

■

13/11/2015

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Tattoo Studio.
N.S.W

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to share my experiences and thoughts on the new tattooing laws currently in place in NSW and QLD.

There are several points I would like to make with the first being;

-Uniformity. There needs to change in regards to having separate licenses in each state. Assuming all states will eventually take on this system then needing licenses for each state is short sighted at best. This is a major concern for many in our industry as traveling interstate to work for a short period of time, known as a "guest spot", has been such an important part of tattoo. It allows the furthering of our education, traveling to conventions, working holidays and lastly the opportunity for our clients interstate to have us come to them.

-Genuine effort regarding unlicensed operators. One simple rule but one massive change in the current laws would be the inclusion to force tattoo suppliers to request tattoo license number on ALL tattoo equipment sales. This would halt existing suppliers selling to backyard/underground tattoo shops and would also force online operations like eBay to stop selling cheap Chinese gear. This also has a massive impact on our industry and the wider community. The spread of blood transmissible disease and infections is a genuine concern amongst professional tattooers.

-Renewal system. This should be obvious. A letter in the mail and a simple renewal fee (even if you want to spend the time fingerprinting again) would be much better than the current system. Re applying from scratch seems unwarranted and the guessing game of how long till the license gets back makes the current system unsustainable. Longer than expected waits could see honest tattooists out of work till the plastic card is in hand again.

-Business Licenses. Same can be said for the business license. Currently you must be renting a studio, THEN apply for the business license then wait for its return to start trading. With up to 8 month waits,

it makes it plain uncompetitive for new business to start up. Even with a cheaper rent of \$500/week could potentially add \$16,000 to the start up of a new business. Perhaps being able to specify a proposed area of operation within a XX/km limit would work better for all.

Although there are more points I can make I leave it in the hands of the Australian Tattooist Guild to handle to other major points. These are the ones that effect me the most. I have been tattooing for 13 years now and would one day like to own my own studio.

Regards.

[REDACTED]

Manager/Senior Artist
07/09/2015

[REDACTED]

05/11/2015

Sydney, NSW

There were a few flaws surrounding the New Licensing Laws that affected me and what I think what could affect my future in tattooing. From the technical side of things, applying for the license, the fingerprinting process, the handling of fee's and dealing with the many many people through the process. It was, to put it nicely, not easy and not pleasant. I was spoken to like crap by the police I had to deal with, calling nearly every day for 3 months to go in and ASKING to get my finger prints done, which is frustrating and EMBARRASSING enough. I got the same rude answer everytime, they had no idea what I was talking about and never had the time, i just had to 'get lucky' that no one was in custody. Therefore stretching out of the time bracket to finalise the license with the other half of the process and causing a lot of stress that I would lose my initial money and application.

The other side of the impact is on my personal work and growth in tattooing and my art. I feed off new inspiration and meeting new tattooers and working with them and learning more and therefore my skills and client base expanding. The license I have doesn't cover me to work in Queensland, where I regularly get tattooed and could possible work if my license covered me. So im missing out on both working and expanding my tattooing network. Same goes for if another tattooer would like to come work in Sydney, they are not going to even consider it with how hard or confusing it is with the licensing. It seems to me that it should be a nationwide license, with all the same rules and regulations across Australia. At least, if its something thats here to stay.

[REDACTED]

██████████
Tattoo
Victoria

A number of years ago I met my wife in Far North Queensland, I moved up and lived and worked in Cairns for a couple of years at ██████████ Tattoo under ██████████ and I became good friends and therefore once my wife and I left to move back to Melbourne we continued to visit Cairns on a regular basis as all her family is there and I could easily work a week or two with ██████████ to help offset the cost of travel and time off.

Once this licensing came into the scene it became evident that this was not going to be as easy to do in the future but as it was a must to keep in contact with family I would have to figure it out.

On my last working visit the changes were imminent but there was not much information on how to actually go about receiving a Guest Artist permit, there was limited info online but it was unclear on what I had to do and also unclear on what ██████████ had to do as the employer.

Before my next visit I tried again to arrange a permit, when I was doing this I believe the law had not yet come into full effect but I was trying to obtain the permit for a few months ahead when it would be in full effect. I rang the number given on the Queensland government website and got to speak to a lady there and explained the situation she informed me that for someone in my situation (only wanting to work a week) I could get a guest artist permit that was advertised on the website, I said yes but that's for visiting overseas artists and it seemed I couldn't do that being from Victoria. She seemed unsure but looked it up and confirmed that it was just for overseas artists, she then explained that being an Australian resident I would need a full license. I explained that it would seem unnecessary and incredibly hard to get a full license to only work once or twice a year for a week or so and she totally agreed. She asked when I was travelling up and I said in a few months when the law would be in effect and when I explained that I only wanted to work for a week of our 3week stay she asked me "why I really needed to work when I was there?" Her exact words were something like "do you really have to work while your on holiday?" I said I don't "have" to but I would like to and without going deep into my personal home/financial life that it was a regular thing I did and it made it possible for my family to stay in contact blah blah. She then explained that she really didn't know what was going on with these new laws and it had all just come

up quickly so if I waited they would "probably" sort something in the future that could cater to this. I explained that I needed to get it sorted for my trip coming up and to this I was told that it was all so new and quite unorganised that I should just go and work and if I do get caught I could take it to court and would "probably" get off as it was such a new process and they were still working out the "bugs"

To this I just said that it would be insane to put myself through that let alone my boss and friend up there, to have court dates in another state, possible massive fines, possible loss of license to him or denial of a future license to me. To this she said "I doubt that would happen"

She was nice enough and really did try to help me out but really had no decent solid knowledge on this variation to the license.

As most artists know travelling to learn/work between States is and has been common for tattooing for years, some sort of unified license would work otherwise the simple guest artist permit that is already available to overseas artists can just be granted quite easily to ALL artists you'd think?

So despite her solid knowledge on the subject I chose not to risk it on recent trips and am now in the process of getting a Full Queensland tattoo license.

In saying that I was already denied once as I filled the forms in stating I worked at [REDACTED] (my studio in Melbourne) and was told I didn't need a license to work in Melbourne. I called and said I was aware of that and explained the situation and I was told I would have to fill the forms out as a permanent employee of [REDACTED] Not sure if this will have implications on me Tax wise? Or even if licensing in Melbourne comes into effect and it turns out I hold a Queensland license will it affect my ability to hold a license in VIC? We'll see I guess?

Good luck to all.

[REDACTED]
Melbourne, Australia.

06/03/2016

[REDACTED]
Perth, WA

I can't speak to the impact of the tattoo licensing to tattooers who live in Queensland or NSW, but as a tattooer which a clientele spread out over the whole of Australia, tattoo licensing has damaged my ability to reach my clients in two states, as it is not cost effective to spend the time and money travelling back and forward from my home base in Perth to Queensland or NSW to undertake a police review in both of those states and paying an obnoxious fee, just to only tattoo in those states for a month or two out of the year.. I understand that legislators who write these laws don't understand or likely even care about the business or culture of tattooing (evidenced by the repeated attempts to make us out to be criminals or degenerates), but it's important to understand that we're law-abiding taxpayers and voters as well, and so are our clients. All the laws have managed so far is to make it so top tier travelling artists can't visit the state. I would wholeheartedly recommend an affordable national licence available in every state, based more on a system of regulating sanitation and health standards in shops, but I'm under the impression that the licences are more about trying to police morality rather than policing health standards and good business practice to keep people safe.

Thanks for taking the time to read this,
[REDACTED]

07/10/2016

[REDACTED]
Melbourne, VIC

To whom it may concern,

I am a tattooist from Melbourne, Australia, as part of my business practice i travel to other states and countries to do what we call Guest spots. The guest spot is something that was up until now a great part of the tattoo industry. It allowed us as artists and business people to learn and work with other people from around the world as well as have people from around the world come work with us. Also to this integral part of our practice, it enabled customers who followed your work from either interstate or overseas to be tattooed by you. Now that these new licensing laws are in place, this has almost come to a stand still. i am currently in the process of applying for a Qld tattoo license. The process its self has made it non viable from a business point of view, other then the now \$714 license fee, in order for me to tattoo in Qld or Nsw i must first fly to Qld or Nsw in order to have my finger prints and palm prints taken, then simply to return home and wait months for the processing to happen before i can return to that state in order to make any money. and as far as i can tell there is nothing in place for people hoping to travel from other countries. This makes Guest spotting from a business point of view not worth doing. the lack of guest artists and traveling artists will effect not only the tattooing industry as a whole but will effect other business that gain from things like tattoo conventions. Apart from the individual customer coming to get a tattoo from a world famous tattoo artist that they have always admired, money will be lost on the hire of the building in which the convention would have been held, the people hired to build the stands, make and sell the food to cater to tens of thousands of people who would have attended, cleaners paid to clean every night the event is on, as well as the hotels that interstate and international tattooers would have stayed at, restaurants they would have spent there hard earned money in, the effect is more then just the individual person or industry alone.

[REDACTED]
14.06.2015

[REDACTED]
Melbourne, VIC

My name is [REDACTED] and I work at [REDACTED] in Melbourne.
Last year I was emailed by a studio in NSW to do a guest spot.

In the email it was mentioned that all guest artists would need to have a NSW tattoo license to do the guest spot and as an incentive the commission was 90% to the artist to combat the price of the license. I had heard from other artists and shop owners that they were having trouble getting artists to visit since the licensing had come in partly because of the cost but also from the difficulty of trying to obtain a license.

I did look into getting a license and filled in the application form but with further research found the difficult part is trying to get the finger printing done, which has to be done at a NSW police station and also that the license, if you actually get one needs to be picked up from one of the limited amount of location in NSW.

The price of the license was a big deterrent for me considering that I would have to pay around \$750 for the license on top of flights, accommodation, supplies and other expensive that go along with working and traveling.

I feel that it is made so difficult to get a license that most artist would just stay in there own state rather than travel to work with other artists and friends.

[REDACTED] 09.04.2016



Melbourne, Vic

The most saddening thing regarding the recently implemented licensing requirements in NSW and QLD for an out of state artist is having to go through the whole process and paying the full fee the same as a resident of those states to work for only one or two weeks for a guest spot.

I had to cancel my guest spot in Brisbane this year as it wouldn't have been processed in time. 7 months is a ridiculously long wait.

As an ex high school teacher it's disgusting that the licensing requirements for tattoo artists is more strict and complicated than the teaching license/working with children act. More expensive and has to be renewed more often.

And the pitiful excuses for bringing in the license is an even more pathetic smokescreen for the government to squeeze more money out of us.

If the license ensured anyone was up to date with the c.c and bpp knowledge instead of their criminal record it may have even been welcomed..... Shame nothing can be done about all the terrible people who can't draw or tattoo..... But let's not get into that.

I could carry on but I'd still be writing this time next week.

I have a license in Oregon in the USA also and its a simple process as well as being only \$75. Why Australia couldn't have mirrored that I don't



know

The license exists simply for the wrong reasons



17.03.2016

[REDACTED]

Melbourne, Vic (formally NSW)

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a Professional Tattooer since I was 19 years old. 23 years. This is a personal impact statement regarding the Tattoo Parlours Act NSW 2012, on it's effect personally to me and my professional career.

First of all I would like to start with that at first I was fairly excited that this industry was going to get some sort of regulation, and that it was designed to rid the industry of the outlaw biker element. As it was stated that was its sole purpose, however, I soon came to realize that wasn't exactly true. It became evident that anyone with a criminal history regardless of association was indeed targeted as an unfit person to hold a Tattoo license.

Knowing that I had no OMC affiliations or associations I applied for my tattoo license on the 14th Feb 2013, payed my \$699 fee and continued about my business eagerly awaiting a reply. 8 months later I met my now Wife in Melbourne and decided that I wanted move interstate. At this time I had no word or contact or anything from dept fair trading. after several useless and severely frustrating phone calls to the relevant people, which seemed to change every time I called, I was finally able to be notified that I had to have my fingerprints taken, so the appointment was arranged and I did so. Come May 2014 I was moving to Melbourne to be with my girlfriend and get married and settle down. Still no word from the dept of Fair Trading. several attempts were made to notify them about my new address, all failed. So, time went on and I had no notification even though they had all of my contact details in all forms. again I had to call them with only my receipt of my payment as proof, to be notified that I was refused 8 months prior and that a letter had been sent to my old address. So mind you this was 2 and a half years after I applied. Also I have no right of appeal as I no longer live in the state of NSW And no reason was given to me as to why, I know I have a record, Mostly driving convictions and only two Bar fight related offences in the last 10 yrs, not squeaky clean but not a serious criminal or bikie related in any way.

This has effected me greatly, as it is now illegal for me to work as I have done for the last 22yr's in my home state....can you imagine! Any crime

I may have committed in my life I have already payed the price through the judicial system like any one else. This basically is another form of punishment for the same crimes that I have served my time for. I am outraged, cannot understand how my past (unless OMC related) would effect my job as a Tattoo Artist, and well known and respected the world over. Not to mention the good things that I have achieved through this job, EX: Helping breast cancer survivors regain their dignity through tattoos, hiding scars and reconstruction tattooing. I Have also donated a huge amount of monies To charities throughout the years, always trying to give back to the community.

I am now living under constant fear that sooner or later I will no longer have a job as these laws move through the country. I can only say that I feel like my life is in constant danger, this job is and has been the only constant, and it has pretty much saved my life, if I hadn't started this job all those years ago my life would of been far worse and I don't think I would be around to tell this story. I was a troubled youth who grew up on the streets of Sydney, I only made it to yr7 in high school so I have no education or any other Job prospects. Without this job I would be either forced into a life of crime or to live out my days on welfare. There is much to be said here however I'm trying to keep it brief, I'm all for regulation and following the laws in this industry, however the criminal aspect needs to be revised so that some of us with checkered pasts can still contribute to society and not revert to being a drain on it.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

5/4/16

[REDACTED]
Brisbane, QLD
19/08/2015

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a professional tattooer in Brisbane, QLD for approximately 18 years now. I have worked some of Brisbanes most respected studios and created a strong clientele and have a solid reputation amongst them and my peers
In 2008 my husband and I started our own private studio in Archerfield -

[REDACTED]
Included in this was, from what we know, the only health department approved mobile tattoo studio in Australia, set up in our vintage Australian 1965 Sunliner caravan.

We invested all we could afford and continued to improve it, and our studio continuously from that date a sum in excess of \$100,000.

We have taken it to numerous Wintersun festivals, it has been a fixture at the Greazefest Kustom Kulture festival for 8 years, along with the Logan Tattoo convention (Sin the Skin), the Sydney tattoo convention and now the Melbourne Leg of the Greazefest brand. The Van has become an icon in the industry and helped in no small way to create our very successful and world famous brand. I have tattooed many times over seas and many people have come to me from around the world and Australia.

I am a professional tattooer as I mentioned and have obtained the skills taught to me by my mentors and peers, and the required level of attainment for infection control required by the industry for many, many years now.

In 2013 the QLD government "Informed" the industry of the implementation of a tattoo licensing scheme. I think the industry as a whole held it's breath as this system was quite clearly and in fact blatantly a knee jerk reaction to local OMCG problems the police and Government were having.

Most of the leaders in our industry have been expecting and supportive of some sort of regulation/licensing system to help control the influx of back yard and unskilled tattooers who can buy

all they need to tattoo from the internet for a fraction of the cost of **“professional”** equipment and supplies that **“professional”** tattooers use to create beautiful and amazing permanent art on peoples skin.

The products and equipment these people use are inferior quality and come with no guarantee of sterile nature or even quality of manufacturing, especially inks. Least of all they do not come with **skill and experience.**

These people endanger and disfigure their victims on a daily basis. A professional tattoo studio can tell of the poorly executed tattoos that pass through it's doors weekly, for repairs and cover ups or even expensive and painful laser treatment.

The reality of course was very far from this hope or expectation. In fact now with absolutely no experience these people could be licensed!!

What would this mean to a client? What should they then expect?? In fact, despite the size and comprehensive nature of the application form the only mention of the health department approval in your application is whether or not you have been refused an infection control certificate - not “do you have one “and” what is the approval number”!!!! Unbelievable.

The legislators made absolutely no attempt to liaise with any industry leaders, who would have been easily identified if they tried, or suppliers or the health department!!!!, No attempt was made to apply a licensing scheme that in fact had any intention of helping or regulating the tattoo industry at all. The facts are now clear that the “tattoo license” is plainly and simply an identity record system designed only to prove whether the applicant is a criminal or associated with a criminal organisation or not.

It is a complete breach of any civil liberties we thought we had, The form its self is very insulting and the finger and palm printing absurd. The fees are crippling and the underlying regulations have not only not helped control the backyarders but have stopped or seriously hindered the professional tattooers from performing their job and pursuing their careers.

A major part of the artistic flow and advancement of experience and influence has always been the travelling artists doing guest spots with other and particularly interstate shops. This is no longer

possible, the application process, cost and the finger & palm printing has deterred even the most die hard artists.

We, like many shops, have offered to pay or subsidise the cost but even this has mostly fallen short of the mark. The fact that the state police are making the artists fly into QLD for the finger printing alone is turning them away, and it's no easier for us to go to NSW. It is in fact easier for an international artist to come to Qld and tattoo, than another Australian from interstate. This has left us with no way to fill empty stations when artists are away on holidays or guesting in other states of Australia has left us floundering for many, many months and has cost our business many thousands of dollars and nearly brought us to our knees earlier this year. On top of this is the unfair treatment by police, turning up at our studio with bullet proof vests, guns on hip in numbers of 4 or 5 on our busiest day (Saturday morning) while our shop was full of customers asking for paper work, licenses (not yet distributed after 10 months of waiting, what were they thinking) and then proceeding to line our staff up against the wall and photograph them and their tattoos!!!!

This is total deprivation of our civil liberties.

At last count none of us were under investigation or even suspicion of any criminal activities, oh except the criminal activity of "Criminal Tattooing in QLD"pfft. This has left us feeling embarrassed and violated in front of our customers. It was akin to a raid. WE had to apologise to our clients and make up the time. We are totally disgusted by the whole scenario.

Further to this, after making our application and continuing on our way waiting a seemingly indefinite period of time to get the approval, we were shocked to receive a phone call from the organisers of the 2014 Greazefest show wanting to know why the Office of Fair trading was demanding they apply and pay for a convention license to have our mobile studio on site at the show. They then informed them if they did not the police would be arriving on site on the Saturday morning to shut us down and fine them a ridiculous amount of money for breaking the law. The legislation will not annexe our mobile van under our already \$2000 studio license and requires that we now ask all promotors to apply and pay \$430 every time we take the trailer out to a show. This cost obviously will be passed on to us as they are not running a tattoo convention, we are a fully self-contained tattoo van and do not require anything from organisers

and are and have always been fully health department approved since 2008. Our previously successful, unique and health dept approved mobile studio was now breaking the law. Now with this extra cost, if we were to take the van out 10 times In a year we would incur a licensing cost of in excess of \$4000, plus our initial \$2000 3

year license a potential total over three years of \$14,000. It's the most expensive license in the country and is driving our law abiding, family owned, tax paying, and small business to the ground. I thought the government wanted us to strive for excellence and to promote our small businesses as stated by the governments' small business boost program currently running.

In summary our particular major issue is with the mobile tattooing scenario and how we get this sorted out, the many other also major issues as stated I'm sure by nearly every other shop in the state are just as important and crippling financially to the overall problem for this industry. This matter needs to be sorted out immediately to help save and revive the beautiful and unmatched art form that is the Australian tattoo industry.

Sincerely and hopefully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

[REDACTED]
Gold Coast, QLD

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a tattoo artist at [REDACTED]. I moved to the Gold Coast nearly three years ago with my now wife and immediately began working for the industry legend [REDACTED]. Tattooing in New Zealand is lacking a type of licencing system to combat the growing 'backyarder' problem. One of my hopes for moving to Australia was that the tattoo industry was more recognized and taken more seriously by the government and local councils. The level of tattooing coming out of Australia led me to believe that whatever health or licencing system was in place it was organized and recognized the more established studios/artists. When I learned of the new licencing I had no idea how it would affect not only the current studios but the future of the industry in the two states. I find it extremely disappointing that the industry licencing unit has done so little research and is so ignorant to think an entire industry is linked to bike clubs. As a positive outcome I would like to see the current laws updated to benefit the established shops that have remained independent and make it harder for backyarders to operate. We are not criminals and have proved this by obtaining a licence so it would be nice if we are not treated as such.

[REDACTED] 12-11-2015

[REDACTED]
Brisbane, QLD 12,11,2015

Currently [REDACTED]
Brunswick, Melbourne, Vic

As a tattooer of 18years in the craft I have seen a lot of changes....
Some good and some bad. The tattoo licensing regime, as it stands at
the moment, is one of the bad changes that has occurred.

I am not opposed to sensible regulation for the tattoo industry. I feel
however that no actual consultation was done prior to the
implementation of this scheme.

Every tattooer is considered a criminal, being forced to prove otherwise.
This is a gross discrimination on behalf of government and shows a
deep lack of insight on their behalf.

I was personally subjected to this after the regime came into place in
QLD, being routinely targeted by police officers who enforced random
ID checks whilst I was in public. Which as I know is a breach of my civil
liberties!

I was not committing any crime but simply going about my day. Due to
the fact that I am heavily tattooed I was immediately identified as being
some type of "undesirable or criminal".

Due to this continuing harassment I decided to move, with my family,
interstate. I was tired of being singled out by police law enforcement
agents.

I did apply for a QLD tattooist's license and was successfully granted
one. I do not think the intense scrutiny of applicants has aided out craft
in any way.

If gov are going to regulate the tattoo industry they need to ensure that
regimes work for both tattooers and gov.

Thanks, [REDACTED]



Toowoomba QLD 4350

Firstly, the new laws in Qld have put a very negative image on our industry as professional operators. Basically all the good and honest tattooists have been targeted as criminals and misfits. The VLAD law simply does not make any sense and is certainly not helping to abolish the backyard operators or any who may be connected with the criminal gangs.

In the 35 years I have been in the tattoo industry, I have never seen so many poorly executed tattoos done with professional equipment which is so readily available through on-line stores. The impact all this has had on my business is immeasurable - backyarders everywhere who do not wish to pay the licensing fees and the general public questioning our integrity of being associated with criminal gangs. Media only ever appears to cover the negative side of the tattoo industry.

The tragedy of this law to license every Tattoo Studio owner/operator along with their staff members, is that we are being tarred with the same brush as the criminals and gangs who are responsible for this law to be legislated in Queensland.

In my view, it is not very Australian and I can only hope the change of government will acknowledge that not all of us are the persons the Newman government has portrayed us to be. Hopefully, the government will make the necessary changes to the policies and separate us from the people these laws were directed.

The new licensing system has failed to control the non-compliant operators from working at unlicensed premises. The so-called 'professional' studios which have since been closed due to the legislation, have gone underground and working from safe-houses which are not publicly advertised or known to the investigators of the Licensing Unit within each local government area.

Hope this will help in some way.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

My name is [REDACTED] I have been tattooing since 1991, and have owned and operated [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Brisbane since 2001. [REDACTED] was started in 1998, and has become one of Australia's premiere tattoo studios in it's 17 years.

We have faced many challenges over the years, including a "hostile takeover bid" by an OMCG. This was handled by members of the "Hydra Taskforce", and resulted in a favourable outcome for us. The police installed cameras inside my home and business, to gather evidence if anything were to happen to me or my family. This was a very stressful time, and cemented my very firm belief that something needed to be done about the problems associated with organised crime groups being involved in the industry.

I welcomed the introduction of licensing and other forms of regulation, as I had experienced threats and intimidation my entire working life. It was a constant source of anxiety knowing that I would be forced to interact with

OMCG members at some point again in the future. On average I experienced some form of threat to mine, or my family's safety every five years or so. I might just add that the last fist fight I was in was in 1987, with my sister. She flogged the crap out of me. I am really, really not cut out for staring down Balkan war criminals.

██████████ has grown from a three person operation in 1998, to now employing 9 artists, a laser technician, a full time manager and an apprentice. In 2011, the Australian government received tax revenue from my business that was twice that paid by Google Australia and Starbucks combined.

The introduction of licensing 18 ago has led to my business being on the verge of collapse. As things stand now, I would be financially better off to wind up the business and tattoo my customers at home. Essentially going "underground." This is one of the things the laws were meant to combat.

The culture of tattooing has always been fairly transient. I filled 2 passports in the first 10 years of my career. I now employ 8 tattooers who all enjoy this

aspect of the job. In the past when one of my crew would take off for a few weeks, there was no shortage of tattooers from other parts of Australia lining up to "guest" at ██████████. There was never an empty seat in the house. There was also a freshness and excitement that came with having somebody new in the shop. It also meant that there was a sharing of skills and ideas that has elevated tattooing in Australia to a world class level.

Today I am lucky if there is a full house at ██████████. We have offered to pay the license fees for any interstate artists that will commit to guesting with us. Only two people have taken us up on this offer. The red tape, and implied guilt that many people associate with the licensing process has

stifled one of the fundamental aspects of the industry. The introduction of state based, non-transferrable licensing has made my business no longer viable, and I am in the unenviable position of having to shut down.

This problem could be rectified by making the license transferable between states, much like a Driver's license.

There are many other problems with the new regulations, but none of these have impacted my business as seriously. The lack of consultation with the industry, and the lack of a united voice with which to consult are the primary reason for these problems. The establishment of the Australian Tattooers Guild should go a long way to addressing this. I ardently hope that the government will hear our concerns and make changes to the legislation, that will allow our industry, and the thousands of people it employs, to grow and thrive.



17-09-2015

 Brisbane, QLD

Statement re: Licensing impact

Below I have highlighted some of the experiences that occurred during the application process for a Tattoo Operators license, in QLD 2013.

When I applied for the Tattoo Operators license in QLD in 2013, I called the Office of Fair Trading because our shop is a partnership. I was told I would need to get an Operators License and another Tattooist License as only 1 person can tattoo under an Operators License. I was also told that I could get 2 Operators licenses if I wanted. I opted to get an Operators License and a Tattooist license (\$2700) rather than 2 Operators Licenses (\$4000)

Part of completing the Operators License was to fill out a "Close Associate's" form. This was so background checks could be done on anyone that we pay money to for a service related to our business. I rang the Office of Fair Trading to enquire if our accountant was included in this. The first person I spoke to **told me** "I don't know" and transferred me to someone else. The next person said "I don't know" and also transferred me. The fifth person said "Accountant... no he's not a close associate". I asked him if he was sure and he said, "I think so"

It was apparent from this experience that the staff that were responsible for handling this process were uninformed.

On a letter that we received on the 5th of Sep 2013 from the DFT regarding making an appointment to get fingerprinted it said that it would take up to 3 months after being fingerprinted to receive our license.

It is now the 17th of Feb 2014 and no license has been issued or received.

I had a visit from 3 plain-clothes police people (from the department of Drug and Prostitution) 3 days after the Laws came into effect. Two of them were quite friendly, bad cop was not. They asked me to stop tattooing. Then they asked me if it was my shop.

I said "no I have a business partner" and they said "we know that" and proceeded to tell me her full name and listed off everyone that works here.

I asked them why they had asked me, if they obviously already knew. and they said, "to make sure you're telling the truth". They also asked whom I banked with and requested to see the Government form that we now have to record all information regarding the tattoo process we perform on.

I received an email from a police officer saying they wanted to ask me a few more questions about my application. I called them but they were out of the office. I asked the receptionist if they could email me as I have irregular work hours and am very busy with family and life and had already attended the police station on a prior occasion for the application process.

The officer phoned me at 7p.m. on the Saturday night. She said she had my application in front of her and needed to ask me some more questions. She asked my date of birth, address, car registration, shop address, etc. I said to her that all this should be on the application she has in front of her. She said she was just double-checking my answers.

 Senior Tattoo Artist
 Brisbane, QLD
17/02/2014

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

The implementation of licensing in the tattoo industry as it stands in my eyes is lacking in several areas.

Firstly, a tattoo license can be granted without any cross reference as to whether an individual has attained an infection control certificate which is a legal requirement of operating in Queensland, or whether or not they are working out of a licensed premises.

Under the current system, anyone who is not a member or an affiliate of an OMCG is free to be granted a license and as such may market themselves to the unwitting public as being a legitimate operator by virtue of obtaining this license.

In regards to license renewal, as many have stated before the process has been clumsy at best. Numerous contradictory answers from different bodies, lengthy processing times and drawn out correspondence. The need to collect many documents and signatures and be re-fingerprinted every time the license needs to be renewed is time consuming and inefficient.

Travelling artists from interstate and overseas, often with large client bases, are now also being discouraged from visiting the state for conventions or guest spots in local studios. More consultation with ATG members about how the industry operates on a practical level could help improve the system in regards to temporary licenses etc which in turn would encourage more people to bring their business to QLD.

[REDACTED] Tattoo Artist

[REDACTED] Brisbane QLD

08/11/2014

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

The impact of licensing laws in Queensland concerning guest artists.

1. The licensing laws hinders guest artists traveling from other states of Australia to a large degree. The paperwork procedures are foreign and lengthy, time consuming and expensive. This Ostracizes Queensland tattooists from the day to day working interaction with other tattooists, sharing ideas and general relationships between studios.

Many tattooists will avoid visiting and working in Queensland. Planning is essential and fair trading and local councils should be contacted regarding any questions.

2. International tattooists are granted only two periods of 31 days a year tattooing in Queensland and the 31 days need to be in the same studio and consecutively (not allowing for days off) ,thus making it difficult to travel and tattoo in a few studios. Queensland is a large state and has many great studios to visit and interact with.

Solutions to this is to have easy booklets on how to in basic steps. And to be less rigid within time frames.

[REDACTED]

03/01/2015

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

Statement re; Licensing impact, QLD

When I originally applied for my license in 2013, I felt that everything was ok, and then I called the Department of Fair Trading in January 2014 to find out where my license was. I was told it had been sent to the wrong address in September 2014.

Besides this I also have a problem with the QLD license being a piece of paper and not a plastic style card. The paper copy is easily damaged.

The DFT have now sent it out to the right address but the license has retained the original number.

Due to the original confusion, and my license being issued to an incorrect address, someone else in Queensland now has my license as well, which means **that** this person can use my license even if they are not a tattooer.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

[REDACTED]
Woolloongabba QLD

12/02/2015

To whom it may concern in regards to possible amendments to the Tattoo Parlours Bill as part of the VLAD act.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am an honest, hardworking, fully licensed Queensland tattooer wishing to express my concerns at the truly ridiculous laws which have been forced upon our trade in recent years.

The Australian Tattooist's Guild has already presented on many occasions the flaws and oversights in these laws, and I hope that these points will be considered, as well as the points of personal experience which I will add below.

I have worked for [REDACTED] in Woolloongabba QLD for over five years, and as a direct result of the licensing laws, the amount of interstate and international guest artists has gone from over ten per year to ZERO since the laws were introduced. This is a massive drop in potential business for us, as well as extremely disappointing to our clients and resident artists who used to look forward to having new faces in the studio.

The reason potential guest artists are avoiding QLD (and why I myself have avoided working in NSW) is that the application process is lengthy, invasive, expensive, embarrassing and unnecessarily complicated, involving a large fee, multiple trips interstate to be fingerprinted, photographed, then again to

collect said license at an undetermined time, provided it is granted.

Once taxes, accommodation and transport are accounted for, it is simply no longer profitable or worth the trouble of going to work interstate for 1-2 weeks at a time, let alone for overseas artists to attempt to apply for a license.

If the licensing system made more sense and was streamlined to allow for application via correspondence and co-operation between the QLD and NSW Government agencies and Police Service, perhaps we would once again have artists visiting our studio.

The free exchange of art, ideas, technical skills and trade information across borders by inviting guest artists to work in studios for a short period of residency has been a long-standing tradition in the tattoo industry. It is one that has been stifled by these laws, and we wish to regain the ability to do this with ease and without fear.

The other point I would like to raise is the complete lack of a renewal process for our licenses once they expire. This requires all tattooers to completely re-apply for licenses every 1-3 years, subjecting us to the same invasive police checks, the same ID and background checks, and to present to a police station to be fingerprinted once again, even though our fingerprints are, very obviously, the same.

The lack of provision for renewal is a blatant oversight and a true concern for us. I know from personal experience that receiving my license the first time took well over six months from application, and was marred by errors and issues from the staff at OFT, requiring countless phone calls to resolve. To then

be told, only a few short months later that I will have to repeat the entire process is stressful and disheartening.

As of this date I have reapplied for my license, but I am afraid the process will be struck with the same errors, resulting in me being unlicensed for a period of time while I wait for OFT and QPS to address the issue. This is deeply concerning to me, as the fines for working unlicensed are absolutely crippling, and I feel as if the date I eventually receive my second license is out of my control, despite having done the right thing.

I hope that these issues are taken into account and amendments can be made to the current laws and application processes to make it easier for hard-working and honest tattooers to comply with government regulations without further stress, financial hardship or hindrance.

Sincerest thanks for your time,



██████████

13-12-2015

Brisbane, QLD

My name is ██████████ and I am a licensed tattooer based in Brisbane. My experience with applying for and holding a tattoo license has been nothing but detrimental to me and by no means helped the industry in any way that I have seen. I won't go into details as I don't necessarily have the answers but I do believe that the Australian Tattooist's Guild need to be consulted and listened to in regards to reviewing the laws and making changes so that if the industry is going to be governed that they might have a chance of doing it in a way that promotes clean and sterile practices and good tattoos!

██████

[REDACTED]
Mount Isa, QLD

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I own and tattoo at [REDACTED] in Mount Isa, QLD. My experience with the OFT and the QLD Police has been lacklustre at best. I applied and paid for my license very early on, around March 2014. The payment came out almost immediately. Visits from local police also began, and although they were polite, it was clear every visit was a fact finding mission, with all questions posed to us relating to CMGs and nothing, ever, to do with tattooing. If the numerous visits from local officers wasn't enough, I had to then present myself to the police station to speak with an officer from Brisbane via teleconference, who similarly asked questions relating to my knowledge of CMGs and little else. The only question I was asked which related directly to tattooing was thrown in as an afterthought, and was something like 'what makes you a tattoo artist'? Arbitrary at best. Any contact we made with the OFT was a confusing and frustrating affair. At times my 'file' was not locatable, and the status of my application was awaiting police input, even though it was months since I'd spoken with both locals and Brisbane officers, and had also provided my prints (which I now need to do again when I re-apply?!). This whole time, we actually did have a huge amount of bullying from local CMG members, which both police and OFT could do little about, and in fact we felt like bait at times. Ultimately we were asked to journal any incidents with CMG and provide this to police who often pressured us to lay charges.

In any case, any and all focus was on our CMG links, and not our trade at all. No one looked at work, checked our council health license or TAFE Certs. We did get a shop licence, almost 12 months to the day after applying, and we are not looking forward to doing it again.

On a side note, I also have a degree in fine art from QCA, a diploma of art from Bremer Inst. TAFE and a degree in secondary education. I taught john school art for around 7 years before doing my Tattoo apprenticeship. At the time of applying, I remained a registered teacher in qld.

[REDACTED]
09.07.2015

██████████
Brisbane QLD
14/12/2015

To whom it may concern,
I am writing in advocacy of the Australian Tattooist's Guild of Australia. Please accept this impact statement regarding my disappointment with the legislation and practices in place for the current Tattoo Parlours Act. The application process is not only questionably invasive bordering on a breach of my private information it is also too expensive and therefore discouraging for domestic and international traveling artists to acquire the correct documentation. I don't believe there should be ongoing maintenance fees for simple acts such as address updates and there should be the suitable links provided via the mygov website to have better access to my registration information and the ability to update it without fees. This registration can sit amongst other government services like Medicare and The Australian Taxation Office etc. If this is a government initiative then my affiliation/association/registration to this government service should include some sort of incentive if only maybe financially encouraging. I prefer that the fee I pay for this affiliation to this government initiative isn't funding further avoidable administration costs for a repetitive application process. Instead the process should be reviewed with the advice and council of representatives such as the Tattooist guild.

As a sole trader and GST payer I believe that submitting this personal impact statement that my voice is being heard by my government and actions will be put in place to review and amend current requirements and improvements are made.

Sincerely

██████████ (Tattoo Artist)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] QLD

Since the licensing came into effect the biggest change has been the opening of a lot of new tattoo studios, a lot of these studios are from people who are not tattooers and have no idea about the industry at all, and are using it for nothing more than to make money. They are hiring unqualified tattooers people who cannot even draw. These are people (mostly young kids) who now have the right to obtain a licence for tattooing without even having to do an apprenticeship or be taught by another professional tattooer. All that is needed to successfully tattoo another person and mark them for life properly and safely. There are shops on the coast that these persons are hiring these kids and calling them apprentices handing them machines and letting them tattoo with no training. Also these apprentices are then given apprentices under them as long as they have a tattoo license.

This is leading tattooing into bad territory, bad tattoos, using inferior equipment which can lead to bad reactions, infections, scarring and worse.

tattoo industry to put customers at risk if the new licensing wasn't so easy to obtain.

These people would h

The more studios opening and hiring new people to tattoo is also forcing some professional tattooers to lower their cost because these others are cutting prices in half! One shop near [REDACTED] was doing 13 dollar tattoos!!

We have over 50+ tattoo studios on the coast. And that number is growing fast!

We have had police march into our studios on many occasions with(4-7) officers at a time demanding our papers asking the same questions they asked last time, we had police come into our studio during schoolies, our staff were all busy, they demanded our body piercer stop piercing and supply them with what they needed. She had to stop half way through the piercing and get all the info for the police.

come in. We lose customers and who knows what they say to others, makes us look like criminals!

This does damage

Renewal of licensing has come up for some of our tattooers they had to go through the process again. Photos, fingerprints etc. fingerprints changed?

I didn't know that

The worst part is

nearly impossible, having to wait up to a week and taking time off work to do

so to fit in with their 1 officer that does that job.

It makes it even harder when you can only have them done at 1 police station
for the whole coast as well.
ridiculous!

'S he funny thing is even
No studios have been

open have "sold" them to relatives or apprentices.

It really frustrates us all here as when we want questions answered and ask
advice from police they say they have no idea what they are doing or know
what is going on with any of it.

Tattooers have been left with no real knowing of what to do with filling out the
proper forms and all that is demanded of us.

I think some sort of

Should have been in place to show us what was expected of us. Not being
told no that's wrong here's a ridiculous fine for forgetting a date.



10.12.2014

[REDACTED]

Gold Coast, QLD

To whom it may confer,

Recently we have had some troubles regarding and overseas artist. He came to Australia under a year open working visa. Being approved and paid for, he arrived in Queensland, Australia, only then to be informed of these new laws.

He applied for a Queensland tattooing license, once again, was approved.

Now, under Section 7 (i think) in the legislation, he is only allowed to work in two shops for a month each, so a maximum of 2 out of 12 months , even though his Australian working visa is allowed for year. With any other industry the applicant is allowed to work for a 6 months for the same employer.

I'd like this to be put forward as it making it incredibly hard for overseas artists to come work in this state and therefore minimising exposure for artists themselves, tattoo studios and the industry in general.

I have emailed and called the licensing board regarding this, but only to be told it's in the legislation and there is nothing no one can do. Even if he was to work in a shop, without pay, he would still be fined.

Also, I'm sure you're aware of the difficulties involved in travelling between states as the licenses are not recognised between neighbouring states. I don't understand why this is an issue as other industries can legally travel interstate on a working license.

I feel this legislation has been rushed through with no concern for the working tattooer.

Thank you and kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



16/8/15 To whom it may concern,

Owning and operating a tattoo studio in Queensland with the new licensing laws has been a difficult issue. I have no problem with the paperwork; however I do not see how the high fees are justified? Over \$2000 for a 3 year license for an operator! The biggest issue I am facing is having to complete all the same paperwork, get the same documents witnessed by a jp and make time to go to a police station (of which there are only a couple in Brisbane with specific opening times) to get fingerprinted – again! I do not understand why I have been granted a license and now have to reapply – surely just a renewal letter with payment should be enough?

As well as this license fee we also pay a local city council annual one – not sure how this money is justified either? And why is there not just 1 application and fee – why two different government bodies hitting us for money?

If the real issue is to stop organised crime surely the police check is enough – why the high fees? What do we get for our money? This is also a huge issue for our tattoo artists who are struggling with the annual fee and also the inconvenience of a huge amount of paperwork, provided witnessed documents and fingerprints – again and again!

We have had no international or interstate artists wanting to tattoo in Queensland now as they deem the paperwork too difficult and the fees too expensive and the amount of time they are actually allowed to tattoo too little. We are missing out of valuable creative art experiences these talented people could be providing to our industry.

I hope to see some common sense prevail shortly.

Yours in frustration,



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Surfers Paradise, QLD

My name is [REDACTED] I tattoo at [REDACTED] in Surfers Paradise, QLD. I have been tattooing professionally, safe, clean, and well-established studio. The QLD Tattoo Parlour laws and licensing have impacted me entirely negatively since the legislation was introduced. The initial license application was confusing, with very little direct instruction from any government body.

I relied mostly on advice given by other tattooers who were going through the process. I called the Licensing Department at Fair Trading several times for advice/information and each time I spoke to a different staff member they would give me different/contradictory information or admit outright that they didn't know the answers to my questions.

Any time I would have a question about the police check, Industry Licensing would tell me to call the police. When I would call the police about it, they would tell me to call Industry Licensing. On one occasion, I rang Industry Licensing and requested to lodge a formal complaint due to the lengthy delay and lack of information regarding an application and was told by the operator it was not possible to do so (he was lying) and when I then requested the contact details of the Department Head, he refused to give them to me and said there was nobody else to speak to. (I was able to get these details and lodge a complaint later when I rang again and spoke to a different operator). Calls to Industry Licensing were almost entirely unhelpful and incredibly frustrating. Operators admitted knowing almost nothing about the legislation itself and absolutely nothing about the tattoo industry. Several times I had industry-related questions (such as what to do regarding doing a guest-spot for one day at another QLD tattoo studio) and was transferred to multiple staff within the Licensing department and none even knew what I meant. The fingerprinting process was inconvenient and humiliating. We were only offered very limited time-slots during the day to make an appointment to have our prints taken, which meant taking time off from work. I waited for almost 2 hours in the police station before finally having my prints taken.

Eventually I received my 1 year license, months after submitting it. Several of my co-workers waited months longer than I did, and one co-worker's application was lost altogether by Industry Licensing (which they denied ever receiving until we informed them that our company submitted all our applications together in one registered post pack).

In hindsight I wish I had applied for a 3 year license because in May this year, I got a letter in the mail informing me that I had to repeat the ENTIRE

PROCESS and apply again for my license because there was no renewal process in place. I rang Industry Licensing and spoke to Principle Probity Office [REDACTED] seeking to clarify what I was required to do, and he confirmed that I had to essentially re-submit duplicates of the forms they already had on file, take time off work to get the same information certified again, and have my fingerprints taken again. I expressed disbelief, due to the fact that they had all this information already on record, and he admitted the system was flawed but this was the way it was. I submitted all my identical information again, and made my appointment to be fingerprinted again. When I arrived I had to wait again, and when I was finally taken through to be printed, the woman handling the process asked me about the recent influx in License applications. She had no idea that there was no renewal process and was shocked when I explained the application/fingerprinting process would have to be repeated every year (depending on how many people apply for 1 or 3 year licenses).

As advised in the

than 6 weeks in advance to account for the ridiculously lengthy processing time of information that was already on record. I was also unhappy to see the license cost had increased already since being introduced. I heard nothing for 6 weeks and began panicking as July 1st approached, as I would be unable to legally continue working after that date if my license had not arrived. I stopped taking appointments for after that date so had no work lined up, until finally on June 30th I received a call from [REDACTED] letting me know that my license would arrive in the mail in the next few days and I was approved to continue working. This time I applied for a 3 year license and am hoping that the legislation will have been DRASTICALLY improved by the time I am due for a renewal.

On a personal level, this legislation has left me feeling absolutely frustrated and humiliated. I have no criminal record or associations, yet I have been profiled due to my career and am forced to jump through numerous hoops and pay hundreds of dollars a year to prove my innocence. I am passionate about my job and tattooing in general, but the license doesn't even address my ability to tattoo safely, cleanly, and at a professional standard. Our business has been negatively impacted not only by the extortionate fees, but the semi-regular visits by police officers leave myself and my co-workers feeling unfairly targeted and our customers feeling uncomfortable and unsafe. Every step of the process has been difficult and confusing, with almost no useful advice from the departments involved. In fact the majority of Industry Licensing staff, document certifiers, and police officers that I have dealt with have expressed their sympathy and own frustration with the legislation. Many have even questioned the legality of the criminal profiling aspect. It is painfully clear that the "system" (or lack thereof) has been written without proper consultation of the tattoo industry, or even consideration of the amount of unnecessary work required for it to be processed/policed.

I very much hope that the many flaws in this legislation will be addressed and corrected as soon as possible.

Sincerely [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
12/03/2016

[REDACTED] Woolloongabba QLD

To whom it may concern in regards to potential amendments to the Tattoo Parlours Bill as part of the VLAD act,

My name is [REDACTED] and I have been tattooing in Australia for over a decade without so much of a hint of committing any crime and yet get made to feel like a criminal in regards to my trade.

The implementation of these laws has cost countless shops within Queensland thousands up thousands of dollars as a direct result of us no longer being able to easily host guest artist from overseas and to a larger extent interstate. The application process is absurdly cumbersome and time consuming and even then we can be denied without any sound reason being given at all consequently Qld now gets overlooked.

I might also add the reapplication and resubmittal of our fingerprints is absolutely ludicrous - to my knowledge these are not something that is likely to change.
day it was delivered to my door, is this something that just be expected from every renewal also?

It took 1 year to th

I hope that these issues are taken into account and amendments can be made to the current laws and application processes to make it easier for hard-working and honest tattooers to comply with government regulations without further stress, financial hardship or hindrance.

Sincerest thanks for your time, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Gold Coast, QLD

To whom it may concern,

I have worked for and currently own [REDACTED] in Burleigh Heads for over 20 years. I have never had a conviction or any association with any CMCG. As a direct result of the licensing laws, the amount of interstate and international guest artists at my studio has gone from over 8 per year to maybe 2 max since the laws were introduced. Guest Artists are an integral part of running my business. This is a massive drop in potential business for us, as well as extremely disappointing to our clients and resident artists who used to look forward to having new artists in the studio to learn and share tattooing techniques, styles and artistic ideas.

The reason potential guest artists are avoiding QLD (and why I myself have avoided working in NSW) is that the application process is lengthy, invasive, expensive, embarrassing and unnecessarily complicated, involving a large fee, multiple trips interstate to be fingerprinted, photographed, then again to collect said license at an undetermined time, provided it is granted.

It is simply no longer profitable or worth the trouble of going to work interstate for 1-2 weeks at a time, let alone for overseas artists to attempt to apply for a license.

I personally feel that if the licensing system was streamlined to allow for application via correspondence and co-operation between the QLD and NSW Government agencies and Police Service, perhaps we would once again have artists visiting our studio and reduce the time taken on the application process for all involved. For example, NSW has a photo ID, whereas QLD has a piece of paper with printed name and licence number. There should be an easy way for mutual recognition within our states.

As artists, the freedom of travelling and learning is such a positive to us, as there is no formal education in this line of work thus travelling, conversing with such artists and peers is the only way we do learn and grow, both artistically and as an industry in general.

The other point I would like to raise is the complete lack of a renewal process for our licenses once they expire. This requires all tattooers to completely re-apply for licences every 1-3 years, subjecting us to the same invasive police checks, the same ID and background checks, and to present to a police station to be fingerprinted once again, even though our fingerprints do not change. I think there could be an easier way, such as the weapons act which

does not require the same renewal process in regards to owning firearms.

I feel there are too many "grey areas" when asking a question to either the OFT or QPS and find every time I am told to contact the other or will be

contacted with an answer to be left with no return phone call or information on my enquiry. This takes hours away from my work/business time and I find the stress it brings the staff and myself could be easily avoided.

I am finding it hard to hire any new staff full time or casual, due to the time consuming application process and is detrimental to my business and I am personally feeling this financially.

I hope that these issues are taken into account and amendments can be made to the current laws and application processes to make it easier for hard-working and honest tattooers to comply with government regulations without further stress, financial hardship or hindrance.

Thank you for your time



22/09/2015

[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

To whom it may concern in regards to possible amendments to the Tattoo Parlours Bill as part of the VLAD act.

My name is [REDACTED], I own and work at [REDACTED] in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. I have been tattooing for 15 years and am a honest, hardworking and fully licensed tattooist in Queensland and New South Wales.

It has come to my attention that the tattoo licensing laws are being reviewed and I wish to express my concerns as there are a few flaws and oversights in these laws .

Please consider t

suffering, and Australia's tattoo industry that is suffering.. And indeed Australia as a nation that is suffering. Tattoo is an international prestigious artistic industry that deserves respect as an art form.

As a direct result of licensing laws--Myself and the tattooists registered as tattooing at lust for life tattoo cannot tattoo elsewhere in Queensland. If for any reason (for eg a storm/power cut) business is disrupted I cannot legally tattoo elsewhere. If I don't tattoo I can't eat, pay rent etc.. This applies also to the tattooists at [REDACTED] ~~Victoria and reply on~~ work / exchange of art, ideas and techniques throughout Queensland, let alone Australia. Being told I cannot work kills me, heart and soul.

: Guest artists have nearly vanished from visiting Queensland. This is a massive drop in business as well as upsetting to clients and resident tattooists who look forward to exchanging with new people. The lack of guest artists also affects tourism greatly.

Potential guest artists avoid Queensland and Nsw. the lengthy, invasive, unnecessarily complicated, expensive process of crossing the border multiple times for fingerprints and awaited an undetermined amount of time for license collection in Nsw and repeated this process in Qld. I have clients in Queensland, Nsw, Victoria, Perth etc and international clients, like many other tattooists. This process is undesirable for Queensland artists to go through these procedures, especially waiting upon pending licences when their stay has been and gone.

I paid and went thr

tattooists and It is no

A recognition of one license throughout Australia would help our national guest artists and all tattooists throughout Australia.

The free exchange of art, ideas, technical skills and trade information across borders by inviting guest artists for short periods of time is a long standing

tradition in the tattoo industry. This enhances our culture and creativity and builds a foundation for a ever evolving artistic platform. To deny tattooists of this cripples the industry.

For international guest artists the consecutive 31 day allowance to work (once visas and license has been approved which may take a few months) is unrealistic. For international artists to be registered with one studio only for this period is restrictive. Tattooists need to draw the designs they tattoo and generally their days off include drawing for clients. I would ask for the 31 days not to be consecutive leaving room for tattooists to work at different studios and to enjoy the touristic sites Queensland has to offer whilst working. I have a legit tattoo business that pays the appropriate tax and follows all tax procedures that makes it easy to track money's to be paid to the government and to easily see the rent provided from each tattooist at my premise. I pride myself on this. Therefore each international guest can be accounted for. At the moment a visa 400 is needed for the Queensland international tattoo license. This visa does not comply to the government requirements for a temporary tax file number or Abn for guest artists. This may be something to think about.


The license renewal process is ridiculous. To reapply each time the license expires costs the government in time and paperwork as it does to ourselves.. Let alone the re-fingerprinting - my Fingerprints have not changed. I feel like I am a criminal without a crime. To do this again is demeaning, stressful and insulting, let alone a waste of both parties time. The period of waiting for a renewal requires tattooists not to work.. How do I eat during this period? Are nursing/ real estate/ car licenses the same?

Please streamline the renewal process. My last major concern is the lack of a certification of infection control in the workplace. This is Tafe course that all professional tattooists have and should be a mandatory course for a tattoo license. Without this certificate there should be no license. We deal with blood.. Everyday, and I and all tattooists that have done this course know how to work in/dispose of /and clean the areas that are bio/waste contaminated in a tattoo environment than most in medical practices.

I hope these words have been constructive and help amendments to be put in place so that the current laws and application processes are streamlined and are made easier and more concise for tattooists, police departments , fair trading and the local and national governments alike.

Let's work together.

Thank you for your time.

 14/05/2015

[REDACTED] Brisbane, QLD

To Whom It May Concern:

We, [REDACTED] are working under the studio [REDACTED] have a few points we would like to address regarding the QLD tattoo licensing laws.

This has dramatically affected our business, not only financially, due to the exorbitant fees, but by affecting the flow of business and thus our family's income. With these laws you have created the fear that the majority of Tattooers are dangerous people and have biker associates. This has given the public uncertainty as to whether they want to be associated with us which has also made a huge impact on our everyday family life. Everyone, from our clients to the parents at our children's schools, are now worried about our characters and the potential ramifications from associating with us. Our children are now scared of the police after having them knock on our door and pull us up for 'checks' on a very heightened level. We are good people with no criminal records and to have our kids feel scared like this directly from the impact of these laws is shameful on our government.

The application in general is outrageous. We have needed to have more checks and security put on us than the people teaching and working with our kids. I do not believe you need our fingerprints nor should you need to know who I have worked for anymore than I have said on my tax forms for the past 10 years.

The renewal process is something to be thoroughly addressed as you would know our identity and our fingerprints have not, and cannot possibly have, changed in the last 12 months and to ask us to go through the whole process again is not only a waste of our time but a waste of government resources. This also puts an enormous strain on our work time and therefore our income.

The Office of Fair Trading has very limited information about licensing and renewal and they have been little to no help which has meant hours on the phone with no answers in the end. This needs to be addressed now.

We also have the issue that the new license system isn't cross checked with council licensing therefore we have people licensed who are not council approved. This law I believe was brought in to make the public safer however it has not done so, people are still tattooing who do not understand infection control. This might have stopped a person with a criminal record doing a tattoo but it has not stopped the spread of disease through lack of education.

That is on the government. We need to put public health forward here.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

QLD

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a tattooer living in QLD. My first hand encounter of the recent Tattoo legislation occurred when I moved up here in December last year, from Melbourne. Melbourne does not have these laws in place, and when I began my research in preparation for my relocation, I was appalled. I couldn't believe not only the low standard of requirements to gain the license, but the incriminating terms in which I was to gain it. I was literally paying to prove my innocence, to prove I didn't hold any criminal records or association with a motorbike club. For some reason, they were the only terms in which i needed to adhere to become a licensed tattooist. No proof of contamination control, past experience or employment. The whole system sounded absurd.

On top of the requirements, obtaining my license was the next obstacle. There were no options to apply in person or even online, all submissions were to be made by mail, which was inconvenient. Then once submissions were made, the large fee was instantly deducted from my account, before even being approved. The next step; having to have my fingerprints taken at a police station (as if I was some kind of monitored criminal) was just embarrassing, and seems extremely excessive. After having my fingerprints recorded, it was a LONG period of waiting. I thought that applying for my license a month before relocating would be more than enough time to process, how I was wrong. After making the move to Queensland, I was left stranded by this ridiculous system, without an income, answers, or a job. I regularly contacted Fair Trade and QPS, to which every time I was just told to be patient, yet they could not give me even a rough estimate of processing time. When I requested to talk to a manager or any one of

higher authority I was told "there is no-one you can talk to, no one will help you". I tried calling the QLD police department to track the progress of my security check, however was repeatedly turned away. I was told I would not be able to contact anyone there about the issue, and referred back to fair trade. It was like I was running around in circles in an unorganized maize. It seemed as if the employees didn't even have any idea of the functionality of the system in which they were running. Eventually, after waiting over two months after my application I managed to acquire the email of [REDACTED] the Head of the licensing department. My plea for help to [REDACTED] is attached following

Dear [REDACTED]

Attached is my complaint form that I have just submitted to the general Industry Licensing email address.

I am contacting you

desperate hope that you will be able to assist me, as nobody else in my numerous phone calls to Fair Trade and QPS has been willing or able to. I moved from Victoria to QLD late last year, and in preparation I applied for my tattoo license early and it was received on the 4th of December, 2014. It is now 12 weeks later and I still have not received my licence, and am unable to do anything to accelerate the process or even get an estimate of when to expect it.

In line with the la

after July 1st 2014, I have not been able to tattoo the entire time I have been in QLD. I have been without an income for months, living off my savings and waiting for my license to come through.

I have no criminal

record or associations, and I am 100% confident my license will be granted. But I cannot understand the delay, and am getting to the point of relying financially on my partner and others just to survive. I have contacted the Industry Licensing Unit multiple times, and have been offered no answers or assistance. All I get told is to contact the police because it is in their hands. So I contact the police (in person and over the

phone multiple times as well) and am given no answers again, and just referred back to Fair Trading. I am going in circles and getting nowhere, with no end in sight.

I need to be able to work to live, and this dysfunctional system is preventing that. While my application sits in a pile of papers on someone's desk, I am here fretting over how I will buy groceries next week. I am begging for you to re-evaluate the application process, and please help me. At the very least, allow me to continue working while my application continues to be processed, as was permitted for applications submitted before July 1st last year.

I will be calling the Industry Licensing Unit again to follow these emails up, I would very much appreciate being able to speak to you directly. My contact number is [REDACTED]

Regards, [REDACTED]

I was then told by his assistant that I would receive a call the next day. One week later he finally called, and miraculously my license had been granted that day. I attempted to have a conversation with him about the extreme flaws of the system and possibility of making amendments, however I was repeatedly shut down and cut short.

While all this was happening, I had a friend who had applied for his license in November, and ended up waiting FIVE MONTHS for his to be granted. I couldn't help but think if I hadn't spoken out, would I have been left unable to work for that long?? There has to be a better way about introducing some

regulation within the industry, if it must be done. I can only hope that my statement here can help assess our current enforcement's and improve on

the system which is failing its workers. Surely, there has to be a better way.

Not only was the application process absolutely absurd, reading into the matter further I couldn't believe the conditions in which I've placed myself by signing that paper. I have practically wavered all my civil rights to the police, and under any suspicion I am now open to search. Under what other profession is this legal, that I should be considered a constant suspicion purely because of my trade? My occupation is solely an expression of art!

■ 17.04.2015

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the owner and operator of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Woolloongabba, Queensland. I've been tattooing for almost twenty years, and have owned my studio for over 5 of those years.

Since the inception of the Tattoo Parlours Act, my studio and the hardworking people in it have only experienced a NEGATIVE impact from the new legislation. The new laws, and the licensing rigmarole that surrounds this legislation is nothing short of an absolute farce. We are honest, hardworking people, and we spend our days striving for excellence in our craft and in our customer service. It is an affront to everything we work for to be "lumped in" with criminals and outlaw motorcycle clubs, and then to be expected to jump through hoops in order to prove that we are not associated with those people. It is insulting, humiliating, disheartening, and only devalues the years of professionalism that we, as a group, have cultivated. Having members of the QPS walk through my door while we are operating to question me and the people that work there about who they are and who they know is nothing short of embarrassing, and detrimental to our reputations.

Licensing for tattooers is quite agreeable for any professional, provided that the license is material verification of competency, infection control, artistic ability and standards of service. The current licensing scheme doesn't encompass any of those things, but only the association (or lack thereof) to criminal organizations. It's an absolutely disgraceful waste of resources and money, not to mention the laughable nature of the renewal process- telling applicants they have to get fingerprinted for every renewal when their prints obviously don't change is one of the most obscenely stupid pieces of red tape to ever be inflicted onto a group of people. That one piece of legislation demonstrates how flawed the thinking is behind this scheme. ...It's also interesting to note that an applicant to hold a license for a firearm in Queensland is not fingerprinted, but it's necessary if one wishes to hold a license to hold a tattoo machine. It's astonishing.

One of the most notable things about this legislation is the way it has put a complete halt to the influx of interstate guest artists. The traffic of guest artists through tattoo studios has been an integral part of the sharing of ideas, techniques, social bonds, and information that push our craft forward. In my studio, we went from over ten per year to none, because of the nature of the licensing process. Needless to say, it has a profound effect on the dynamic nature of the studio, and it has had a disastrous effect on the financial state of

my business. Additionally- Applying for an interstate license is expensive, requires multiple trips interstate for fingerprinting etc, and the prohibitively

slow and obtuse bureaucratic process makes certain we can't have any insight into the progress of an application. This only deters people from even wanting to apply. How does this scheme even benefit the people required to participate? It demonstrably doesn't. It only makes it harder.

I know I'm not alone in suggesting that a national licensing scheme, allowing traffic of artists between studios, would be much more beneficial to all concerned, as long as the license held by tattooers was there to prove competence in all areas of our craft, not to prove that the person holding the license is not a criminal or associated with criminal organizations.

This legislation has been nothing short of Sisyphean in the level of frustration that my peers and I have experienced over the last 18 months or so, and I would wholeheartedly recommend consulting with the committee of the Australian Tattooists Guild for a strong, sensible, level headed and above all, practical approach to the review process. I hope to see a brighter future for our craft in Australia because of it.

Sincerely, [REDACTED] 07.06.2015

[REDACTED]

NSW

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a tattoo artist for 6 years. I have worked in 3 studios in NSW, 1 studio in VIC (as a guest artist) and 1 studio in Auckland (also as a guest artist). I also regularly participate in tattoo conventions within Australia and New Zealand.

I became a tattoo artist because I wanted to pursue a career in art and be able to support my young family. I have also had a love of tattoos and tattoo art since a young age.

At the beginning of my career, I was fortunate enough to do an apprenticeship under an experienced tattooist as well as work alongside some of the most experienced artists in the industry. I learnt how to do things properly (such as cross-contamination prevention, tattooing techniques, book keeping and bedside manner). I also worked long and hard to hone my skills and continue to do so everyday.

When the licensing was introduced, I was shocked that I had to go to the police station to give my fingerprints for my tattoo license. It was a scary time because no information was given as to who would receive a license and (it seemed) little could be done if you were not approved for any

reason. The whole process could be made easier with information readily available as well as the Police and RTA having a complete understanding of what to do in the event of receiving applications or giving out licenses.

My girlfriend's family lives in Victoria and I sometimes work in Melbourne as a guest artists (so that we can afford trips away to see her family). I would struggle financially if I had to pay for 2 licenses so that I could work a couple of times in a different state. I believe you should create a single 'national license' which will allow artists to work throughout Australia, without having to pay separately for each state. I also feel that the process of 'fingerprinting' applicants is over the top, degrading and a simple photo should suffice? I didn't need to get finger prints to get my driver's license, passport, or 1st degree black belt in Taekwondo? Why is applicable for a tattoo license. The license should also be able to be renewed without going through the whole application process again!

Also, in order to have a license, I believe that there should be a component of: having to pass a test to make sure that the licensed tattooists understand what he/she is doing? Otherwise, what is the point of the license? It means that anyone can pay and receive a license and then tattoo with no understanding of health and safety procedures. This is not going to benefit our industry in anyway, instead it will cause further problems for clients who presume someone is a professional purely because they have a license. This puts a lot of people at serious risk of injury and needs to be resolved asap. You would not allow someone to drive just because they paid for a license and do not have a criminal record! It would put other motorists in grave danger.

There needs to be some kind of education and support system set up so that we can continue to improve the standards of our industry.

Thank you



24th September 2015



Jan 19th 2016

To whom it may concern,

In mid-2015 I made the decision to transition into tattooing from five years in the nursing profession for personal health-related reasons. I have been a strong follower of the tattoo and art community for a number of years and strongly support the work of the Australian Tattooists Guild. To begin working as a tattooist, I have had to apply for my tattoo license which has been a logistical nightmare. To work in a shop, I have had to fill out an "associates" form which had to include passport photos signed by a JP. To work as a tattooist, I have had to provide more passport-photos signed by a JP, along with documents such as my birth certificate, car license and other identification signed and witnessed by a JP. I must also pay \$375 for a year license - which I will have to go through the entire process again next year. Scraping together these funds has not been easy with the cost of living as I am a current full-time student studying my Bachelor of Nursing at university and working full-time to support myself independently. I have been advised as a Bundaberg resident that I will have to travel to Maryborough to get my fingerprints taken, despite there being facilities for this in Bundaberg. This is also personally insulting as I am not a criminal, I do not associate with criminals (but it should not be the business of anybody if I were related or choose to be friends with such a person), I have never committed a crime nor intend to, and I have never been subjected to this as a nurse.

The requirements to working as a qualified "Health Services Assistant" or aged care nurse are to provide a partial police check which I recall cost less than \$60 and lasts between three and five years before renewal is required. This check results in finding out whether I have any convictions such as harm against other persons or drug convictions. I have not had to provide fingerprints, JP signed documents or fill out documentation in regards to "association" with OMCG members. I also had to pass a TAFE certificate III in Health Services Assistance or a certificate III in Aged Care to attain my current position. Both require training in sanitisation in the work place (such as hand washing), working with clients (appropriate workplace mannerisms and working with client's bodies in regards to professionalism and modesty), ensuring a safe workplace (using appropriate equipment, wet floor signs, identifying risks and hazards in the work area, ect) and privacy and confidentiality. I believe a lot of these things I have learned as a nurse are vital to the tattoo industry. None of these things are a requirement to attaining the tattoo license. Any person can attain this license without any knowledge or experience in hand-washing, keeping a clean and safe workplace or more importantly, handing clinical sharps items such as needles in a safe and appropriate manner. This lack of professionalism and health safety standards with the license has angered me and displayed the lack of correct industry input in creating this legislation. I have also been advised into my foray into tattooing that I am to expect visits from police to over-see my documentation and interview me. It is up to the police to determine if I am of worthy character by my associations and financial decisions as to whether I should be permitted to engage in an art form that is a body-cosmetic procedure and therefore should be treated under health laws instead of criminal or persecution laws. I am a tax-paying, law abiding citizen with nothing to hide, so I am disappointed that my tax-dollars are spent ensuring the stereotype that tattooists are OMCG members trying to launder money, instead of 23yo artists with nursing background who enjoy crochet and have to save every dollar just to pay for the rip-off registration costs on a tiny car.

The tattoo license should become a more stream-lined service to ensure it is a quick and easy procedure to attain one (and not a six month wait as I am expecting) with a better renewal service and focus more on the abilities of the applicant and not on their instant portrayal as a criminal with the provision of fingerprints.

I am an artist, not a criminal.

[REDACTED]
Bundaberg, QLD.



Forwarded message

Date: Wed, Jul 13, 2016 at 11:19 AM

Subject:

I was first introduced to the man who did my 'backyard tattoos' when I was just 17. I was told by people who I trusted that he was an amazing artist and great tattooist.. Naively I trusted them. I got my first tattoo less than a week later, just before Christmas of 2012. I was 17 and had my daughters name, [REDACTED] tattooed on my forearm. At that same time my partner(17) got a dream catcher on his ribs and my little brother (15) got lettering on his ribs. Since then this backyard tattooist has tattooed hundreds more people AND children, some as young as 14.

Unfortunately, during this time, I didn't care enough about my body to stop going back to the same person who did my first tattoo. I went back two more times and received tattoos just as bad, if not, worse than my first one. It wasn't until I got a little older and learned to respect myself and my body that I realised my mistake. I've never regretted anything in my life more than I do these tattoos. Since then I've been to professionals for proper tattoos and the difference is huge. I get made fun of by people on the street and become a display for all the artists when I do enter a studio. It's embarrassing and ruins my body image and confidence I worked so hard for. I've cried over the tattoos I have and not for any good reasons.

Whenever I hear of friends or family talking about getting 'home jobs' or 'backyard tattoos' I try to warn them off and show the tattoos I have, in attempt to change their minds. But the problem is that tattoo equipment is too easy to get a hold of and makes it too convenient for both that 'tattooist' and the person wanting a tattoo.. There are too many kids walking around with tattoos and things need to change.



12/07/2016

To Whom it may concern

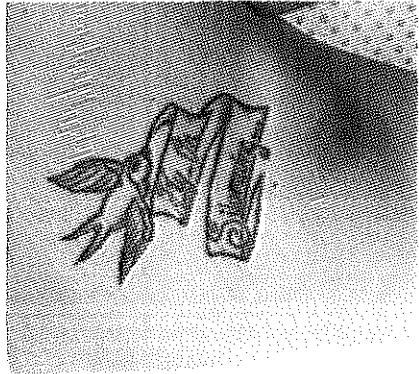
I have been tattooed in a licensed tattoo shop by a tattooist who had a NSW tattoo license. He spelt two words in my tattoo wrong and the line work is not well done. After speaking with a reputable artist I now realise that there is no formal qualifications to do with the tattoo license and I can't believe that.

I think the government should be responsible and make sure that tattooists are properly trained.

Yours

[Redacted signature]





Examples of work by backyard operators in QLD

