

21 September 2012

Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee Secretariat  
Via email [thlgc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:thlgc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Inquiry into Building Services Authority**

This submission is provided by the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland (Union of Employers).

In the current system a plumber needs to go to multiple agencies and comply with multiple licensing models, unlike an electrician who needs to deal with only regulator.

**For plumbers in Queensland:**

- Contractor licenses are issued by the Building Services Authority under the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991.
- Occupational licences for gas workers are issued by Chief Gas Inspector, Petroleum and Gas under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004.
- Occupational licences for plumbers and drainers are issued by the Plumbing Industry Council under the Plumbing & Drainage Act 2003.

Plumbing contractors are frustrated with the multitude of licensing authorities and compliance obligations such demonstrating net tangible assets to meet eligible turnover requirements.

In July 2010 the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland sent a survey out to all licensed plumbing contractors to obtain feedback on the BSA. Survey results indicated:

- 99.7% did not believe the BSA provided value to their business
- 97.4% did not believe the BSA provided value to their customers and
- 98.2% though the Plumbing Industry Council should take over plumbing related contractor licensing.

**We believe there are three (3) main points of conjecture we wish to highlight on behalf of our membership and the plumbing industry in general.**

- **Why is a licensed plumber / drainer / gas fitter required to hold a BSA contractors licence?**
  - As licensed tradespersons, it is the majority of industry's belief that a BSA issued contractors licence is nothing more than a revenue raising exercise that actually serves no relevant purpose for the plumbing contractor. Industry believes it should be excluded from the requirement to hold a BSA contractors licence.



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- The current requirement for a sole trader to hold two licences (company and nominee) does not seem logical. If the licensed tradesperson is also the business owner, the requirement for two (2) licences and fees should be removed.
  - The BSA fails to achieve a balance between the interests of contractors and consumers, as it fails to represent the interests of contractors at all.
- **“Home Warranty” insurance what does it actually do?**
    - From experience the home warranty insurance does not adequately protect the consumer from defective works. Often, defective work is not picked up by BSA inspections or is incorrectly identified.
    - Whilst the home warranty insurance is in place to protect the property owner, contractors are also required to hold public liability and various other insurances which would also cover defective work and personal or property damage. Again, it is the majority of industry’s view that the requirement for plumbing /drainage/ gas fitting etc trades should not come under the BSA umbrella.
    - Defective work performed by the property owner after the contractor has completed works should no longer be brought back to the contractor.
    - The BSA fails to accept reports of defective building work when reported by contractors.
    - The BSA is considered a toothless tiger in the industry.
- **BSA cannot supply relevant and reliable information to contractors.**
    - It is common industry knowledge that several calls made to the BSA call centre (on the same topic) will result in several different answers. Steps need to be taken to ensure that information released is correct and consistent.
    - The BSA fails to provide support, education or advice for contractors in our industry at all. No one at the BSA has sufficient knowledge or expertise to be able to provide support or advice to our industry. It would be better to have an industry body involved, as they would be able to provide the necessary support and advice.
    - BSA licence holders should have the limit of “Incidental work” raised to \$25,000.00 to allow for the coordination of other trades to facilitate the completion of total works relating to plumbing / drainage / gas fitting.

Evidence and statements are available upon request. This completes our submission if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 07 3273 0800.

Kind regards,



Penny Cornah

**Acting Executive Director**

Master Plumbers’ Association of Queensland