



23rd October 2017

Committee Secretary  
Public Works and Utilities Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Reference to:

*Public Works and Utilities Committee review of the Draft Bill Queensland Building and Construction Commission (Mechanical Services Licence) Amendment Regulation 2017 and the Draft Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017*

Dear Ms McGuckin,

We thank you for the opportunity to make comment in response to the draft bill currently under review with the Public Works and Utilities Committee.

In the draft bill, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration industry (HVAC&R) and the specialized skills involved to perform the broad range of refrigeration and air-conditioning scope of works. The HVAC&R industry has been added into the draft bill as an adjunct to the plumbing industry; which it is clearly not.

The Australian Federal Government have committed to International Agreements in relation to the reduction of potent warming greenhouse gases and introduced phase down targets for hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) emissions and the most recent signing of the Kigali agreement means the bulk of the working fluids (refrigerants) now available to the industry will either be flammable, toxic or operate at extreme pressure. The draft legislation fails to recognize this and as such, will fail to provide the appropriate legislation to protect the HVAC&R industry and consumers with regulations and an appropriate trade license.

Currently we are witnessing an increasing number of incidents involving A2L flammable refrigerants and there has already been one international death. We are still awaiting the coroner's report of the two deaths in Victoria, but early indications suggest it is highly likely that the two Victorian deaths were a result of unlicensed persons working on a non-compliant refrigeration system containing a flammable refrigerant. If these gases are installed and serviced by appropriately trained and qualified HVAC&R technicians they offer a high degree of safety, significant energy reductions and in the case of natural refrigerants are environmentally benign.

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of innovative legislation to lead the Australian HVAC&R industry to meet these agreements. We request that you proceed carefully and urge the members of the committee to seek professional advice from those with comprehensive knowledge and experience with the new



suite of refrigerants becoming available. We offer our assistance to the members of the draft bill committee to provide contact details for those with experience in handling such refrigerants.

The ARA is aware of the submission from Australian Refrigeration Mechanics Association (ARMA) and the members of the ARA request the Public Works and Utilities Committee to reject the draft bill and support the ARMA in their request to construct a consultative regulation impact statement (RIS). The purpose of the RIS is a mechanism for gathering a broader consultative process on the refrigeration and air conditioning industry in support of a HVAC&R industry who rightfully deserve its own license as are plumbers and electricians.

As President of the Australian Refrigeration Association I would like to personally request the opportunity to attend the public hearing as a witness on behalf of the refrigeration and air conditioning tradespeople and small businesses.

Sincerely,

Ian Tuena  
President  
Australian Refrigeration Association



Web: [www.arma.org.au](http://www.arma.org.au)

Below is an extract for your consideration from “Cold Hard Facts 2”, an overview of the HVAC&R Industry, commissioned and published by the federal government in July 2013 and is currently being reviewed for “Cold Hard Facts 3”.

Reference: <http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/publications/cold-hard-facts-2>

*“The services provided by RAC systems reach into the daily life of every Australian, yet this major industry is largely unknown to the public. Refrigeration, like lighting and hot water services, is a ‘cross cutting’ technology that is present in, and facilitate every other industry and the daily life of every Australian. To some extent these technological systems are found in every building, home and industry. However, partly as a result of this ubiquitous presence in every corner of the economy, and because of the many and varied technological forms and styles in which it is deployed, RAC is not seen as an industry of its own. Despite our reliance on refrigeration for essential services, such as the daily delivery and storage of fresh food, it is an industry that is effectively ‘invisible’ while in full view. Even more invisible is the huge investment in air conditioning that makes the high-rise towers of our cities habitable and keeps telecommunication centres and internet server farms in operation. Air conditioning has become almost as ubiquitous a presence in modern Australia as refrigeration. Air conditioning is now present in nearly all commercial buildings, hotels, retail spaces whether they are single shops or huge shopping malls, in massive convention and conference centres, all hospitals*



*and health centres and increasingly in universities and schools.*

*Nearly all modern vehicles have air conditioning as a standard feature. Air conditioning is now expected on all large passenger vehicles including commuter buses and passenger rail. All commercial aircraft have extensive air conditioning systems. Air conditioning is now becoming more common in off-road vehicles such as military vehicles, mining and earth moving equipment and harvesters. Modern luxury boats have air conditioning as standard.*

*The provision of refrigeration and air conditioning is clearly a major enterprise by any measure. Yet the Australian public has little knowledge of this industry, and does not relate to it as an industry in any meaningful way.*

*This obscurity is partly the result of the historical development of the technology and its role in almost every other enterprise or activity as a service, an input, is not generally the main economic game.*

*Agriculture is a good example. Despite the critical reliance on refrigeration for much of Australia's primary produce, refrigeration services are relatively modern phenomena that are just one input (of many) required in the production of food. No one thinks of the refrigerator when they eat the apple, they think of the tree, the farm, even the truck that carried it to them.*

*Similarly, in the construction industry, many modern construction techniques and building designs rely on extensive and energy intensive air conditioning to make the buildings habitable. However, the air conditioning is not the main objective of the endeavour.*

*This invisible role of RAC in the economy means that it has not fared well in the collection of economic data by government. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), responsible for measuring economic and social activity in Australia has, over the decades, evolved very well defined and tested methodologies for collecting and processing data on the many facets of the economy.*

*Much of the economic analysis of the ABS is about defining inputs and outputs and the value of activity that results in goods and services for domestic consumption or export, or activity that transforms materials.*

*But how do you measure the economic value of refrigeration and air conditioning? No one pays for refrigeration or air conditioning as a separate service. Transport is a service that is paid for and easily understood as it can be easily measured. Telephony, electricity and water consumption can be easily metered. The use of buildings by tenants or the rent returned to owners can be easily measured. The production and trading of commodities and their transformation into value added products can be measured. But there is no usual means or method of measuring the provision and value of refrigeration and air conditioning, nor of calculating the change in value of other goods or services as a result of RAC services. Yet without these services there is much we take for granted that would not be possible."*



*In summary, the HEVACR industry :*

*Serves everyone, everywhere:* commercial, residential, industrial, transport, food, hospitality, public facilities, health care....

***Cold Hard Facts 2 based on 2012***

- 53\* million individual HVACR installations (\$100B),
- 2% of GDP (\$26B spend, \$6B capital investment PA)
- **22% of electricity**, (\$14B PA, 10% of national emissions)
- **14 %+ of national GHG emissions** (2/4% direct emissions, synthetic refrigerants, HCFC / HFC)\*
- 20,000 firms, 200,000 direct employees, 60,000 licensees - tradesmen

Source: Cold Hard Facts 2, Dept. of the Environment 2013 ,\* adjusted by ARA

***HVACR Sections***

***Installations***

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| • Domestic & Low Rise Commercial – Split Systems | 12,000,000 |
| • Commercial Chillers                            | 84,000     |
| • Industrial chillers and splits                 | 100,000    |
| • Cars and Trucks                                | 12,000,000 |
| • Refrigeration                                  | 90,000     |
| • Domestic fridges and freezers                  | 17,000,000 |
| • Commercial display cabinets, vending           | 1,000,000  |
| • Industrial, Manufacturing refrigeration        | 80,000     |
| • Grocery Stores                                 | 10,000     |
| • Cold Stores                                    | 100,000    |
| • Transport                                      | 29,000     |
| • Hot Water & Heat Pump                          | 11,000,000 |

- *The industry consumes a large proportion of the energy produced in Australia and is therefore a large proportion of indirect emissions. The industry causes a significant degree of direct emissions caused by high GWP refrigerant leakage. On a global basis we estimate that the HVACR industry will be responsible for greater emissions than all other sources of carbon emissions combined by 2050 if we don't dramatically reduce the use of HFC refrigerants and cause increased use of energy efficient HVACR technology.*
- *The Australian HVACR industry used about \$14B pa in energy in 2012. In 2016 this is likely to be well in excess of \$20B pa*
- *HVAC is the largest energy consumer – about 60%*
- *Refrigeration is the next largest at about 36%*
- *The energy consumption of the industry generates about 70% of the industry's emissions – indirect emissions.*
- *It is our view that the energy consumption of the industry can be reduced by 60 to 70%.*



Queensland

# Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017




## Summary of Comments on Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017

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 Number: 1 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 7:21:44 PM  
If Mechanical services are to included, the naming of the bill should reflect such IE:  
The Plumbing Drainage and MECHANICAL SERVICES Bill











Queensland

# Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017



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As per comment 1			
Number: 2	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 6:16:49 PM
Add Mechanical services			
Number: 3	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 6:18:40 PM
Add reference to Mech services codes inclusive of AS5149			
Number: 4	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 6:19:31 PM
Add all mech services code requirement			
Number: 5	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 6:19:57 PM
add Mech services			
Number: 6	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 7:20:57 PM
<p>If this bill is to be developed properly then it must include the the broad scope of potential categories of licensing that should be part of any Mech services license arrangement . Currently there is no clear definition of what a mech services license should consist of . Current trade practice can have both Plumbers and Refrigeration Mechanics classified as mech services . There is a fast difference in the scope of both trades and what type of work they are competent in . Currently the trade operates with an environmental license . Whilst this can indicate the type of work an refrigeration mechanic or plumber can do, it is in not reflective of the skill set or competencies of the license holder . Any refrigeration Mechanic working with natural refrigerants will have no requirement to hold an ARC licenses yet the skill set required to work with natural refrigerants is significantly higher as they are either toxic flammable or operate at extremely high pressure. Australia is a signatory to the Kigali agreement, the net effect off this agreement will be that the working fluids of a lot of mechanical services (air-conditioning) will either be flammable toxic or operate at high pressure . This bill needs to lay the foundation down for this. In its current form it is crossly inadequate and lacks any real input from those who have even a fundamental knowledge of what is inevitable coming. there is a lot of work to be done in this section</p>			
Number: 7	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 7:23:06 PM
A lot of input work required for this section			
Number: 8	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 7:27:45 PM
<p>This is a great opportunity to set a leading example to both the National bodies and all other state bodies but there is a huge amount of work required in the scoping to get it right. The bill in it current form is totally inadequate in this area</p>			
Number: 9	Author: User	Subject: Sticky Note	Date: 22/10/2017 7:38:58 PM
The Australian Refrigeration Council is the current governing body for mechanical service plumbers and refrigeration mechanics working on refrigeration systems inclusive of those connected to air-conditioning systems. How will this bill integrate governance and licensing with the ARC ?			



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Wording in all sections needs to altered to include mechanical services scopes . A lot of work required in this area . Current wording fails to even acknowledge Mechanical services let alone the scope involved if all of the refrigeration industry is to be included

 Number: 2 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 7:56:26 PM

Divisions 4 - 10 all have implications with the current National licensing system ran by ARC how will this bill integrate with the current national system . The assessor would need to be fully conversant with all aspects of the refrigeration and mechanical services requirements , this is a broad scope . What will the Assessors qualifications be ? This applies to sections Div 4 -10


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 Number: 1 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 7:51:28 PM  
Need to add mechanical Services

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 Number: 2 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 7:59:00 PM  
Need to add discharge of prescribed substances under the Ozone protection act

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Consideration needs to given to the ozone protection act as well as a myriad of OH&S requirements and legionnaire issues . This section can be a Pandora box once mech services included in to this bill

Number: 2 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 8:15:31 PM

The commissioner will need to have a through understanding of the broad range of works mechanical services particular if the full range of refrigeration applications come under the class of mechanical services . There may be a need to have several commissioners each with a practical understanding of each scope . Once again there is a lot of work to be done in the scoping and definitions if this bill is to be a practical working document

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There would need to be at least one person on this council who has a through and practical knowledge of the breadth and scope of the refrigeration industry . I currently know of no such person within the QBCC system and it would be well outside the scope of a person coming from a plumbing background . The refrigeration industry is poorly understood by most government and governing bodies . It is not an adjunct to the plumbing or electrical industries it is an industry in it own right and deserves to be recognized as such . A lot of work required in the bill if the industry is to include the refrigeration industry as part of a definition of mechanical services

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Number: 2 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 22/10/2017 8:27:17 PM

As per previous comment






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Would need to add Refrigeration and Mechanical services inspectors with the appropriate skill sets to identify issues
- 
-  Number: 2 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 23/10/2017 9:16:15 AM  
Would need to review how local government could act as an enforcement mechanism . Again a lot of research required in this area
- 
-  Number: 3 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 23/10/2017 9:20:28 AM  
Australian refrigeration Mechanics Association already have an identity card model and system . Consideration should be given to utilizing such a system


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 Number: 1 Author: User Subject: Sticky Note Date: 23/10/2017 9:22:33 AM  
Suggest Alignment with the current ARC powers for consistency with current procedure


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A lot of work to be done to ensure this bill is fit for purpose before it is repealed


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The definition and scope of work is grossly inadequate . There is a clear lack of understanding of what is meant by the term mechanical services and what it is to include if the trade of refrigeration is to be included in this bill . Consultation should be sought to ensure those with the knowledge of the extent of the refrigeration industry are consulted in the proper manner. If not this bill will perpetuate the current total lack of understanding of how the refrigeration trade interacts with ancillary trades to mech services such as plumbers and electricians