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Building and Plumbing Newsflash 643

Plumbing and drainage licensing reforms create simpler pathways for new and returning plumbers

Purpose

To inform plumbing and drainage licensees, apprentices and industry stakeholders of changes to Queensland's plumbing licensing framework that commence today. The reforms recognise the quality of Australian apprenticeship training and support skilled workers returning to the industry, promoting workforce participation and retaining valuable industry experience (eligibility requirements apply).

Background

The *Technical qualifications for licensing* document (TQ document) prescribes both the technical qualification and practical experience requirements for plumbing and drainage occupational licences issued under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*.

Following a review of the licensing framework, the TQ document has been updated to remove barriers for qualified tradespeople while preserving the experience, supervision and accountability measures that protect consumers and uphold industry standards.

What has changed?

The TQ document has been updated to introduce two key reforms:

1. **Provisional licence changes:** Australian plumbing apprenticeship graduates who have completed a Certificate III in Plumbing can now apply directly for a full occupational licence. This removes the previous requirement to hold a provisional licence for 12-month before applying for a full licence.
2. **Return to trade:** Former licensees who are not disqualified may apply for the same licence class and type within 10 years of their licence expiring, without having their qualifications reassessed or undertaking gap training.

3. **Like-for-like licensing:** Where approved, former licensees may be granted the same licence class, licence type and licence conditions they previously held. Any endorsements held at the time the licence expired will continue to apply, except for the Backflow Prevention Endorsement.

What are the benefits?

These reforms:

- recognise the quality of Australian apprenticeship training
- support skilled workers returning to the industry
- align Queensland's licensing framework with other Australian jurisdictions
- provide a simpler and more cost-effective pathway back into the trade
- include updated drafting, clearer definitions and simplified requirements.

What has not changed?

The requirement for occupational plumbing licensees to complete 12 months of practical experience before applying for a contractor licence has been retained and moved from the TQ document to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Regulation 2018 (Part 18 – Plumbing and Drainage Licences).

Provisional licences will continue to be issued to applicants with qualification gaps and individuals with overseas qualifications. The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) Commissioner will continue to have the power to impose additional supervision or training requirements where necessary.

The existing requirements for the Backflow Prevention Endorsement have not changed. Applicants seeking reinstatement of this endorsement must have completed a Backflow Prevention Revalidation course within five years of their most recent endorsement.

Existing experience, supervision and contractor requirements remain in place to support public safety and industry standards.

More information

The updated TQ document is available on the Technical qualifications for building and construction licences webpage.

For more information, please contact Building Policy at buildingpolicy@hpw.qld.gov.au or to apply for an occupational plumbing and/or drainer licence visit the QBCC webpage.

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