

Media Release.



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Industry group urges caution with national licencing

Master Plumbers Australia and New Zealand (MPANZ) is warning that a national occupational licensing scheme announced by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg comes with potential risks for community safety and consumer protection.

The scheme aims to cut 'red tape' for businesses and improve workforce mobility. It will allow licences held by 'tradies' such as plumbers to be automatically recognised across Australia regardless of which state or territory issued them.

While MPANZ and its member associations support the principle of national licensing, they say it must be coupled to a consistent training regime across all states and territories.

MPANZ Chairman Robert Pearshouse said, "It may be natural to assume that plumbing licences issued in different jurisdictions are equivalent to each other and the holders have equivalent training and skills. This is not the case."

He added, "Each jurisdiction has its own regulations about qualifications and licensing. Plumbing and gasfitting work regulated in one state is not necessarily regulated in another. There are also inconsistencies in the types of licence each state issues."

"For example, training in fire sprinkler installation is a requirement for licensed plumbers in Victoria but not Western Australia. Automatic recognition of licences would allow Western Australian plumbers to move to Victoria and start installing fire sprinkler systems without any training in that type of work."

The plumbing industry is highly regulated because the services it provides are essential for public health. Efforts to reduce 'red tape' and improve labour force mobility should never occur in a way that compromises public safeguards.

Currently, any plumbing tradesperson or licensed plumbing contractor who wants to work interstate can simply apply to the relevant licensing body to receive 'mutual recognition' and the appropriate licence.

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