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Plumbing industry refutes claims of excessive rates

CLAIMS that plumbers are paid “more than the average lawyer” are based on flawed numbers and irrelevant comparisons, according to Master Plumbers Australia (MPA).

The national industry association, made up of representatives from each of the state-based associations, represents the interests of Australia’s plumbers and gas fitters.

MPA Chairman Noel Abercromby, who is a WA-based plumbing contractor, refuted the validity of the research gleaned from online job quote site ServiceSeeking.com.au.

“Rates depicted in media reports are not reflective of figures maintained by the industry associations around the country or those on dedicated pay comparison sites,” Mr Abercromby said.

“Using an online job quote site to determine pay rates is much like using eBay to determine the average cost of living.”

Mr Abercromby said irrespective of the numbers, what needed to be taken into account was the important role of plumbing in the community.

“The fundamental purpose of plumbing in Australia is to protect public and environmental health,” he said. “For more than 100 years, the plumbing industry has focused on eradicating life threatening diseases such as cholera and dysentery by ensuring everyone has access to clean drinking water and effective wastewater removal. On a daily basis, we are dealing with significant safety issues ranging from gas and hot water supply to safe removal of products such as asbestos and lead.

“Plumbers are required to undertake a four year apprenticeship – the same time it takes to complete some law courses – and could not go into business without significant further training and experience.

“The Australian plumbing industry is world renowned for its level of professionalism, education, strict regulation and innovation, and that’s a reputation we strive to maintain. So the real issue here is around the value of protecting lives and maintaining good health.

Mr Abercromby said plumbers, like all business owners, needed to maintain business overheads and had to charge accordingly.

“There are fixed overheads that need to be covered and that’s why we have minimum call out fees and rates that reflect the task and time it takes to complete,” he said.

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About Master Plumbers Australia

Master Plumbers Australia Limited (MPA) is made up of representatives from each of the Master Plumbers Associations across the country.

The MPA has adopted a unified policy position in the areas of licensing, qualifications and regulation, continuously striving to achieve the following:

- A national perspective to the government and industry
- Collaboration on national issues to provide a united front
- Exploration of national opportunities for the Australian plumbing industry
- These goals underpin the work of MPA in submissions at both a State/Territory and Federal Government level

For more information see www.masterplumbersaustralia.com.au.