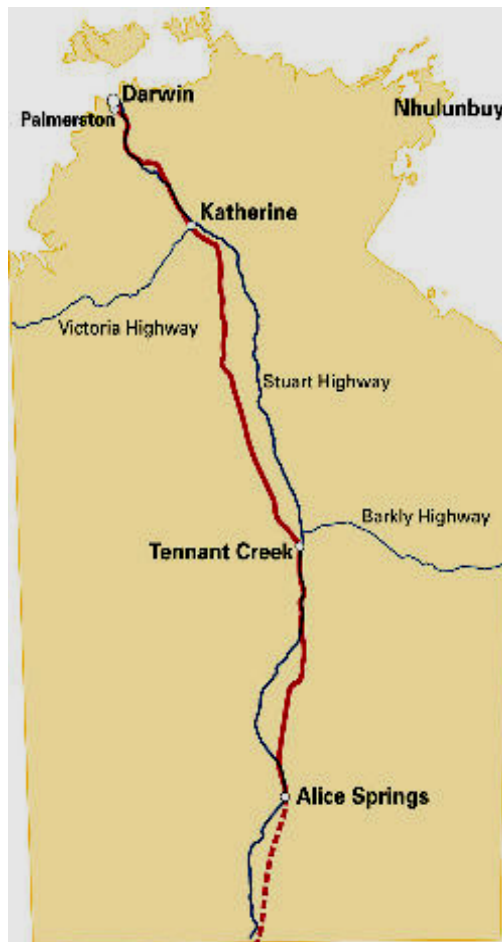


Annual Report

2004/2005



NORTHERN TERRITORY
ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS
LICENSING BOARD

ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2005

INTRODUCTION:

The Northern Territory Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Board is a statutory authority established under the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Act*. It exercises the powers conferred upon it by this Act relating to the licensing of Electrical Workers and Electrical Contractors to enhance electrical safety.

The main objective of the Board is to ensure the safety of consumers and the general public, electrical worker and other workers.

This is achieved by:

- ensuring that electrical work is carried out by persons who have demonstrated their competence at both the issue and renewal of their electrical licences,
- ensuring that electrical workers and contractors working in the Northern Territory are properly licensed through a licensing and regulatory system that recognises local as well as equivalent licenses issued in other states and New Zealand, and
- investigating and conducting hearings into complaints relating to electrical work and taking disciplinary action where appropriate.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD:

The Minister appoints the Members and Deputy Members to the Board under provision of the Electrical Workers and Contractors Act. These members are drawn from various representative groups within the Electrical Industry and have continued to give their services at no cost to the Northern Territory Government. The functions of the Board are set out under section 17C of the Act.

The membership of the Board at 30 June 2005 comprised –

Chairman

Mr C Freeman

37 years experience in Government/private/consulting employment. Fellow Institute of Engineers of Australia; past President of the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists & Managers Australia, NT Branch representing Electrical Engineers.

Members:

Mr D Sachs

Manager Electrical Safety (Electricity Safety Regulator appointed under *Electricity Reform Act*) and representative of Government. Former Chief Electrical Inspector with PAWA. Northern Territory representative on various committees specific to the Electrical Industry.

Mr A Paton

Northern Territory Organiser for the Communication, Electrical and Plumbing Union. Director of Major Industries Training Advisory Council, Co-chair Electro-Tech & Utilities Training. Board member of NT Build. Representing Electrical Workers.

Mr S Versteegh

The Head of Schools for the School of Trades Faculty of Technology at Charles Darwin University. Representing Registered Training Organisations.

Mr K Kernich

28 years as an Electrical Contractor in the NT. Vice President of NECA, NT Chapter. NECA National Councillor. Co-chair Major Industries Training Advisory Council. Co-chair Electrotec & Utilities Advisory Board Member representing Electrical Contractors.

Deputy Members

Mr D W Byerley

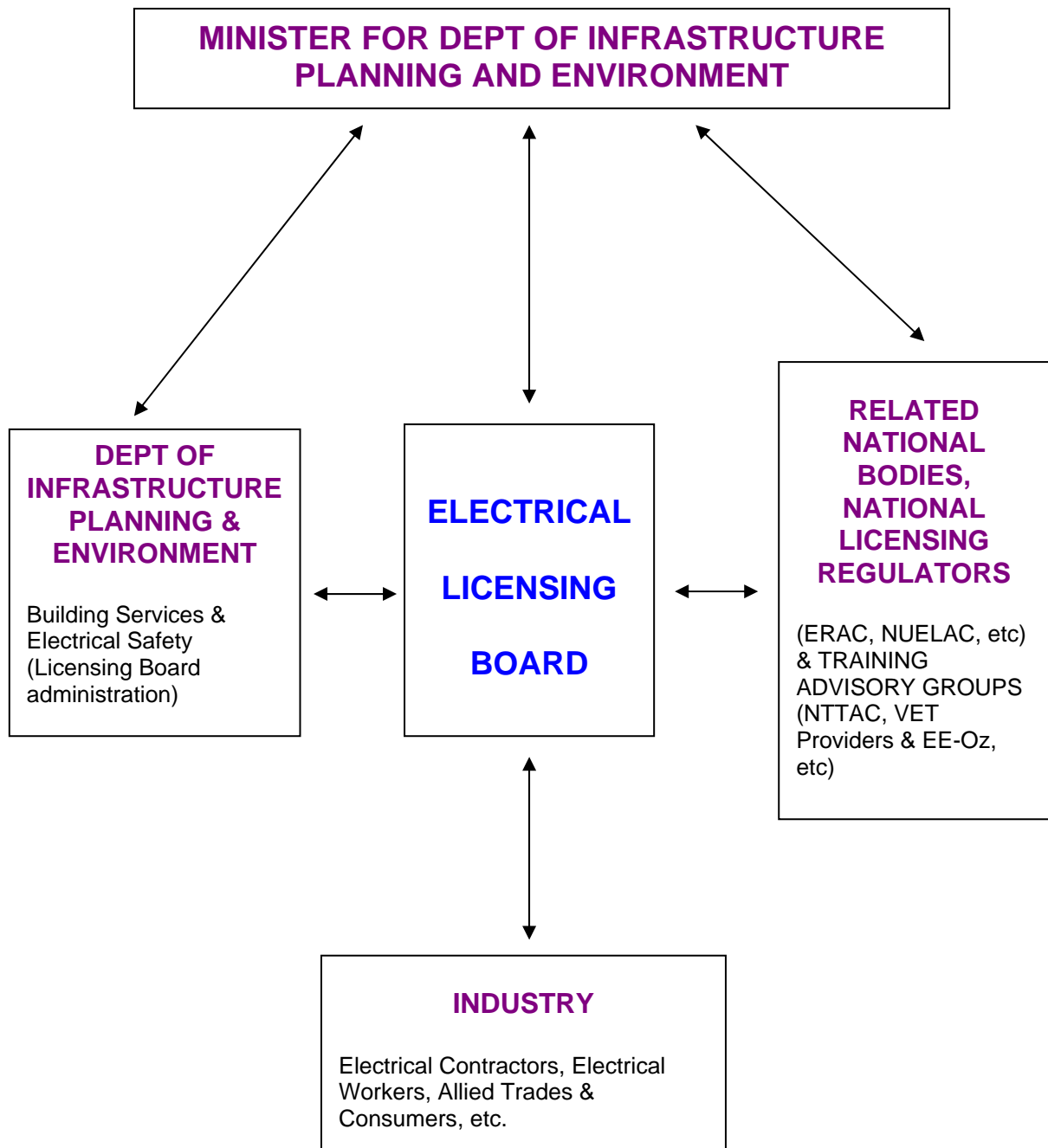
Work's Coordinator Power and Water Authority, Alice Springs
Deputy Member representing Electrical Workers for 17 years.

Mr. T Hallen

Chief Electrical Safety Officer and representative of Government. Northern Territory representative on Standards Australia EL-001 Committee.

Mr. G Cowie

29 years as an Electrical Contractor in the NT principally in the field of Power Generation and Control Systems. 6 years as an Electrical Contractor in WA. Committee member of NECA, NT Chapter since its formation. Deputy Member representing Electrical Contractors.



The diagram above shows the Board's context and the environment in which it operates.

MEETINGS

The Board convened for general meetings on 11 occasions during the last year and on a further seven occasions outside normal hours to facilitate disciplinary hearings. The Board maintains an open door policy and invites any electrical worker, contractor, or employer, who wishes to attend a meeting to clarify or discuss any matter relating to the Act, or the Board's administration thereof. In an effort to maintain this policy and to assist the industry, the Board periodically meets in centres outside of Darwin.

The Board met in Alice Springs in August 2004 and in Nhulunbuy in May 2005. These meetings were followed by open forums where those involved in the electrical industry were sent an invitation to attend and discuss their views and concerns with the Board. On all occasions there was a healthy representation of industry and discussions covered a range of topics such as skills maintenance, trade training, electrical safety and restricted licensing.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE ELECTRICAL TRADES

The Board endeavours to maintain a flow of information to the Electrical Industry through:

- meetings,
- mail outs,
- open forums,
- articles in the Electrical Safety Magazine "The Conduit",
- the Northern Territory Government Territory Business Centres,
- the Territory Construction Association,
- the Boards website, www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au

NATIONAL LIAISON

The Board maintains a working relationship with licensing bodies in all States/Territories and New Zealand and participates in mutual recognition of licenses issued by those bodies. It is also represented on the Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC) a national body that sets the standards for minimum qualifications and requirements for licensing with a view to achieving national uniformity. Additionally the Board staff participate in a national forum of licensing managers working on uniformity of licensing management practices. The forum meets on a bi-annual basis.

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Through its membership of the Major Industries Training Advisory Council (MITAC) the Board is represented at Northern Territory regional workshops when reviewing National Electrotech Training Packages for the Electrical Industry. The Board also participated in the introduction and monitoring of the new training package for electricians. To date the training package appears to be working well and with the recent introduction of profiling of work experience it is envisaged it will address any concerns regarding levels of competence being achieved.

The maintenance of skills is viewed by all jurisdictions as most desirable for electrical workers to keep abreast of the latest trends and requirements to create and maintain safe compliant electrical installations. In supporting this view the Board has a skills maintenance requirement that requires electrical workers, at the time of renewal of their licence, to evidence that they have maintained their skills and knowledge. Workers actively engaged in the industry can achieve this by evidencing they are carrying out safe compliant work. Workers not actively engaged in the industry but wishing to maintain their licence can attend one of a number of acceptable refresher courses available through registered training organisations.

WEB SITE

The Boards web site, attached to the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment, can be accessed at www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au. The site contains information for the electrical industry such as the Boards information bulletins, application forms, frequently asked questions, links to legislation and other information of benefit to both industry and consumers.

INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Auditing of electrical workers and contractors by the Electrical Safety Unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment and education of consumers is the main contributor to the steady stream of breaches being forwarded for consideration by the Board.

During the financial year 2004-2005 the Board received 45 written complaints concerning non-compliant or unlicensed work. This equates to 12 per 1000 licenses on issue as at 30 June 2005 up from 30 complaints or 9.5 per 1000 in 2004. The increase appears to be more related to increased consumer awareness than more breaches of legislation.

The Electrical Workers and Contractors Act enables the Board to take the following action where a breach of legislation has been established:-

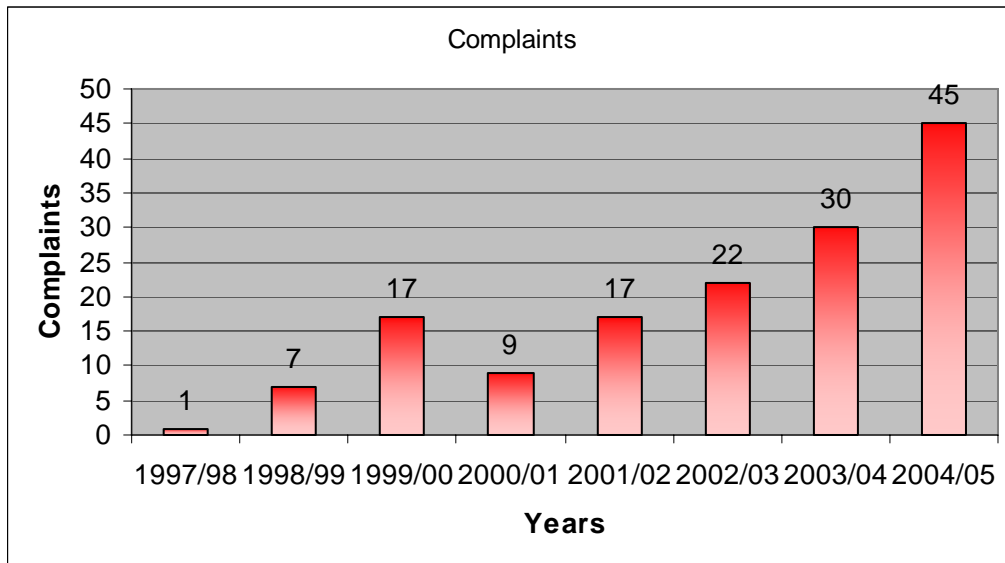
- (a) cancel the licence;
- (b) suspend the licence for such period as it thinks fit;
- (c) vary the conditions of the licence including an endorsement relating to the trade classification or grade of the licence;
- (d) fine the holder an amount not exceeding \$100.00;
- (e) admonish the holder and endorse his licence to that effect; or
- (f) do any combination of the above.

The following table is a summary of the 45 complaints and outcomes.

| DATE | REASON | OUTCOME |
|----------|--|---|
| 13.7.04 | Allegedly supervised an unlicensed person to do electrical work | Investigation failed to substantiate the allegation. |
| 15.7.04 | Alleged to be working as an electrical worker unlicensed | Found not to have worked unlicensed. |
| 22.7.04 | Alleged unlicensed electrical work | Investigation revealed mistaken identity and worker did hold a licence. |
| 6.8.04 | Alleged to have carried out non-compliant electrical work | Found to have carried out non-compliant work, fined, warned and required to put in place a system to prevent future non-compliant work. |
| 6.8.04 | Alleged to have carried out non-compliant electrical work | Found to have carried out non-compliant work, fined \$100.00 and issued a warning. |
| 6.8.04 | Alleged to be carrying out unlicensed electrical contracting | Investigation in progress. |
| 16.8.04 | Electrical Fitter alleged to have worked outside the scope of licence. | Found not to have worked outside the scope of licence. |
| 18.8.04 | Alleged unlicensed electrical work | Found to have carried out minor electrical work, had licence requirements explained and was issued a warning. |
| 14.9.04 | Allegedly failed to supervise worker, issue a Certificate of Compliance or maintain a register of employees. | Electrical Contractor issued a warning with details retained on file for future reference. |
| 14.9.04 | Allegedly carried out non-compliant work by using a green/yellow earthwire as an active conductor and failing to test before energizing. | Investigations revealed that person accused was not the person who carried out the work. |
| 23.9.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical work. | Investigation revealed that the work was actually carried out by a licensed electrician from another company on site. |
| 4.10.04 | Contractor signed for non-compliant work carried out by employees. | Contractor fined maximum amount and admonished. |
| 4.10.04 | Allegedly carried out non-compliant electrical work | Electrical workers licence varied from A to B Grade until retraining completed. |
| 4.10.04 | Allegedly carried out non-compliant electrical work. | Non-compliant work found to be minor non-conformance with supply authority metering methods, no action taken. |
| 21.10.04 | A restricted licence holder (Refrigeration Mechanic) allegedly installed circuit wiring between components of a split system air-conditioner and connected it to supply. Additionally the owner of the installation lodged a complaint against the licence holder. | Restricted licence holder was counseled and issued a warning |
| 23.11.04 | Allegedly carried out electrical contracting without holding an appropriate licence. | Found not to have unknowingly contracted, offered advice and advised to gain a contractors licence . |
| 1.12.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical work | Investigation in progress. |
| 1.12.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical work. | Trades assistant found to have installed cables after being instructed by supervisor to do so. Advised of what work was permissible by a trades assistant. |
| 10.12.04 | Restricted licence holder (Refrigeration Mechanic) allegedly working outside the scope of restricted licence and electrical contracting. | Restricted licence holder found to have carried out installation work and was issued a warning and fined \$100, unlicensed contracting allegation dismissed. |
| 14.12.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical work | The electrical work that was carried out had been certified by a licensed contractor and no evidence could be obtained that it had been undertaken by unlicensed persons. Advice given and no further action taken. |

| DATE | REASON | OUTCOME |
|----------|---|---|
| 23.12.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical contracting | Found not to have been contracting, given advice regarding requirement to hold contractors licence to carryout certain work. |
| 31.12.04 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed and non-compliant electrical work installing a split system air-conditioner. | Lack of evidence negated action being taken. |
| 24.1.05 | Allegedly carrying out electrical work whilst unlicensed. | Worker found to be employed as a Trades Assistant and not carrying out electrical work, no action taken. |
| 24.1.05 | Electrical Contractor allegedly employing an electrical worker with an expired licence and not having him on his electrical workers register. | Worker found to be employed as a Trades Assistant, advice given to contractor regarding maintenance of register. |
| 1.2.05 | Alleged unlicensed electrical work and contracting | Case successfully prosecuted through the court, offender fined \$2000 + costs & victims levy. |
| 11.2.05 | Allegedly employing unlicensed electrical workers. | Found to have employed persons not licensed in the NT. Offered advice and recommendations to prevent future occurrences. |
| 4.3.05 | Allegedly carrying out electrical work whilst unlicensed. | Found to have carried out electrical work prior to obtaining an NT licence. Issued warning and required to have work audited in six months. |
| 4.3.05 | Contractor allegedly employed an unlicensed person to carry out electrical work. | Investigation in progress. |
| 4.3.05 | Allegedly carrying out electrical work whilst unlicensed. | Investigation in progress. |
| 4.3.05 | Contractor allegedly employed an unlicensed person to carry out electrical work. | Investigation in progress. |
| 5.3.05 | Contractor allegedly employment of unlicensed workers | Investigation did not substantiate the allegation. |
| 18.3.05 | Allegedly carrying out electrical work whilst unlicensed. | Plumber found to have removed hot water system and left wiring exposed. Warning issued and advise given. |
| 21.3.05 | Applicant for restricted licence claimed to have carried out substantial unlicensed electrical work. | Complaint found unproven. |
| 24.3.05 | Alleged to have wired a shed whilst not being the holder of an electrical workers licence | Complaint withdrawn due to lack of evidence. |
| 29.3.05 | SA contractor carried out work in NT without NT licence | Board found licence had been part applied for but contractor didn't ensure application succeeded. |
| 1.4.05 | Alleged to have employed unlicensed person to carry out electrical work. | Complaint found not proven. |
| 1.4.05 | Alleged to have employed an unlicensed person to carry out electrical work. | Complaint found not proven. |
| 1.4.05 | Contractor alleged to have employed unlicensed person to carry out electrical work. | Investigation in progress. |
| 4.4.05 | Contractor refused to provide information to Electrical Safety. | Complaint found not to be against the EWCAct. |
| 5.4.05 | Electrical worker replaced several metal light fittings and failed to connect the earth wire. | Found to have failed to earth lights. Licence categorised to B Grade and required to complete training course to have A Grade reinstated. |
| 5.5.05 | Alleged unlicensed electrical work on equipment. | Investigation revealed that electrical work had not been carried out, no further action taken. |
| 12.5.05 | Complaint from concerned member of the public that unlicensed electrical work is being carried out by electronics company. | Investigation revealed all electrical work carried out was within the restricted licence held. |
| 8.6.05 | Allegedly carried out unlicensed electrical work. | Investigation in progress. |
| 20.6.05 | Alleged unlicensed electrical contracting and unlicensed electrical work. | Investigation in progress. |

10 licence holders appeared before the Board and attracted a variety of those penalties available, two licences were suspended. The Board prefers where possible to have offenders participate in retraining to upgrade their knowledge and skills and stay in the workforce rather than suspend or cancel licences.



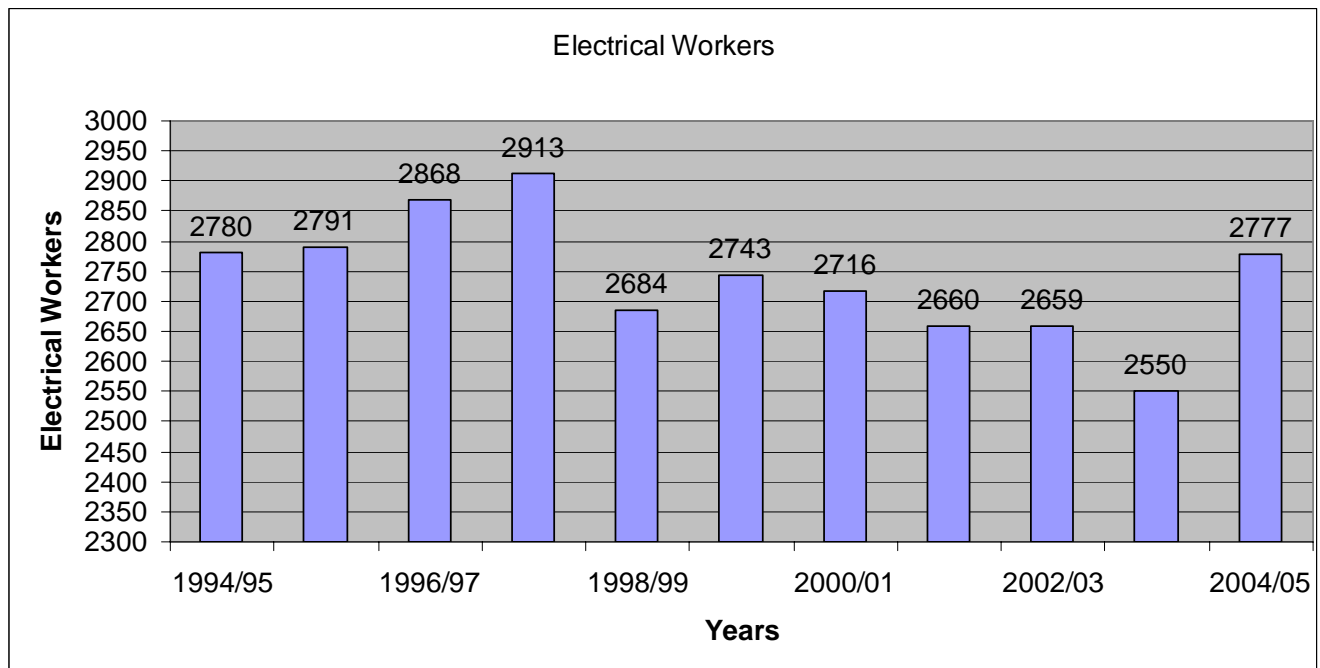
The graph above depicts the complaints dealt with over the 8 years of records to date. The upward trend in recent years is a combination of increased activity of the Electrical Safety Unit in persuing unlicensed and/or non-compliant work and increased consumer awareness.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Electrical Workers Licences

A Grade Electrical Workers Licences are issued in the categories of Electrical Mechanic, Electrical Fitter, Electrical Linesman and Electrical Cable Jointer. These licences are issued to persons who have completed training in any of the areas listed above or who hold licences from other States/Territories and are eligible to be issued with the equivalent licence under mutual recognition. The total number of licences on issue on 30 June 2005 was 2777.

B Grade Electrical Workers Licences are issued in the categories of Electrical Mechanic and Electrical Fitter. This category of licence requires the holder to work under the supervision of the holder of an A Grade licence. In keeping with national policy, the holders of B Grade licences are encouraged by the Board to upgrade to A Grade licences. The total numbers of B grade licences on issue, as at 30 June 2005 were 12.

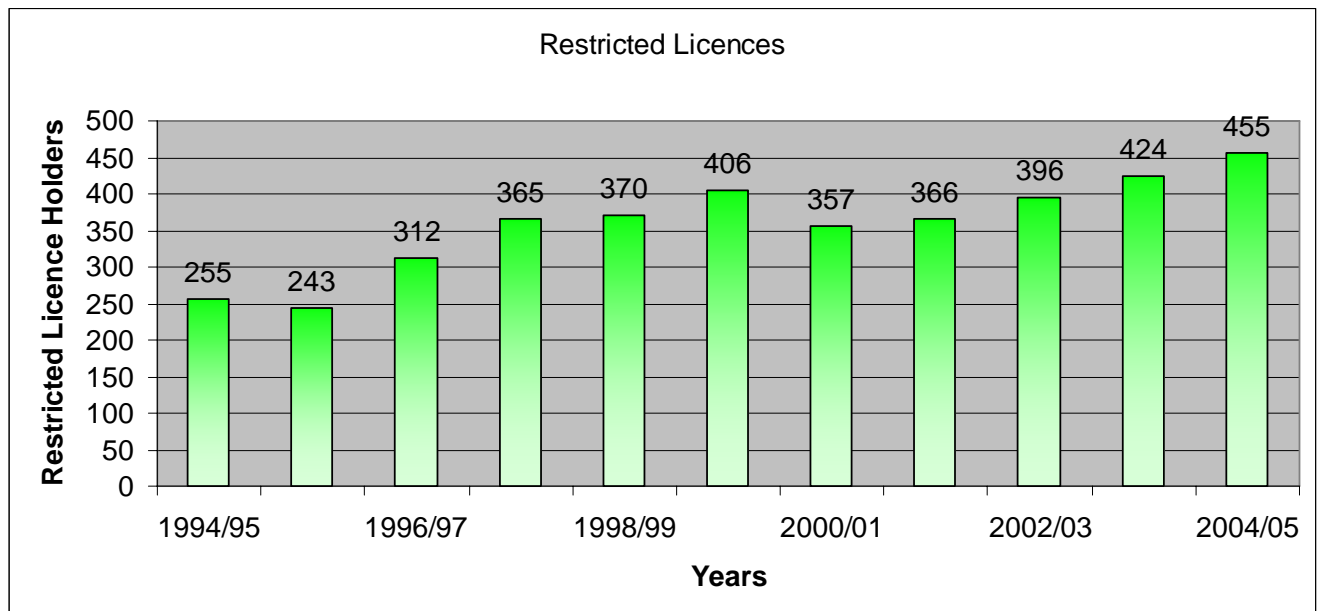


The variations in the above graph depict the trends in the construction industry. The major influence this year is the construction of the Liquefied Natural Gas plant.

R Grade Electrical Workers Licences (restricted licences)

The development and introduction of a new national training package for restricted electrical licences has seen a change from 9 to 11 categories of restricted licences. The categories cater for those workers who need to carry out a minor amount of electrical work to enable them to carry out their main trade. Examples are refrigeration mechanics, appliance repairers, plumbing & Gas trades and areas of the mining industry. A comprehensive set of guidelines included with the application form have been developed to assist industry to determine if their operation can be enhanced by having their workers licensed.

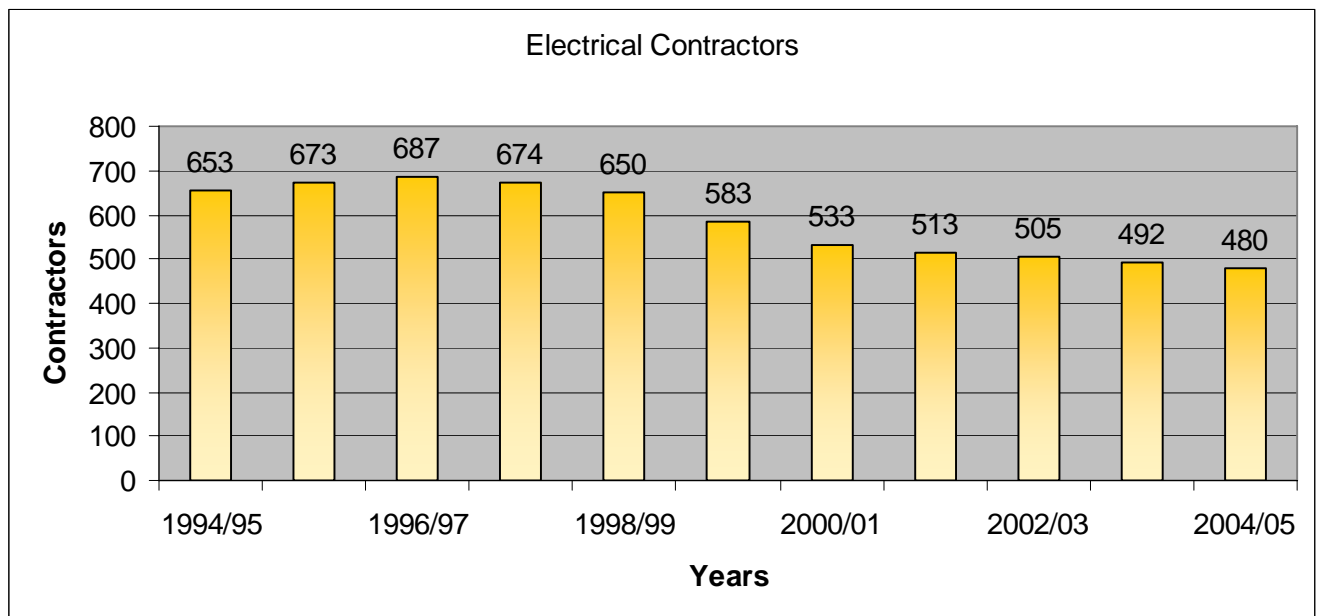
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2005 was 455. The majority of restricted licences are held by workers in the Refrigeration and Air-conditioning trade.



Electrical Contractors Licences

Contractor Licences are annual licences and have a common expiry date of the 30 June each year.

Total number of electrical contractor licences issued as at 30 June 2005 was 480. The reduction in numbers is believed to be as a result of a more stringent requirement to comply with both Acts, the Electricity Reform Act and the Electrical Workers & Contractors Act, which control the electrical industry.



Apprentices

Apprentices to trades that require a person to hold an electrical workers licence are registered with the Board. As well as the main stream electricians these include apprentices in the major service industries of Refrigeration & Air-conditioning, Electronics and appliance service trades etc.

During this 12 month period a total of 45 apprentices registered with the Board.

Staff

The Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment provide administrative support to the Board. Two full-time staff members, the Executive Officer and the Licensing Officer, manage the day-to-day operation of the Board with additional administrative assistance as and when required.

Financial Statement

The Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment administers the Boards budget and finances. The Board's Financial Statement forms a part of the Department's report.

Executive Summary

Determining the skills and knowledge required for licensing of electrical workers and electrical contractors, and ensuring those licence holders have the ability to carry out safe electrical work, is one of the Boards main objectives. To this end the Board continues to participate in the development of training packages, the dissemination of information, receive and deal with complaints from industry, the general public and the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environments (DIPE) Electrical Safety group. Through out the year the Board has continued to make extensive use of the departments' resources in particular the services of the Electrical Safety group to carry out investigations into complaints. Many of these investigations have resulted in disciplinary action being taken. The availability of the department's resources allows the Board to function without having to directly employ staff.

The Board has continued to maintain communication with industry and the general public over the past year by its use of:

- The DIPE's involvement in various functions,
- Frequent mail outs,
- Electrical Safety's newsletter the "Conduit",

- Territory Construction Association publications & forums,
- Trade seminars,
- Addresses to trade training groups,
- MITAC meetings and working groups,
- Open forums held after Board meetings.

We continue our liaison with other government departments especially the Electrical Safety Unit and other related functional departments like the Power and Water Corporation, NT Worksafe and the Mines Group of Department Business Industry Resource Development.

We have integrated ourselves within the electrical industry, interacting with agencies such as the Territory Construction Association, Mining Industry and the various training organizations throughout the Territory. Through the previously mentioned channels the Board has raised public and industry awareness of its activities. It has also increased the number of successful investigations over the previous years and looks forward to a continuing improvement in its effectiveness in the electrical industry. The Board continues to participate in introducing procedures to assist uniformity of licensing with other States and Territories through consultation with the licensing agencies in those jurisdictions.

We are moving towards changes to the legislation the Board administers, the Electrical Workers & Contractors Act, and have been involved in developing the changes required by the National Competition Policy review. The Board looks forward to participating in the general review of the Act over the next twelve months.

Special thanks to all the Board members for their voluntary contribution to the smooth operation of the Board.