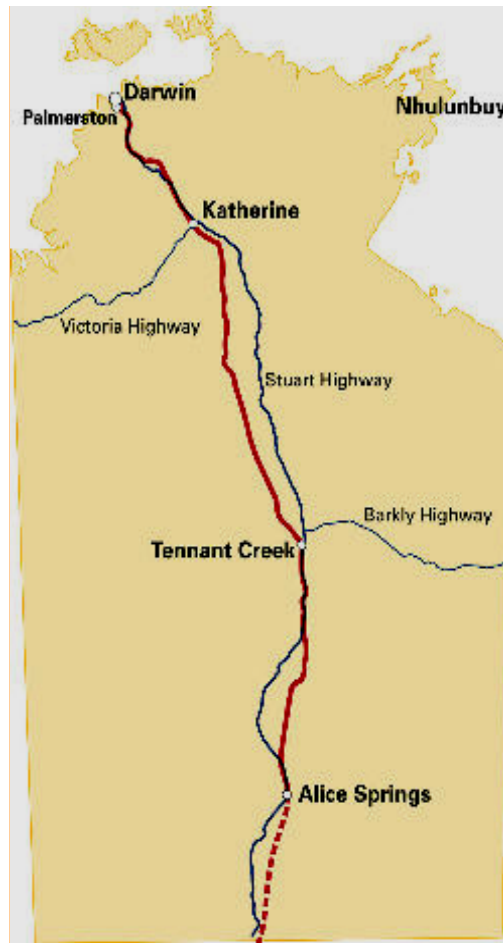




Annual Report

2005/2006



NORTHERN TERRITORY
ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS
LICENSING BOARD

ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006

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 2006 comprised –

Chairman

Mr C Freeman

38 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 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

29 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.

Mr P Nolan

Principal Electrical Safety Officer, NT WorkSafe. 35 years experience in the electrical industry encompassing involvement in electrical contracting and Government Service. Northern Territory representative on various committees specific to the Electrical Industry.

Deputy Members

Mr D W Byerley

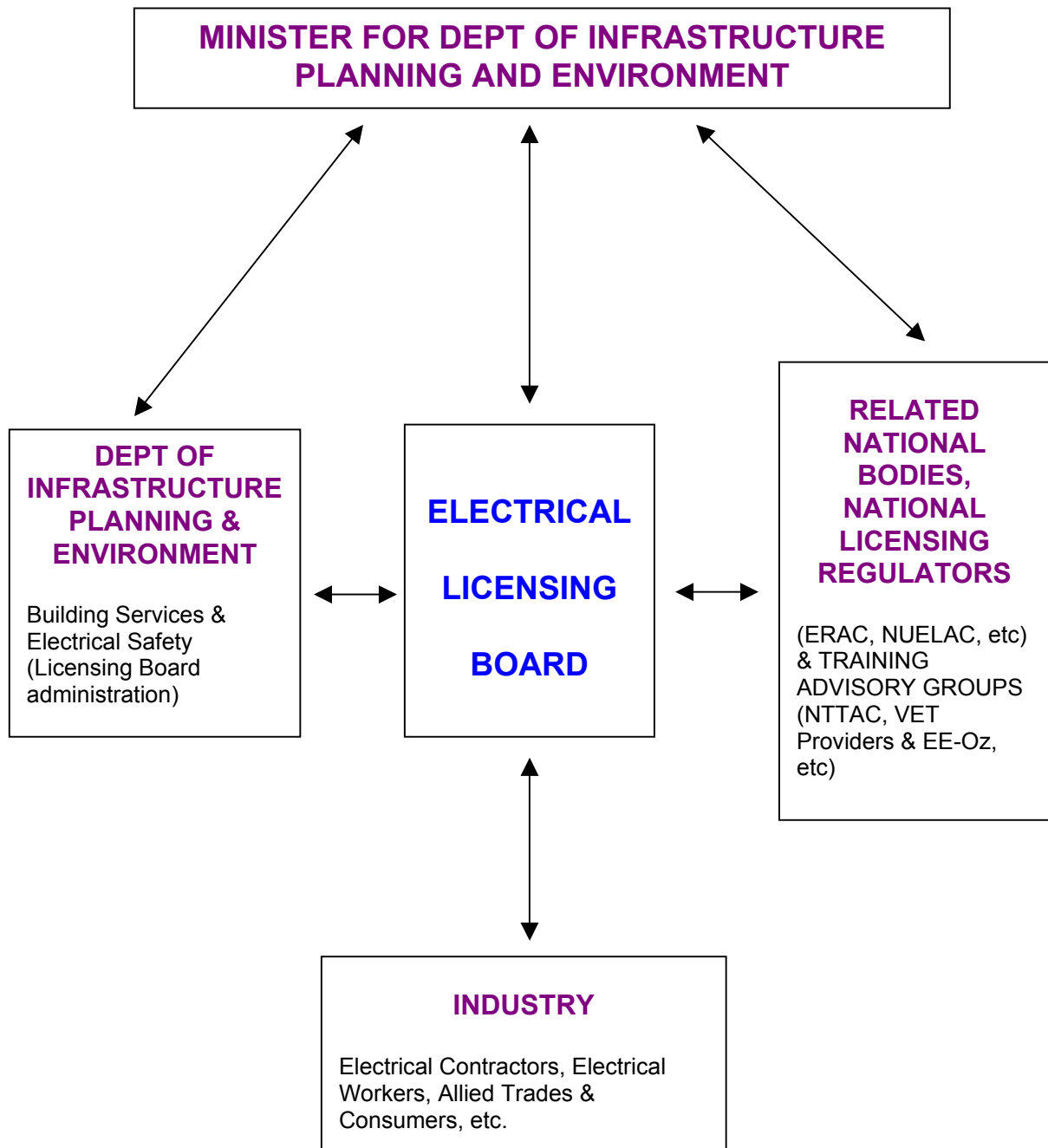
Work's Coordinator Power and Water Authority, Alice Springs
Deputy Member representing Electrical Workers for 21 years.

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.

Mr. G Topham

25 years as an Electrical Trainer/Assessor. 25 years in power station operation/ electrical tradesman. Deputy Member representing Registered Training Organisations.



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 November 2005, Tennant Creek in March 2006 and in Nhulunbuy in May 2006. 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, review of AS 3000 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. Board members and staff have also been involved in the COAG Skills Recognition Taskforce review of trade licences.

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 and 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 2005-2006 the Board received 13 written complaints concerning non-compliant or unlicensed work.

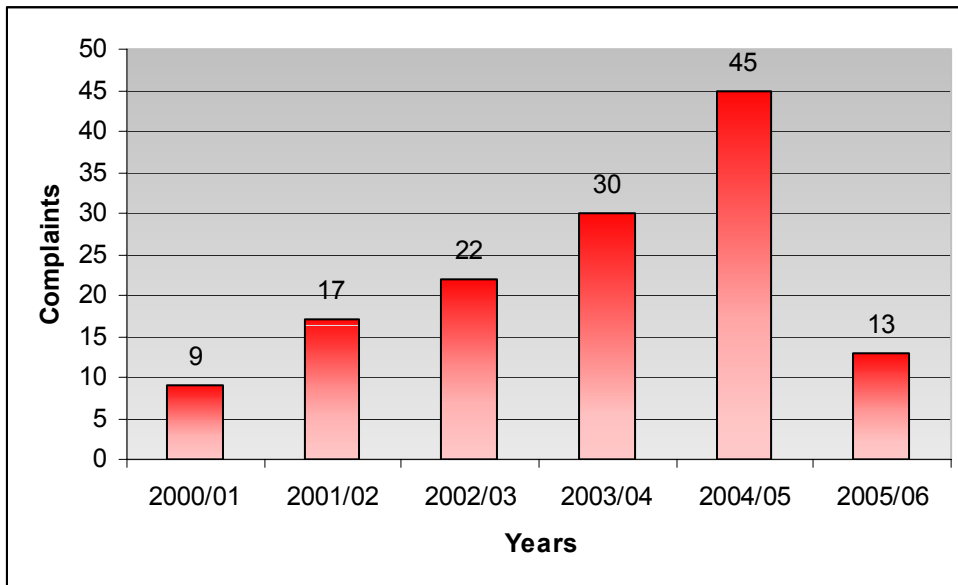
The Electrical Workers and Contractors Act enables the Board to take the following action where a breach of legislation has been established:-

- (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 13 complaints and outcomes.

Date	Reason	Outcome
22.8.05	Alleged unlicensed electrical work carried out by employees of a service business.	Investigation revealed that suitably qualified persons were used.
7.10.05	Anomous complaint that refrigeration company is carrying out electrical installation work without holding appropriate licences.	Complaint not proven, no further action.
11.10.05	Allegedly working and contracting without an NT contractors licence.	Contractor found to have carried out electrical contracting prior to licence being issued, warning issued.
31.10.05	Alleged electrical contracting whilst unlicensed	Contractor found to have carried out electrical contracting whilst licence had expired, warning issued.
3.11.05	Alleged electrical working and contracting whilst licenses expired.	Found proven and fined a total of \$906.00 in the Magistrates Court.
23.11.05	Interstate worker allegedly working in NT without being the holder of a NT licence.	Investigation revealed that the allegation was incorrect.
23.11.05	Interstate contractor allegedly worked in NT without being the holder of an NT licence.	Investigation revealed that interstate contractor sub let work in the NT to local contractor. No further action.
12.12.05	Allegedly carrying on the business of electrical contracting without being the holder of an electrical contractors licence.	In progress.
13.12.05	Restricted licence holding Plumber allegedly replaced an electric stove with a gas stove leaving the wiring unsatisfactorily terminated.	Found to have carried out the work, educated on correct termination by Electrical Safety, no further action.
5.6.06	Allegedly employing unlicensed person to carry out electrical work	Investigation in progress.
5.6.06	Alleged to have carried out electrical work whilst unlicensed	Investigation in progress.
8.6.06	Alleged to have carried out electrical contracting whilst unlicensed to do so.	Investigation in progress.
16.6.06	Alleged to have carried out electrical work and contracting whilst unlicensed.	Investigation in progress.

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 six years of records to date.

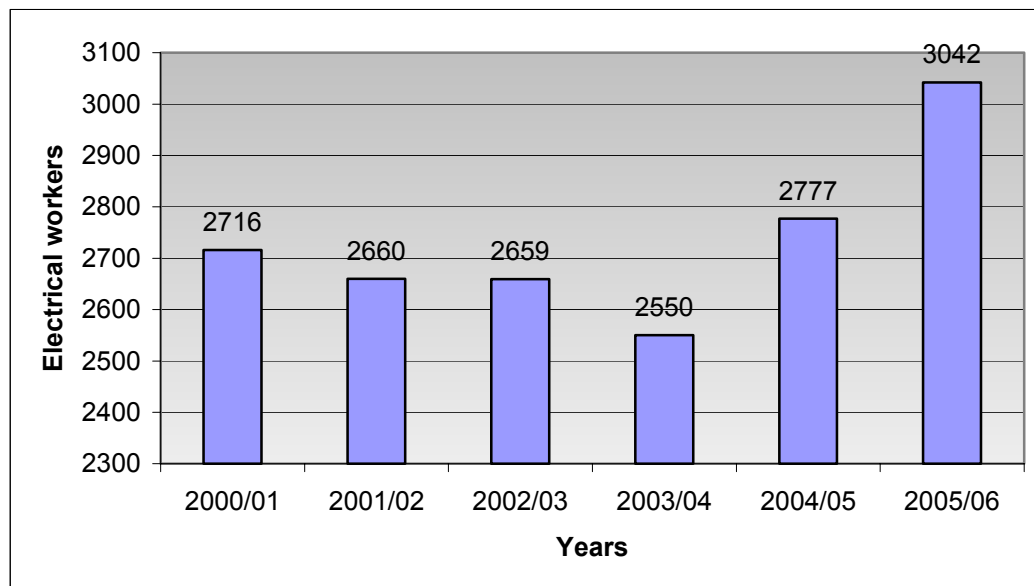
The influx of interstate contractors experienced throughout 2003 to 2005 has slowed, and local electrical contractors were active in lodgements of complaints throughout that period. Active education and advice through Electrical Safety has also impacted on the sharp downturn in complaints.

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 2006 was 3042.

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 2006 were 13.

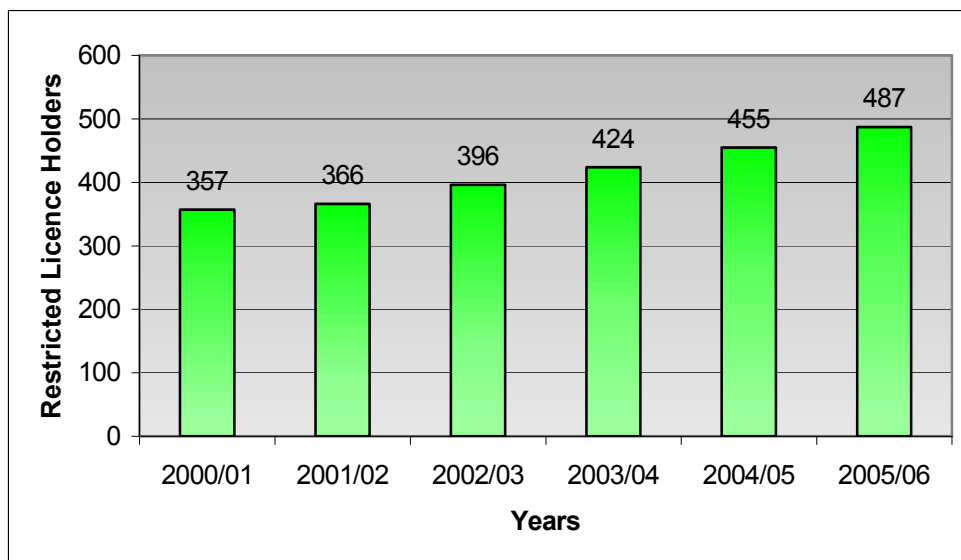


The variations in the above graph depict the trends in the construction industry. The major influence this year has been the construction of the Liquefied Natural Gas plant.

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.

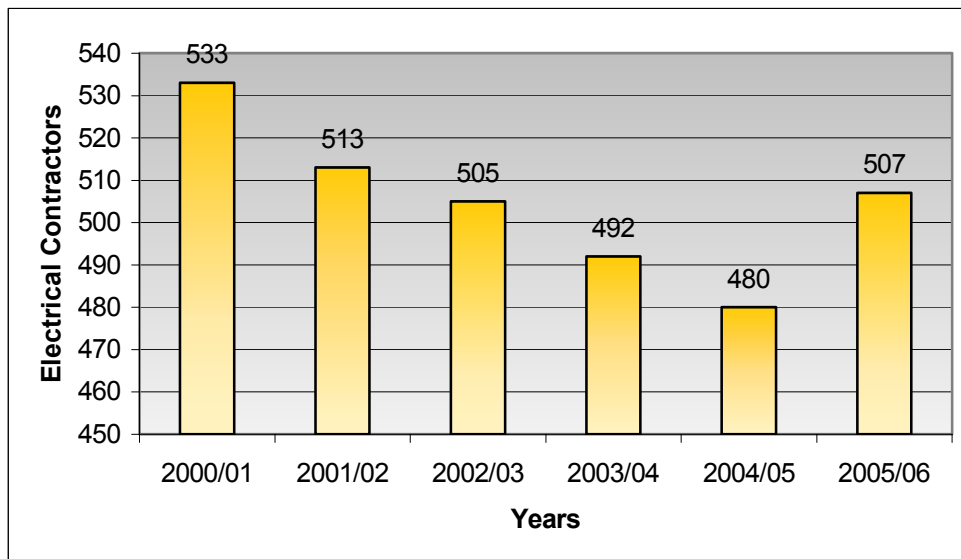
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2006 was 487. The majority of restricted licences are held by workers in the Refrigeration and Air-conditioning trade.



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 2006 was 507. 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 60 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.

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