

Annual Report

2015/2016



ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

INTRODUCTION:

The Northern Territory Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Board is a statutory authority established under the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Act*. The Board 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, the general public, electrical workers 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 licences issued in other states and New Zealand;
- investigating and conducting hearings into complaints relating to electrical work and taking disciplinary action where appropriate;
- maintaining a database of registered/licensed electrical persons; and
- liaising with industry bodies to monitor changes in training assessment.

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, are two of the Board's main objectives. To this end the Board continues to participate in the development of training packages and address issues with apprentice training and skills maintenance as they arise.

The dissemination of information, receiving and dealing with complaints from industry, the general public and NT WorkSafe Electrical Safety Unit also form a significant portion of the Board's activities.

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

- Monthly Board meetings
- Addresses to trade training groups
- Provision of weblinks to on-going national issues including assessment of overseas tradespersons, Standards Australia and interstate electrical licensing authorities.

The Board continues to liaise with other government departments, especially NT Worksafe and Training NT and other related functional departments like the Power and Water Authority.

The Board has integrated itself within the electrical industry, interacting with agencies such as the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) and the various training organisations throughout the Territory. Through the previously mentioned channels the Board has raised public and industry awareness of its activities.

The Board looks forward to participating with licensing agencies from other states and territories in an effort to establish and maintain uniformity of licensing nation-wide.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD:

The Minister appoints Members and Deputy Members to the Board under the provisions of the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Act*. These members are drawn from various representative groups within the electrical industry and have continued to make their services available for the benefit of the Northern Territory Government and industry in general. The functions of the Board are set out under section 17C of the Act.

The membership of the Board as at 30 June 2016 was as shown below

Basis of Appointment	Member	Deputy Member
Electrical Engineer	Colin Freeman (Chairman)	Vacant
Government Employee	Vacant	Anthony Berrill (appointed in December 2014)
Electrical Contractor	Ken Kernich	Geoff Cowie
Electrical Workers	Jamie Houldsworth	Andrew Whitty
RTO	Howard Pullen (appointed in December 2014)	Vacant

Chairman:

Mr Colin Freeman

Forty-five years' experience in government/private environment as a consulting engineer. Fellow of Engineers Australia; past President of the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia, NT Branch representing electrical engineers.

Members:

Mr Ken Kernich

Forty eight years in the electrical contracting industry, with thirtyseven years as an electrical contractor in the Northern Territory. Chairman of Major Industry Training Advisory Council covering Electrotechnology. Member of Apprentice Capstone Assessment Committee. Member representing electrical contractors.

Mr Jamie Houldsworth

Over 15 years' experience within the Electrical Supply Industry. ETU senior delegate. Member representing electrical workers.

Mr Howard Pullen

Over 35 years' experience in the electrical industry in the government, private and training sectors. Currently with Charles Darwin University and representing organisations providing training to electrical apprentices.

Deputy Members

Mr Geoffrey Cowie

Forty years as an Electrical Contractor in the Northern Territory principally in the field of Power Generation and Control Systems; thirteen years as an Electrical Contractor in WA; Deputy Member representing electrical contractors.

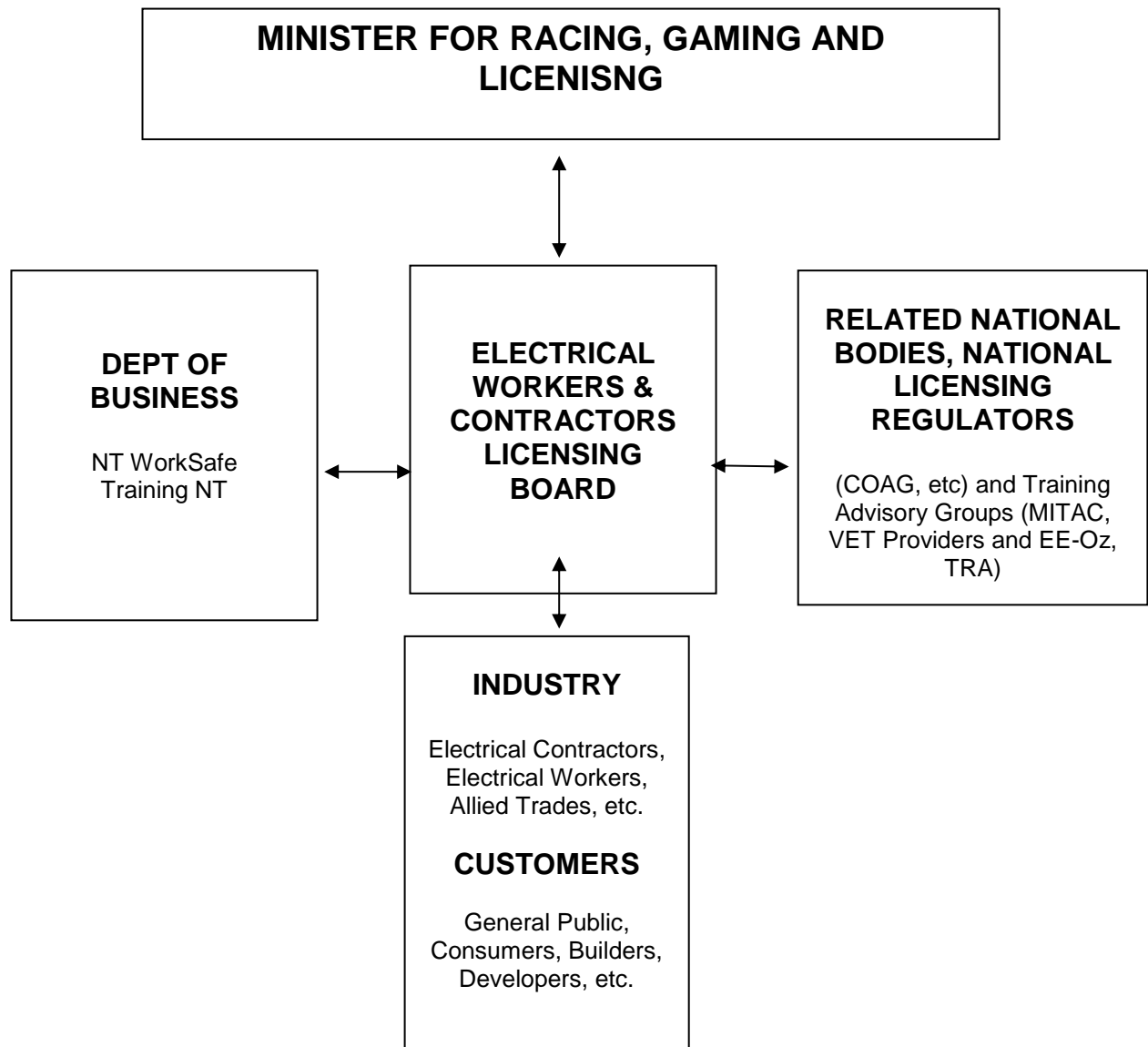
Mr Andrew Whitty

Over 18 years experience in the electrical industry including construction, supply authority, mining, oil & gas sectors, with various roles ensuring safety and compliance. Deputy Member representing electrical workers.

Mr Anthony Berrill

Over 42 years in the electrical industry 35 of which is in the Northern Territory involved in major infrastructure and commercial projects as a contractor and electrical project manager mainly working on major capitol works projects for the Department of Infrastructure for the last 4 years.

The diagram below shows the Board's context and the environment in which it operates as at 30 June 2016.



MEETINGS

The Board convened for general meetings once a month and on other occasions outside normal meeting hours to facilitate disciplinary hearings, discuss important electrical licensing changes and to approve electrical licence applications.

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 of concern or the Board's administration relating to the Act. In an effort to maintain this policy and to assist the industry, the Board would like to periodically meet in regional centres of the Northern Territory as has been the practice in the past. Due to budget constraints, this was not possible over the past year.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE ELECTRICAL TRADES

The Board endeavours to maintain a flow of information to the electrical industry through:

- Meetings
- Mail outs
- Board's website www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au.

NATIONAL LIAISON

The Board maintains a working relationship with licensing bodies throughout Australia and New Zealand and participates in mutual recognition of licences issued by those authorities.

The Northern Territory is represented on Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC), a national body which sets the standards for minimum qualifications and requirements for licensing with a view to achieving national uniformity by the Electrical Safety Regulator, NT WorkSafe.

WEB SITE

The site contains information for the electrical industry such as the Board's information bulletins, application forms, publications, frequently asked questions, Annual Reports, links to legislation and other information of benefit to both industry and consumers.

The website can be accessed at www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au.

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Through its membership of the Major Industries Training Advisory Council (MITAC) the Board is represented at Northern Territory regional workshops involved in reviewing national electrotechnology training packages for the electrical industry.

The maintenance of skills is viewed by all jurisdictions as most desirable for electrical workers to keep abreast of the latest trends and requirements in order to create and maintain safe and compliant electrical installations. In supporting this view, the Board has a skills maintenance requirement which requires electrical workers, at the time of renewal of their licence, to provide evidence that they have maintained their skills and knowledge.

With the release of the amendment to the Wiring Rules released in December 2012, the

skills maintenance course ensures that people who attend are made aware of these changes when they happen.

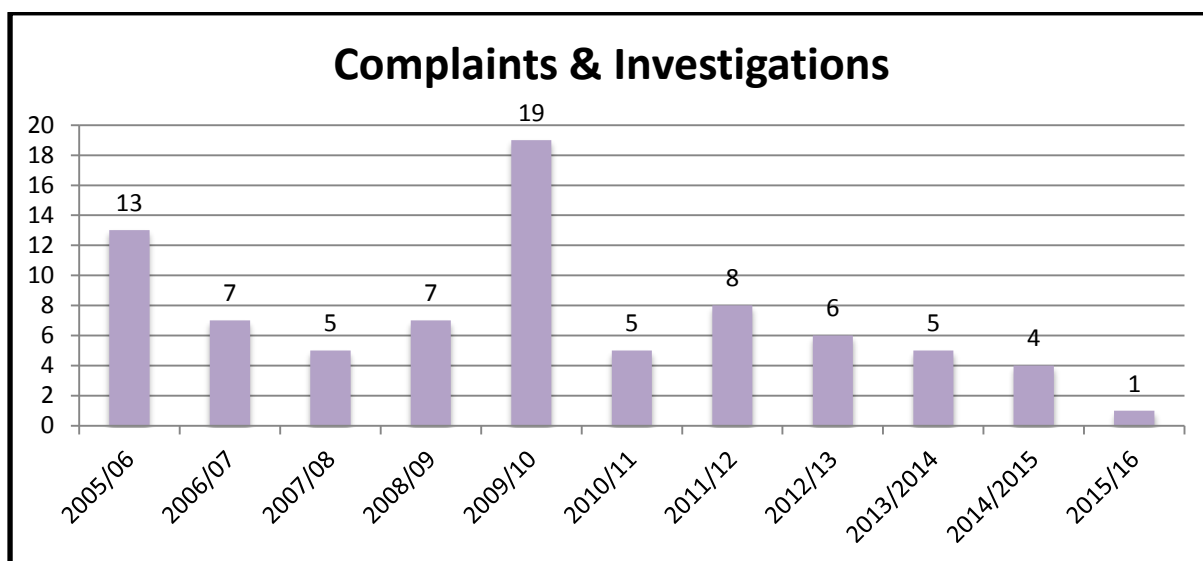
STAFF

The Department of Business (DoB) provides administrative support to the Board through its pool of Licensing Officers in the Client Engagement Unit of Licensing NT.

INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Investigations of breaches conducted by the Electrical Safety Unit of NT WorkSafe and education of consumers are the main contributors to complaints forwarded for consideration by the Board.

During the financial year 2015-2016 the Board received one written complaint 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:

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

The Board prefers to have first-time offenders of less serious breaches participate in retraining to upgrade their knowledge and skills and stay in the workforce rather than suspend or cancel licences.

Where it is evident there are misconceptions or common failings across a section of the electrical industry (such as the requirement to register apprentices separately with the Board), efforts are made to educate employers and electrical workers rather than penalise them in the first instance.

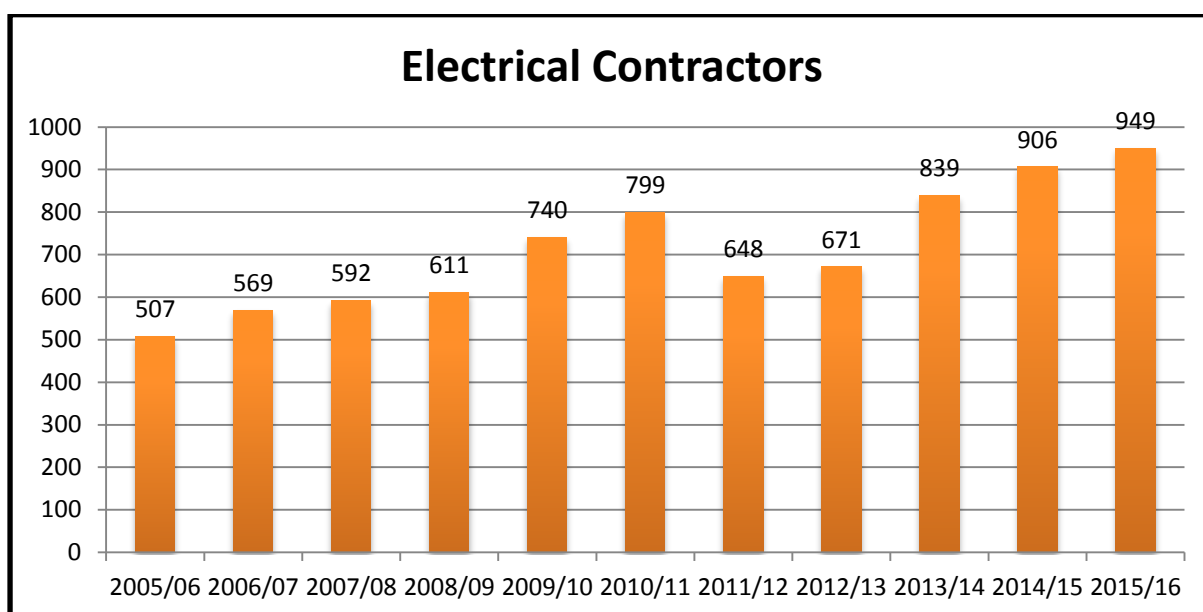
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Department providing administrative support administers the Board's budget and finances. The Board's Financial Statement forms a part of the department's report.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Electrical Contractor Licences

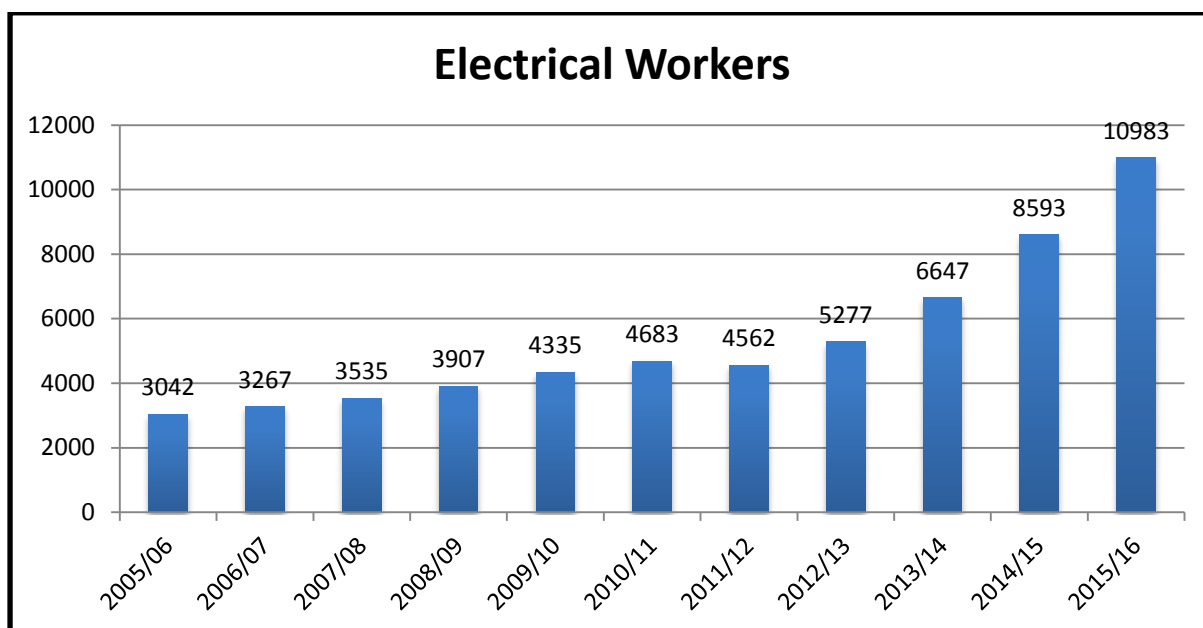
The total number of Electrical Contractor Licences issued as at 30 June 2016, was 949. The fluctuation in numbers is believed to be as a result of a more mobile workforce and the stringent requirement of the electrical industry to comply with the *Electricity Reform Act* and the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Act*.



Electrical Worker Licences – A Grade

A Grade electrical worker 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 or New Zealand and are eligible to be issued with the equivalent licence under mutual recognition. The total number of licences on issue as at 30 June 2016 was 10983.

B Grade electrical worker licences in the categories of Electrical Mechanic and Electrical Fitter require the holder to work under the supervision of the holder of an A grade licence. In keeping with the national policy, holders of B Grade licences are encouraged by the Board to upgrade to A Grade Licences. There are currently three B Grade licence holders in the Northern Territory.

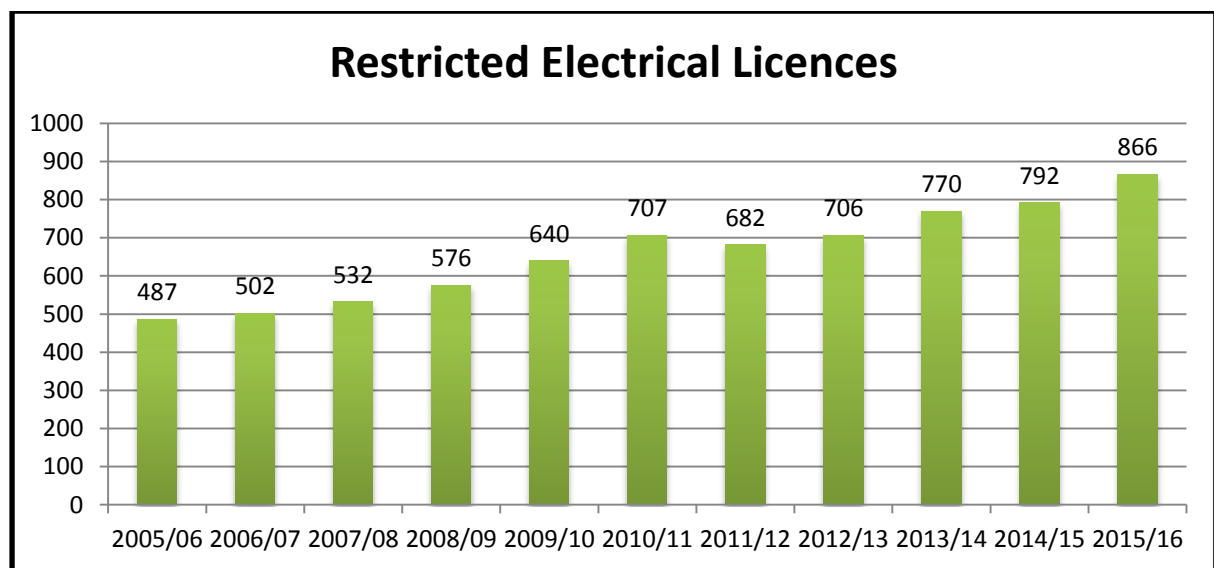


Restricted Electrical Worker Licences – R Grade

Ten categories of Restricted Electrical Licences are available 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 and air conditioning mechanics, appliance repairers, plumbing and gas trades and areas of the mining industry.

A comprehensive set of guidelines included with the application form has been developed to assist industry to determine if their operation can be enhanced by having their workers trained and licensed.

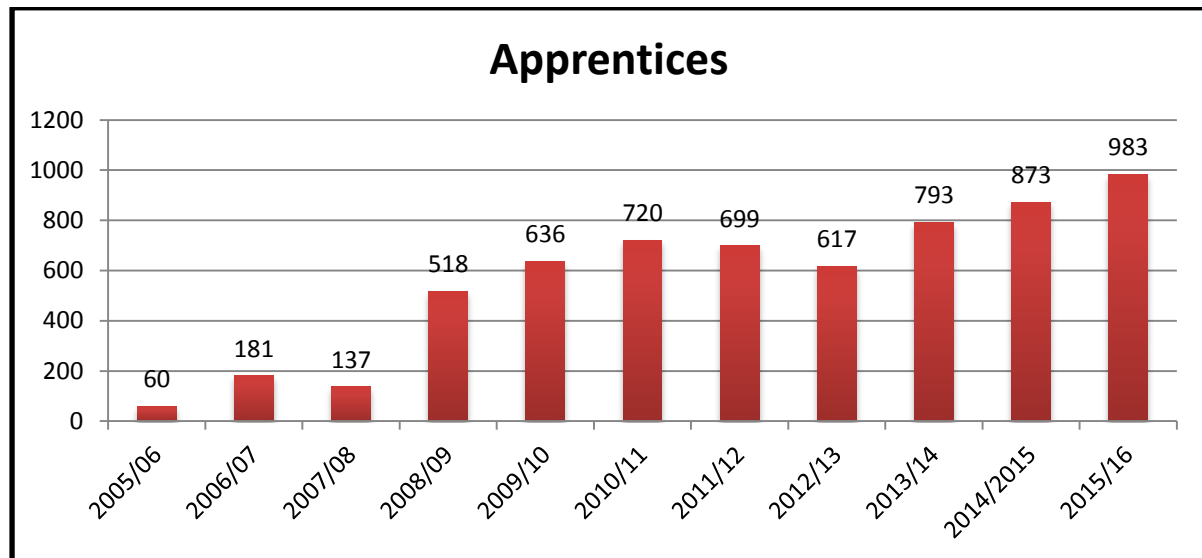
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2016 was 866. The majority of restricted licences are held by workers in the refrigeration and air-conditioning trade.



Apprentices

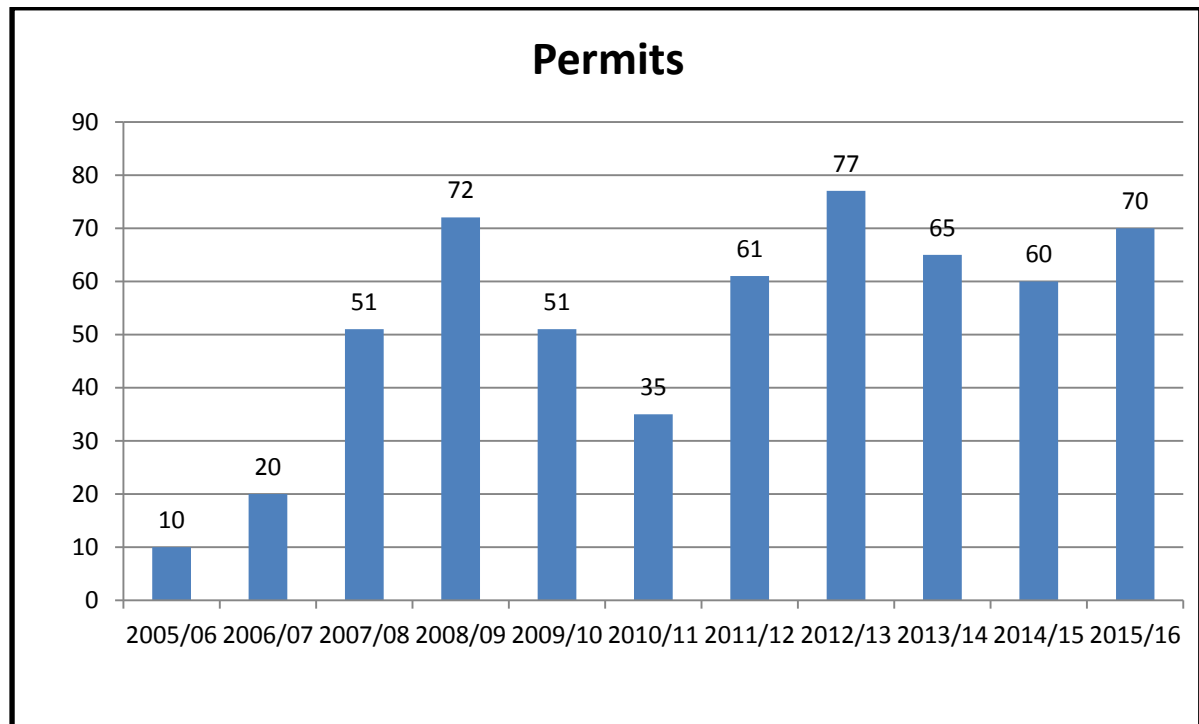
Apprentices to trades which require a person to hold an Electrical Worker Licence are required to be registered with the Board. In addition to mainstream electricians, these include apprentices in the major service industries of refrigeration and air-conditioning, electronics and appliance service trades.

The total number of Electrical Apprentice registrations on issue as at 30 June 2016 was 983.

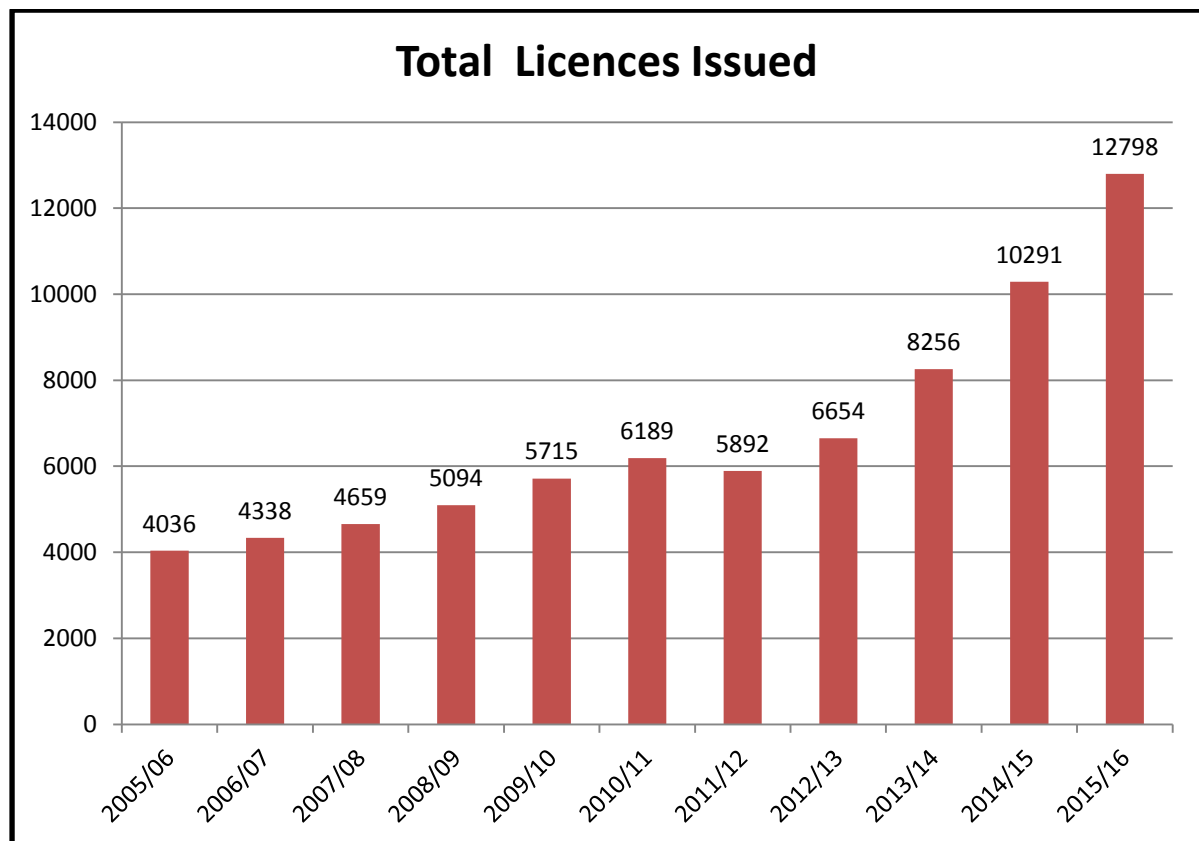


Temporary Permits

In conjunction with licences and apprentice registration cards, temporary permits are also issued. Temporary Permits are issued for a variety of reasons which include Australian context training for approved overseas applicants, electrical workers attempting to gain skills to upgrade a licence and the reintroduction to the electrical industry of former licence holders. Temporary permits are issued for a specific term and have conditions which limit the duties the applicant is able to conduct and further stipulate what is required to gain the licence. The total number of permits issued at 30 June 2016 was 70.



Total Licences current at 30 June 2016 – 12,798



NB* Please note, Permits and Apprentice Registrations are not classed as licences and are not included in the table above.

Conclusion

The increased numbers of licences, registrations and permits on issue by the Board reflect a general migration of industry members into the Northern Territory.

The Board is integrated within the electrical industry, interacting with agencies such as the Master Builders Association, mining industry, interstate electrical licensing authorities and the various training organisations throughout the Territory. Through the previously-mentioned channels, the Board continues to raise public and industry awareness of its activities. The Board also maintains ongoing participation in introducing procedures to assist uniformity and consistency of licensing.

The Board looks forward to another year of positive contribution with the many changes and developments that are anticipated within the electrical industry.
