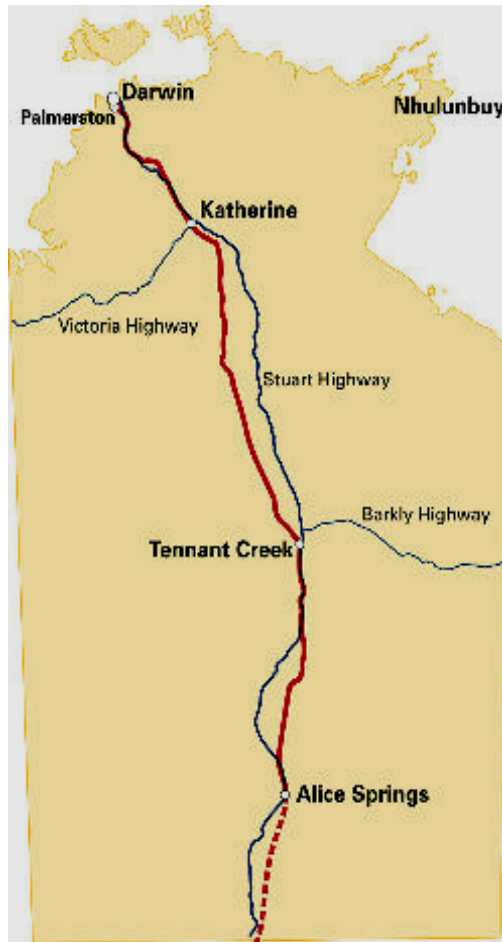


# Annual Report

## 2001/2002



**NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
**ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS**  
**LICENSING BOARD**

# **ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD**

## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2002**

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### **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 electrical workers, other workers, consumers and the general public.*

This is achieved by:

- ensuring that electrical work is carried out by persons who are competent and appropriately qualified to perform the work,
- 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 2002 comprised -

**Chairman**

**Mr C Freeman**

36 years experience in Government/private/consulting employment. Currently employed with NT Power Group; Member Institute of Engineers of Australia; current 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 MITAC, Deputy Chair Electro-Tech & Utilities Training. Representing Electrical Workers.

**Mr S Versteegh**

Associate Director for Community, Technology & Horticulture, Centralian College. Representing Registered Training Organisations.

**Deputy Members**

**Mr D W Byerley**

Work's Coordinator Power and Water Authority, Alice Springs  
Deputy Member representing Electrical Workers for 16 years.

**Mr K Kernich**

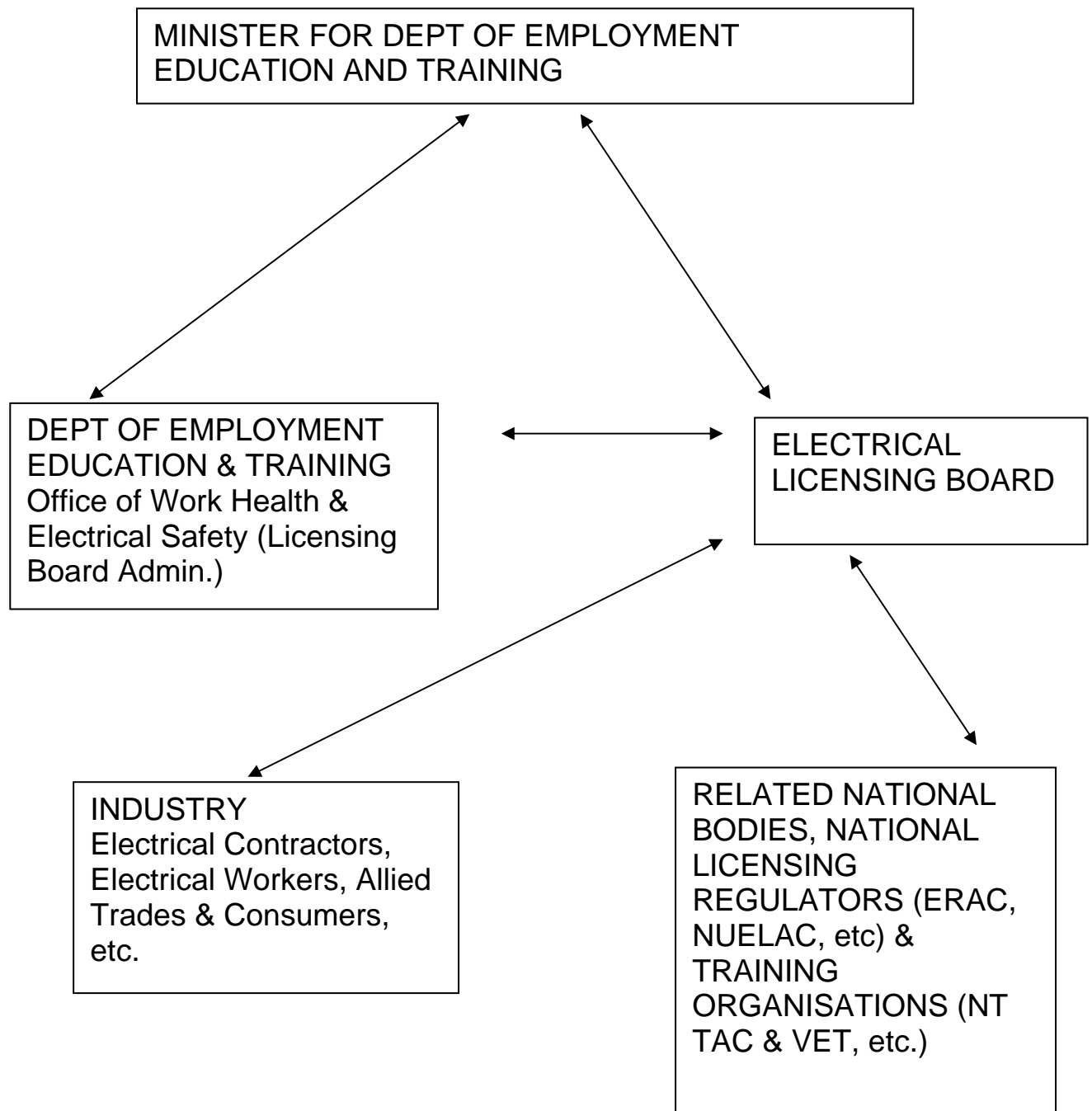
23 years as an Electrical Contractor in the NT. Vice President of NECA, NT Chapter. NECA National Councillor. Member of Management Board of Electrotech and Utilities TAC. Deputy Member representing Electrical Contractors.

**Mr. T Hallen**

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

**Mr. G Dale**

Electrical trades lecturer, School of Utilities and Construction, Northern Territory University. Representing Registered Training Organisations.



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

## **MEETINGS**

The Board maintains an open door policy. 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, is invited to do so. In an effort to maintain this policy and to assist the industry, the Board periodically meets in centres outside of Darwin.

The Board met on 11 occasions during the last year for general meetings and on three occasions outside normal hours to facilitate Show Cause hearings. In November the Board met in Katherine, in March it met in Alice Springs and its May meeting was held in Nhulunbuy. Both these meetings were followed by open forums where those involved in the electrical industry were invited to discuss their views and concerns with the Board. On all occasions there was a healthy representation of industry with many topics discussed.

## **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",
- trade exhibitions,
- local Rural Shows,
- the Northern Territory Government Territory Business Centres,
- the Territory Construction Association.

Additionally a web site has been developed and information is currently being prepared for inclusion.

**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. The National Uniform Electrical Licensing Advisory Committee (NUELAC) is an advisory committee set up to look into issues relating to uniformity of education, training and licensing. The Board has a regular input into the proceedings of this committee. Additionally the Board participates in a national forum of licensing managers working on uniformity of licensing management practices.

**PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING DEVELOPMENT**

Through its membership of the Major Industries Training Advisory Council (MITAC) the Board was represented on the Northern Territory regional workshops reviewing both the Lift Electrical / Mechanical Training Package and the National Electrotech Training Package for the Electrical Industry. The Board is also participating in the development and introduction of a revised training package for electricians by its involvement with NUELAC.

A national review of the training requirements for licensing electricians has led to the development of 66 essential capabilities and a capstone assessment. The new package is approved by NUELAC and ERAC and will solve some of the issues surrounding evidence of competence in both on and off-the-job training areas. The capstone assessment will address industry and regulatory concerns on the levels of competence being achieved by some trainees. It is expected this new training package will be introduced in the coming year.

NUELAC is carrying out reviews of all other categories of electrical licences including restricted licences and the board has an input into this process.

In consultation with local training providers the Board had a training program developed as a prerequisite to obtaining an Electrical Contractors Licence. This program was successfully introduced during the past year and has assisted the Northern Territory to move closer to alignment with national uniformity.

In line with other jurisdictions and in the pursuit of licenced electrical workers maintaining their skills the Board has developed a scheme to monitor skills maintenance . This will require electrical workers to demonstrate the currency of their skills at the time of renewal of their licence. Licences are renewable every five years and the Board has identified several ways skills maintenance can be demonstrated. The Board is currently sourcing refresher courses for those not participating in the industry but wish to maintain their skills. The planned introduction date for this requirement is January 2003.

### **WEB SITE**

This year saw the development of a web site which is attached to the Department of Employment Education & Training at [http:// www.deet.nt.gov.au/wha](http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/wha). The site contains information for the electrical industry such as the Boards information bulletins, application forms for licensing and other information of benefit to both industry and consumers.

### **INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Since 1998 the Board has increased its activity in this area and with the introduction of the Electricity Reform Act in 2000 the auditing of electrical work by Electrical Safety has seen an increase of complaints being referred to the Board for consideration. Complaints currently number 4.7 per 1000 licenses issued annually.

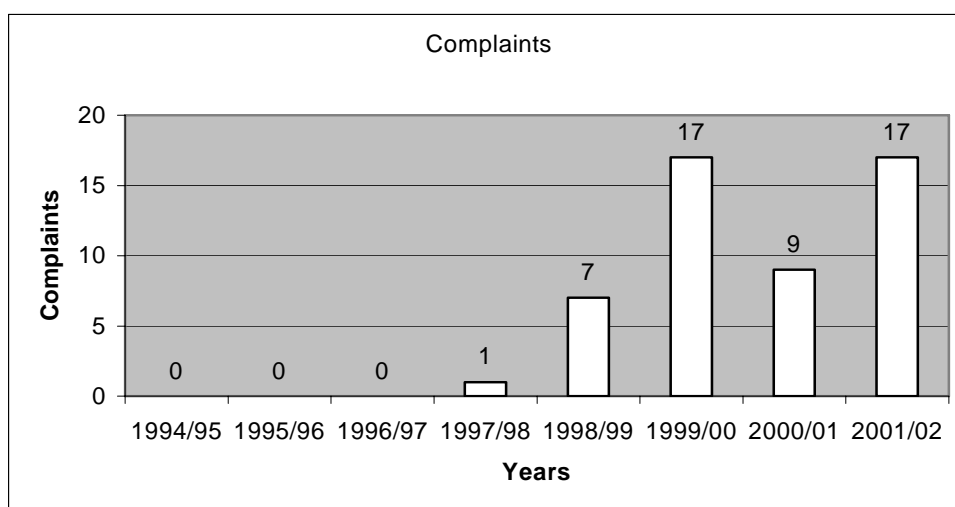
During the 2001-2002 financial year the Board received 17 written complaints concerning non-compliant or unlicensed work. From these 5 Electrical Workers and Contractors appeared before Board Show Cause hearings and 1 unlicensed person was dealt with through the Magistrates Court. Of the rest, after investigation, 7 were issued formal warnings, 1 was provided with advice, 2 were dismissed without action and 1 was referred to the Electrical Safety Regulator for action.

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 those things.

The 5 licence holders who appeared before the Board attracted a variety of those penalties available however no licences were cancelled. The Board prefers where possible to have offenders participate in retraining to upgrade their knowledge and skills and stay in the workforce rather than cancel licences.



The graph above depicts the complaints dealt with over the 8 years of records to date. The lack of complaints dealt with from 1994/95 to 1997/98 was due to a lack of funding and no Executive Officer being appointed.

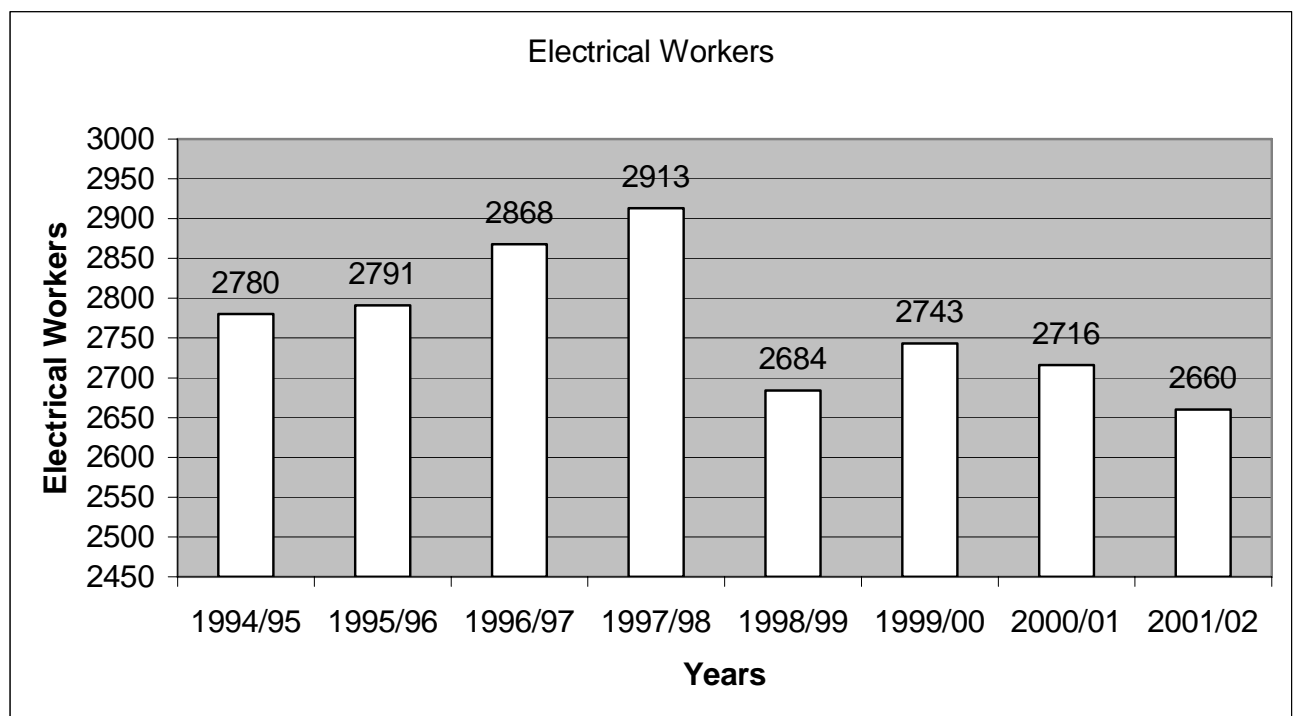


## **STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

### **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 2002 were 2660.

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 2002 were 14.

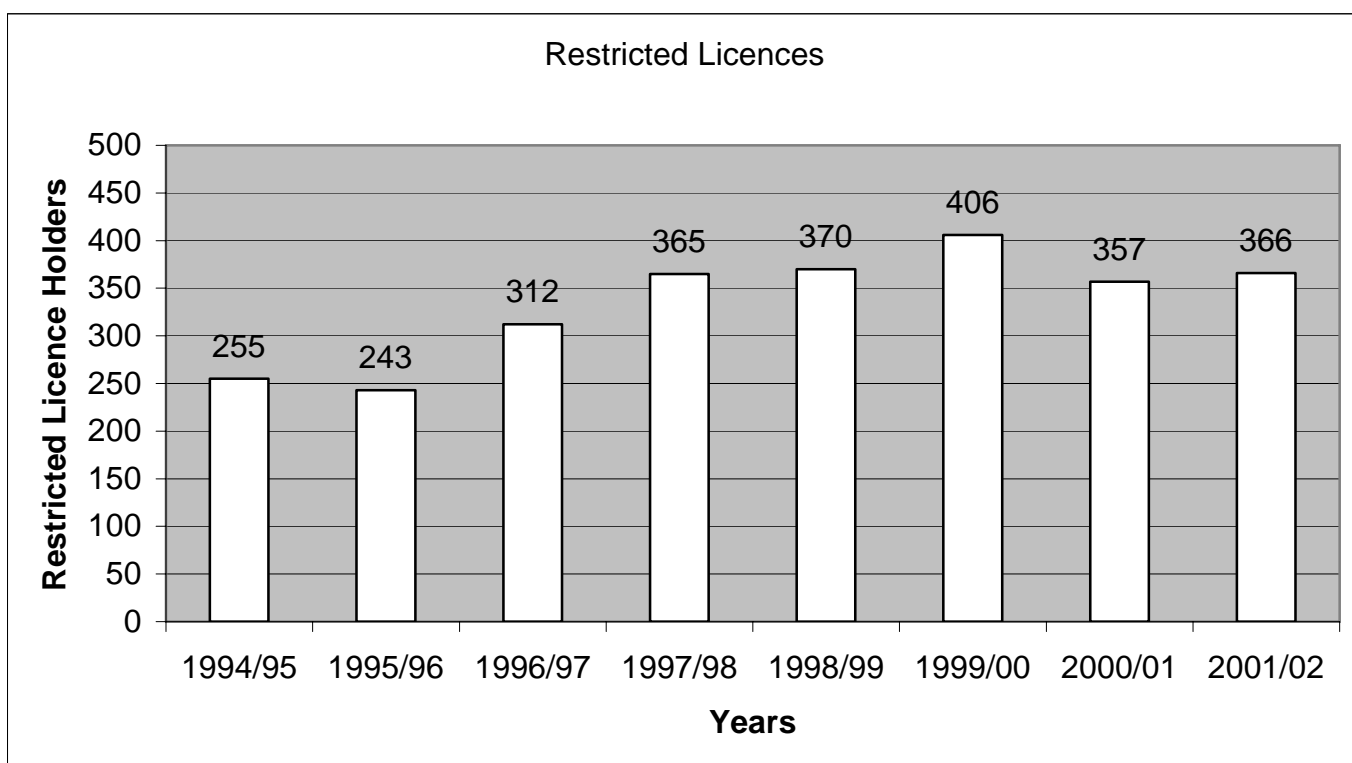


The variations in the above graph depict the trends in the construction industry over the same period.

**R Grade Electrical Workers Licences (restricted licences)**

R Grade Electrical Workers Licences are issued in the categories of Refrigeration Mechanic and Instrument Fitter. Restricted licence categories for other appliance repair such as Plumbing and Gas fitting Equipment, Office Equipment, Domestic Equipment, Lab/Scientific Equipment, Industrial Equipment, etc are also included in the statistics below. The previously existing category of special permits that were due to be renewed during the year was converted to this category of licence.

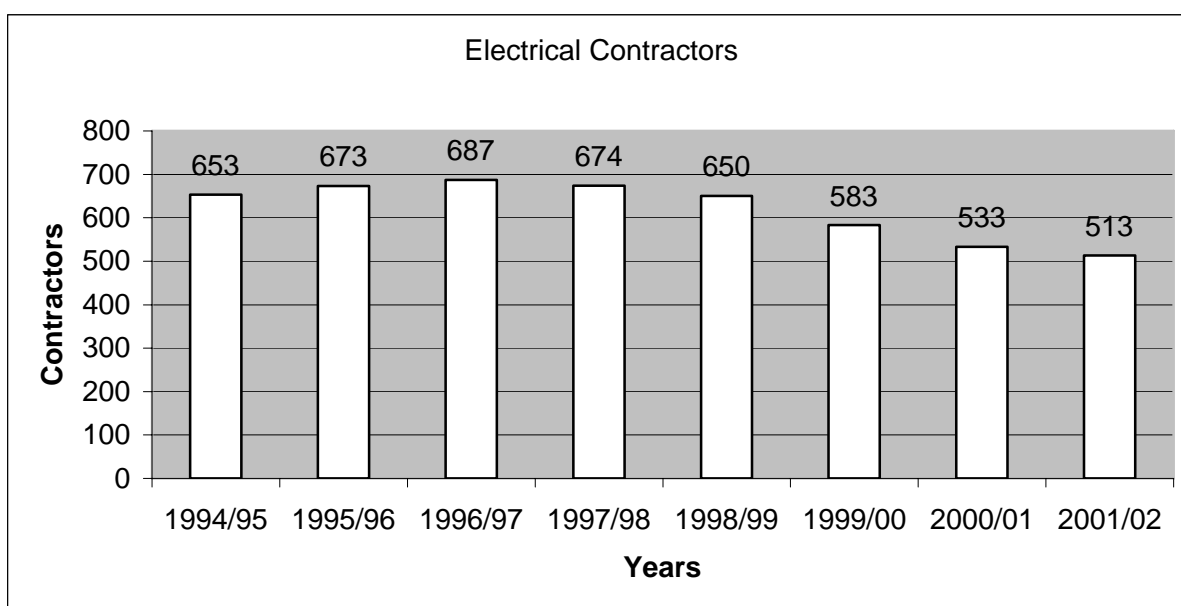
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2002 was 366.



### **Electrical Contractors Licences**

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

Total number of electrical contractors licences issued as at 30 June 2002 was 513.



### **Apprentices**

Apprentices to trades that require a person to hold an electrical workers licence are registered with the Board.

During the year a total of 10 apprentices were registered with the Board.

**Staff**

The Department of Employment Education & Training 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 Employment Education & Training 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 has participated in the development of training packages, the dissemination of information, received and dealt with complaints from industry, the general public and the Department of Employment Education and Trainings (DEET) Electrical Safety group. Through out the year the Board has made 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 has allowed 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 DEET's involvement in various functions,
- Electrical Safety's newsletter the "Conduit",

- Territory Construction Association publications & forums,
- Trade seminars,
- Addresses to trade training groups,
- Trade Fairs and Rural Shows,
- Public displays in shopping centres,
- Open forums held after Board meetings,
- Mail outs.

We continue our liaison with other government departments especially the Office of Work Health & Electrical Safety and other related functional departments like the Power and Water Authority and the Mines Group of Department Business Industry Resource Development and the Department of Mines & Energy.

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 and prosecutions over the previous years and looks forward to a continuing improvement in its effectiveness in the electrical industry. The Board has been active 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 look forward to participating in the review during the next 12 months.

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