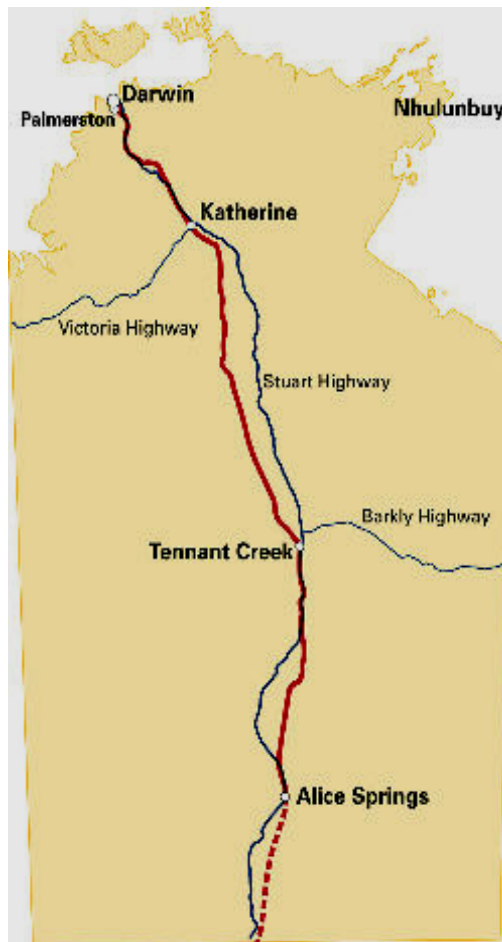


Annual Report

2002/2003



NORTHERN TERRITORY
ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS
LICENSING BOARD

ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2003

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 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 2003 comprised -

Chairman

Mr C Freeman

36 years experience in Government/private/consulting employment. Member 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 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.

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. Member representing Electrical Contractors.

Deputy Members

Mr D W Byerley

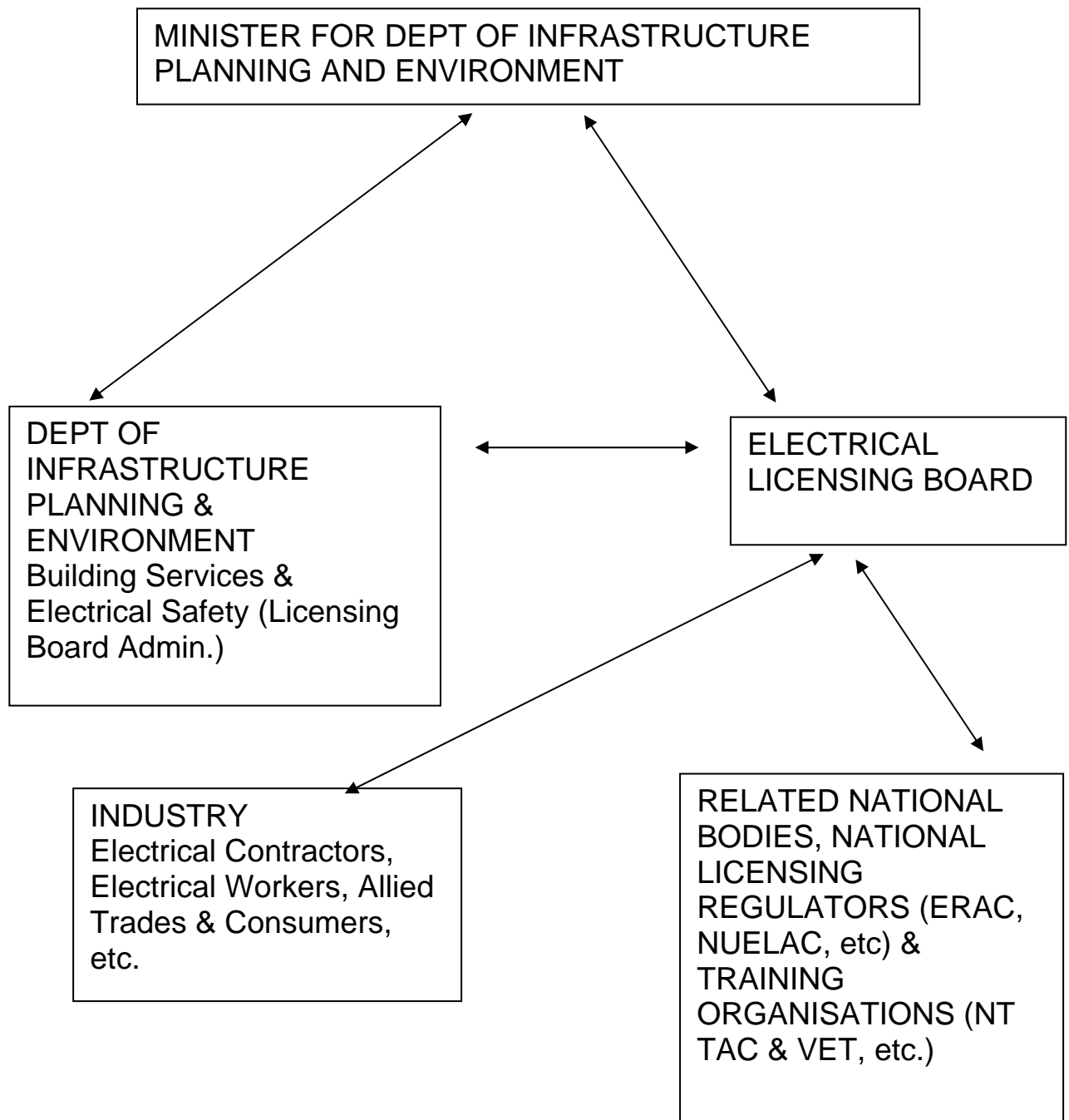
Work's Coordinator Power and Water Authority, Alice Springs
Deputy Member representing Electrical Workers for 16 years.

Mr. T Hallen

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

Mr. G Cowie

28 years as an Electrical Contractor in the NT principally in the field of Power Generation and Control Systems. 5 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 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 four occasions outside normal hours to facilitate Show Cause hearings. In August the Board met in Alice Springs, in March it met in Katherine and its May meeting was held in Nhulunbuy. All 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 a range of 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",
- the Northern Territory Government Territory Business Centres,
- the Territory Construction Association,
- website.

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 input into the proceedings of this committee. 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 was represented on the Northern Territory regional workshops reviewing various National Electrotech Training Packages for the Electrical Industry. The Board is also participating in the development and introduction of a revised training package for electricians.

The introduction this year of a new training requirement for licensing electricians based on the development of 66 essential capabilities and an assessment will solve some of the issues surrounding evidence of competence in both on and off-the-job training areas. It is envisaged that this assessment will address both industry and regulatory concerns regarding the levels of competence being achieved by some trainees.

NUELAC is carrying out reviews of restricted licences and the board has an input into this process.

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 requires 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 has sourced refresher courses for those not participating in the industry but wishing to maintain their skills. The requirement was introduced on 1 January 2003 with all electrical workers given advanced notice of the requirement.

WEB SITE

The Boards web site has been moved and is now attached to the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment. It can be accessed at www.ipe.nt.gov.au. The site contains information for the electrical industry such as the Boards information bulletins, frequently asked questions and other information of benefit to both industry and consumers. More information including application forms is being planned for future inclusion.

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 the Electrical Safety Unit of Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment, it has seen an increase of complaints being referred to it for consideration. Complaints currently number 4.7 per 1000 licenses issued annually.

During the financial year 2002-2003 the Board received 22 written complaints concerning non-compliant or unlicensed work.

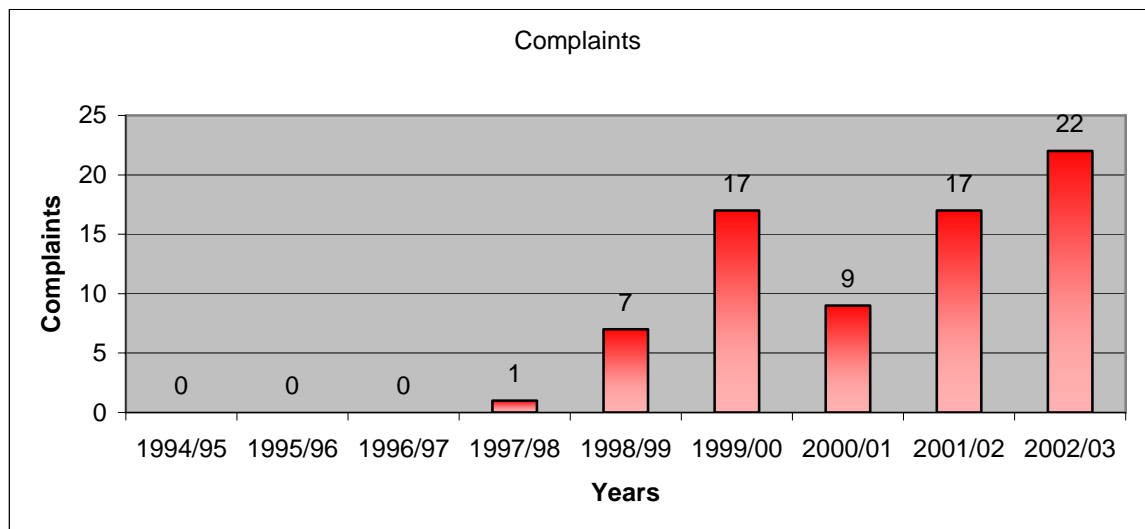
The Electrical Workers and Contractors Act enables the Board to take the following action where a breach of legislation has been established:-

- (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.

DATE	REASON	OUTCOME
10/7/02	Builder contracting for electrical work without a licence.	Found not to be electrical contracting.
11/9/02	Apprentice Electrician allegedly working unsupervised and unlicensed	Investigation found no evidence to support complaint.
11/9/02	Worker in Refrigeration / Airconditioning allegedly working unlicensed	Investigation found no evidence to support complaint.
26/9/02	Consumer performed unlicensed work carried out in preparation for supply to house site on rural block	Issued warning and gave advice on requirement to use licensed contractor to carryout electrical work.
11/10/02	Electrician allegedly working unlicensed	No evidence of working but licence had expired. Licence reissued with warning.
18/11/02	Improper conduct as electrical contractor.	Lack of evidence resulting in matter being dismissed with advice to contractor that Board believed matter could have been handled better.
18/11/02	Undesirable work practices resulting in non-compliant work by Contractor	Decision deferred until audit of newly introduced work practices are audited in late 2003.
18/11/02	Electrician connected an air-conditioner without testing or issuing a Certificate of Compliance.	Decision deferred until outcome of audit of Contractor in late 2003.
18/11/02	Electrician issued a Certificate of Compliance without testing the work which was non-compliant.	Decision deferred until outcome of audit of Contractor in late 2003.
18/11/02	Electrician carried out electrical installation work and issued a Certificate of Compliance whilst licence was expired.	Decision deferred until outcome of audit of Contractor in late 2003.
18/11/02	Electrician signed a Certificate of Compliance, under company direction, as the nominee without ensuring the work was compliant.	Electrician has left Contracting Company and resumed contracting in his own right. He was issued a warning and will come under the audit scheme.
2/12/02	Restricted electrical worker allegedly connected split system air-conditioners without holding a licence	Investigation did not reveal proof that Restricted Electrical Worker connected the units. CoC's have since been issued. Warning issued and advice given regarding licensing requirements.
9/12/02	Contractor responsible for installation that resulted in an electric shock.	Fined \$100.00 and issued warning.
9/12/02	Electrician who is allegedly responsible for carrying out installation work that resulted in an electric shock.	Fined \$100.00, issued warning and required to do retraining.
9/12/02	Contractor relocated elec. Meters to connect new units also carried out work that was non-compliant.	Found not to have carried out non-compliant work but to have contravened supply authority metering requirements. No penalty imposed.
16/1/03	Contractor employed unlicensed electrical worker who produced non-compliant work	Board accepted Contractors explanation and remedial action and issued warning.
20/3/03	Contractor allegedly employed unlicensed electrical workers.	Company issued a warning and given advice regarding responsibilities relating to employing licensed persons.
4/5/03	Electrician allegedly contracting without holding a contractors licence	Electrician found not to be contracting.

DATE	REASON	OUTCOME
17.6.03	Contractor allegedly employed unlicensed electrical worker.	Employee only held interstate licence, contractor was required to meet with the Board to explain and was required to update its employment procedures.
17.6.03	Interstate company contracting in NT without holding an NT contractors licence.	Company received a warning and details were referred to the licensing jurisdiction in contractors state of origin.
17.6.03	Interstate electrical workers licence holder working in the NT without NT licence.	Worker received a warning and advice regarding licence requirements.
17.6.03	Interstate electrical workers licence holder working in NT without NT licence.	Worker received a warning and information regarding licence requirements.

4 licence holders appeared before the Board and 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.



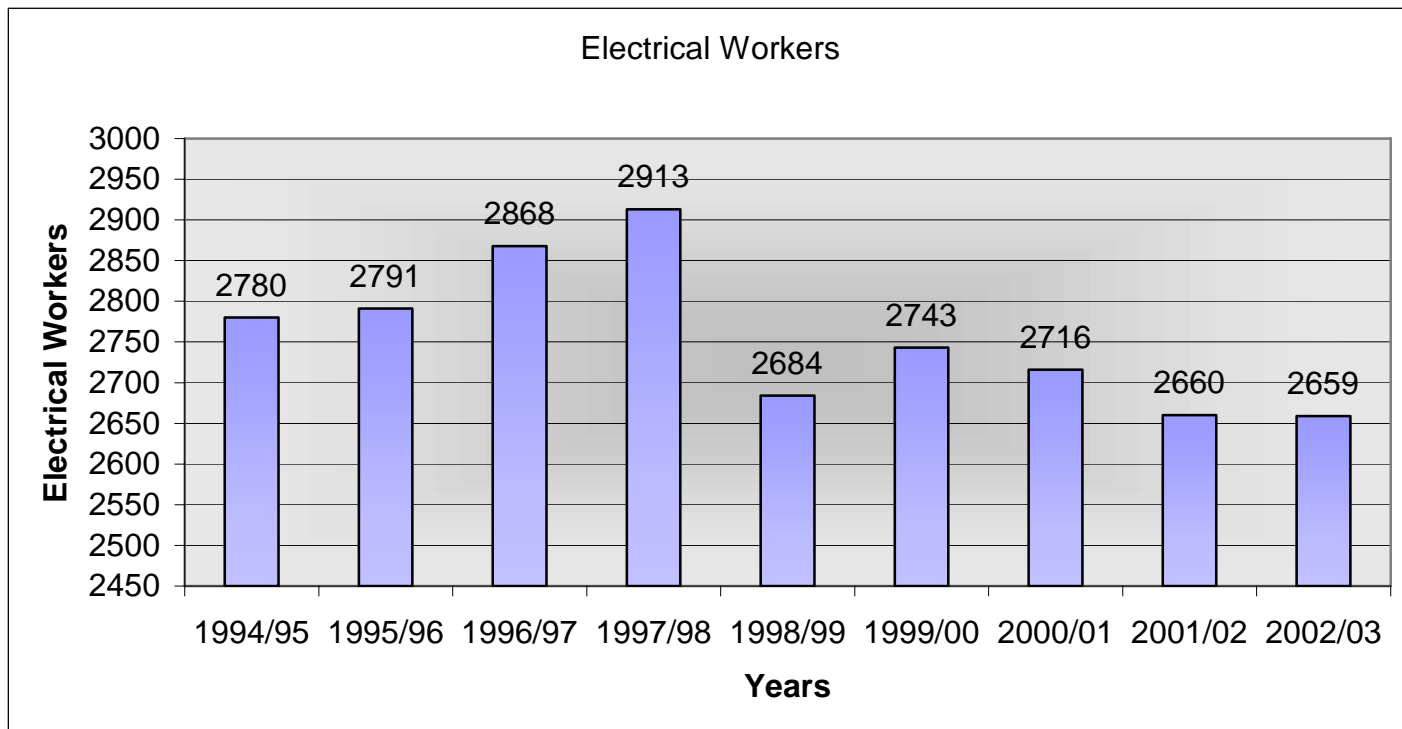
The graph above depicts the complaints dealt with over the 9 years of records to date. The lack of complaints dealt with from 1994/95 to 1997/98 was due to the position of Executive Officer being vacant for that period.

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 2003 were 2659.

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 2003 were 13.

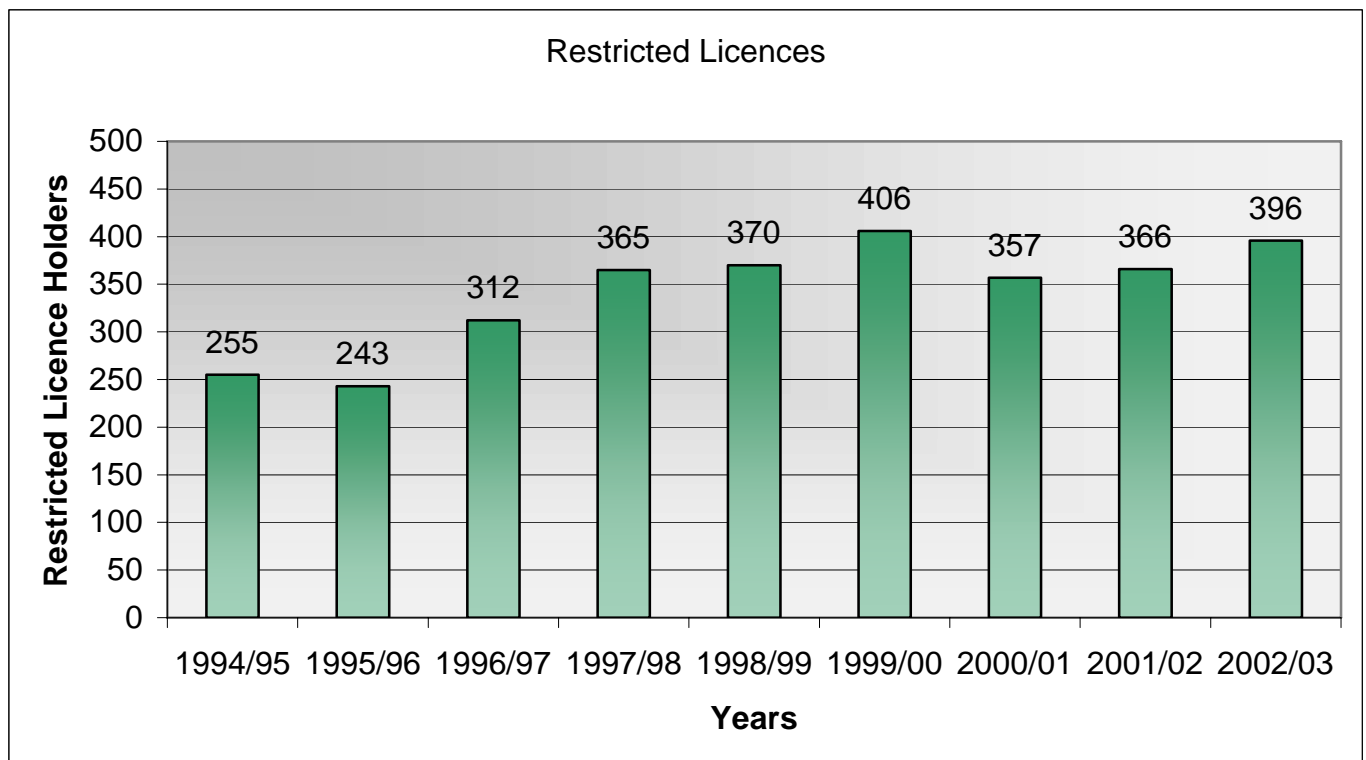


The variations in the above graph depict the trends in the construction industry over the same period.

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.

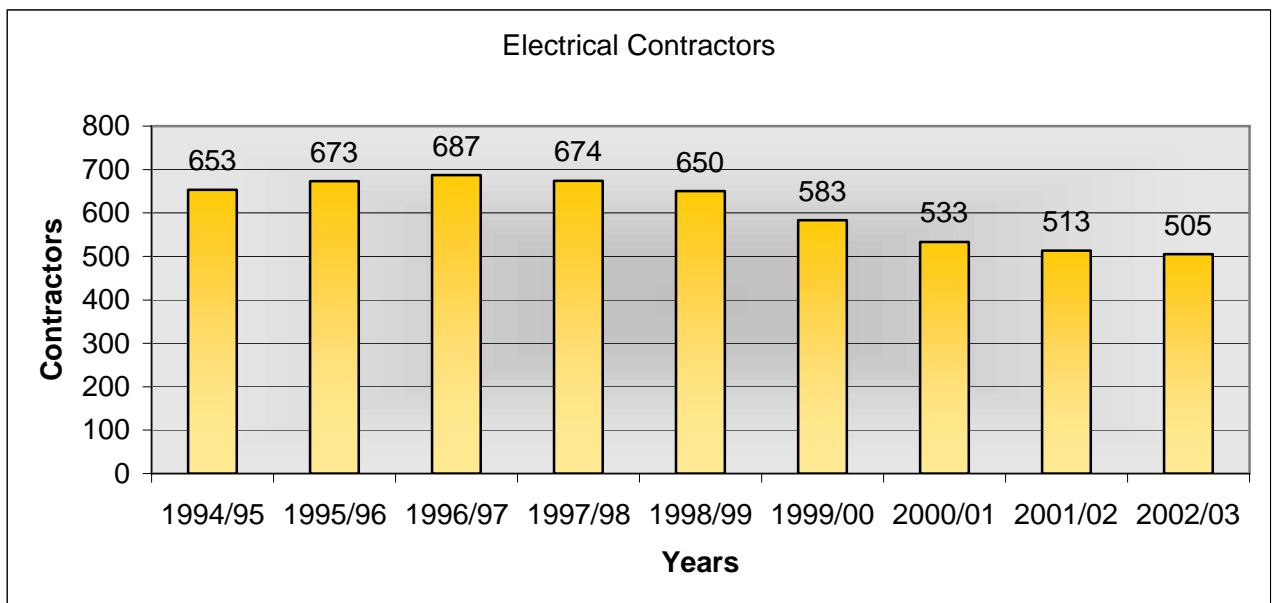
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2003 was 396.



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 2003 was 505.



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 27 apprentices were 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 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 Infrastructure Planning and Environments (DIPE) 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 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,
- Trade Fairs,
- 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 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 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.