

Annual Report

2012/2013



ELECTRICAL WORKERS & CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

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; and
- Investigating and conducting hearings into complaints relating to electrical work and taking disciplinary action where appropriate.

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 forms a significant portion of the Board's activities.

The Board's administrative personnel are currently located with the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, situated in Parap.

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
- Mail outs
- Provision of weblinks to on-going national issues including national licensing, Standards Australia and interstate electrical licensing authorities.

The Board continues to liaise with other government departments, especially NT Worksafe 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 the 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 2013** was as shown below

Basis of Appointment	Member	Deputy Member
Electrical Engineer	Colin Freeman (Chairman)	Vacant
Government Employee	Pat Nolan	Vacant
Electrical Contractor	Vacant	Geoff Cowie
Electrical Workers	Michael Haire	Andrew Whitty
RTO	Vacant	Vacant

Chairman:

Mr Colin Freeman

Forty-three years' experience in government/private and 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 Patrick Nolan

Senior Project Manager Electrical Department of Construction and Infrastructure. Forty-two years' experience in the electrical industry, encompassing involvement in electrical contracting and government service.

Mr Michael Haire

The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) State Organiser responsible for Northern Territory. Seventeen years' experience in the electrical industry, including supply authority, mining, construction, commercial contracting, marine and industrial. Member representing electrical workers.

Deputy Members

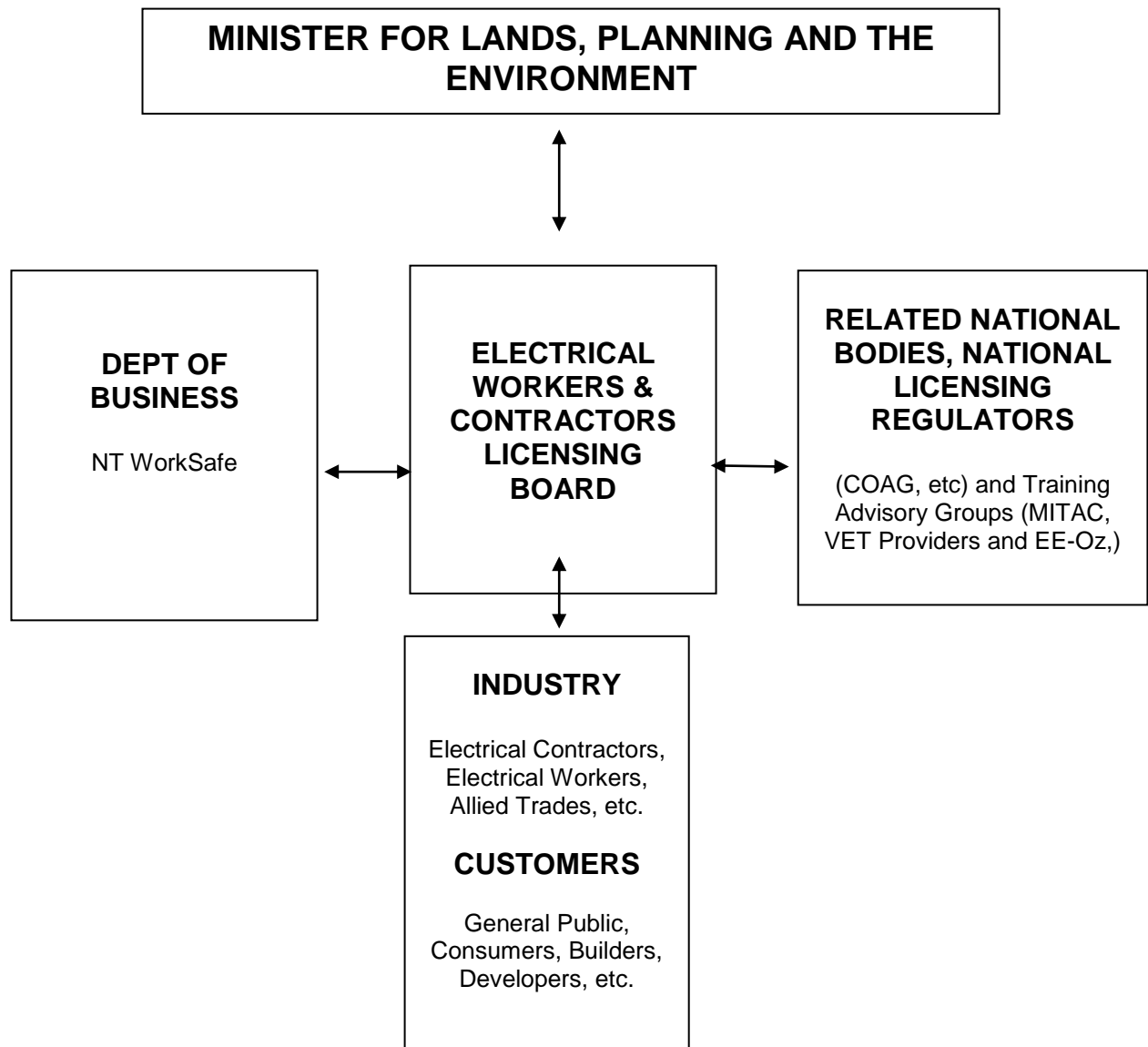
Mr Geoffrey Cowie

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

Mr Andrew Whitty

Project Safety Advisor for tier one contractor John Holland. Over ten years experience in the electrical industry including supply authority, mining, oil & gas sectors, with various roles ensuring safety compliance. Deputy Member representing Electrical Workers.

The diagram below shows the Board's context and the environment in which it operates as at 30 June 2013.



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 periodically meets in regional centres of the Northern Territory. 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 second amendment to the Wiring Rules released in November 2007, the skills maintenance course ensures that people who attend are made aware of these changes when they happen.

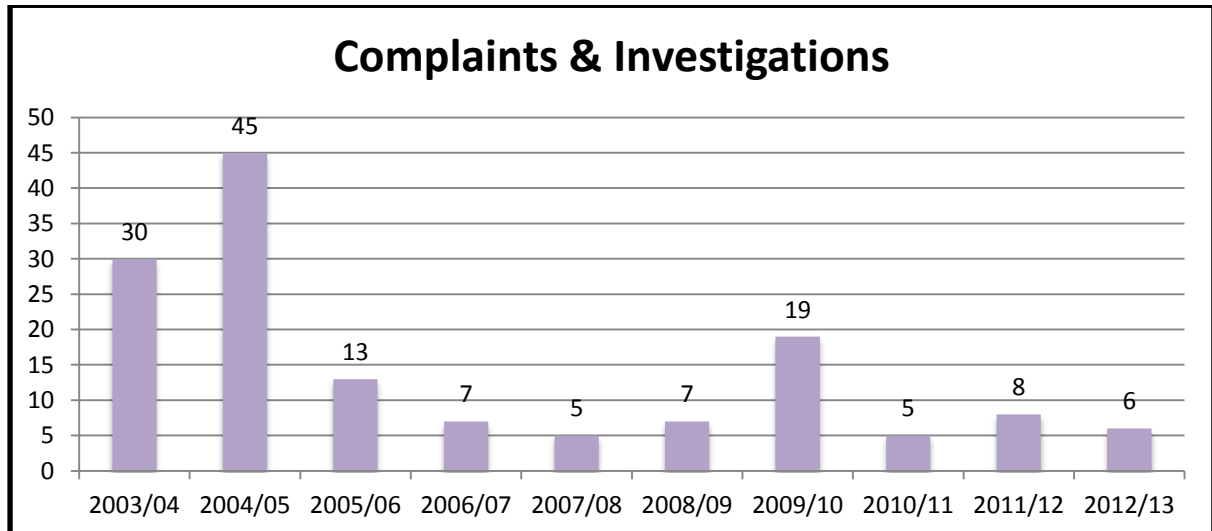
STAFF

The Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment (DLPE) provides administrative support to the Board. Two full-time staff members, the Executive Officer and the Registrar, manage the day-to-day operation of the Board with additional administrative assistance as and when required from additional administration staff.

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 2012-2013 the Board received six 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:

- 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.

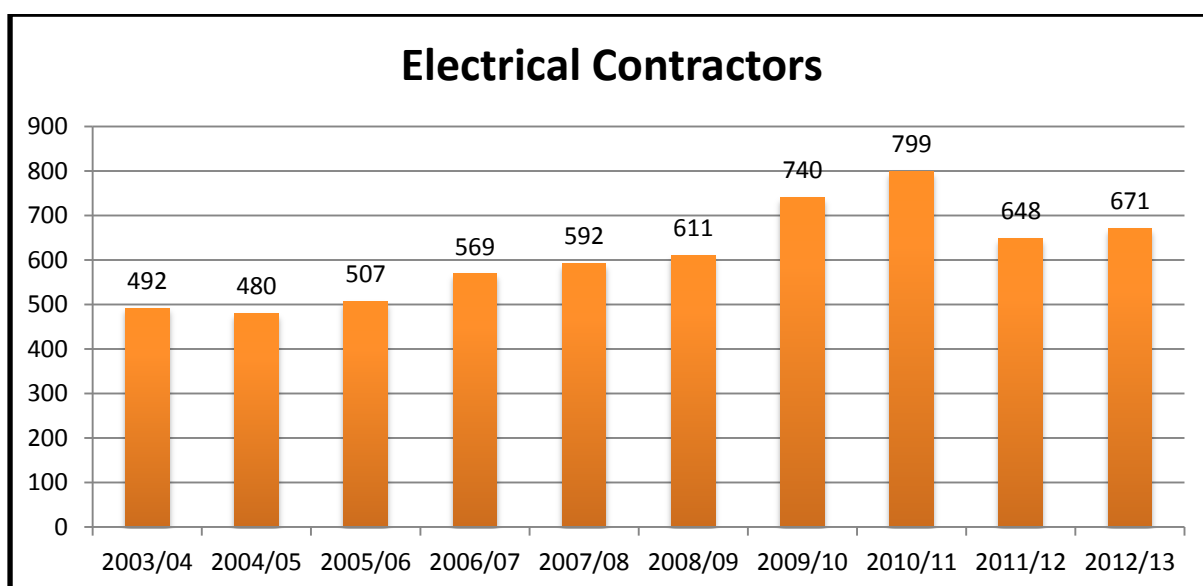
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment 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

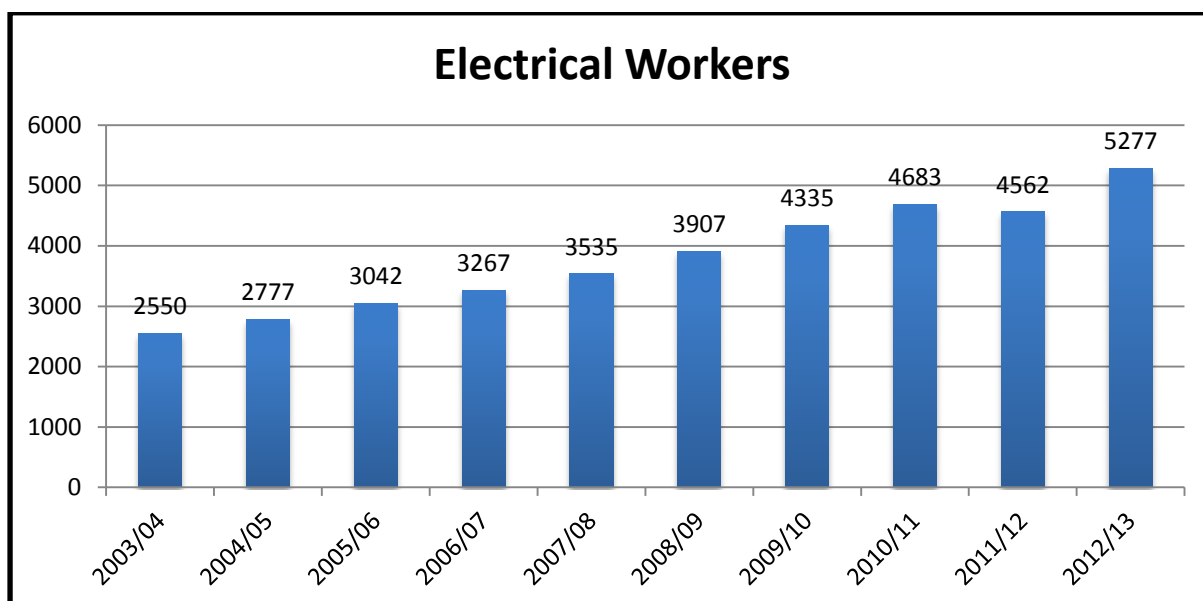
The total number of Electrical Contractor Licences issued as at 30 June 2013, was 671. The fluctuation in numbers is believed to be as a result of a more mobile workforce and the stringent requirement of the electrical industry to comply with the *Electricity Reform Act* and the *Electrical Workers and 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 2013, was 5277.

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 is currently only one B Grade licence holder in the Northern Territory.

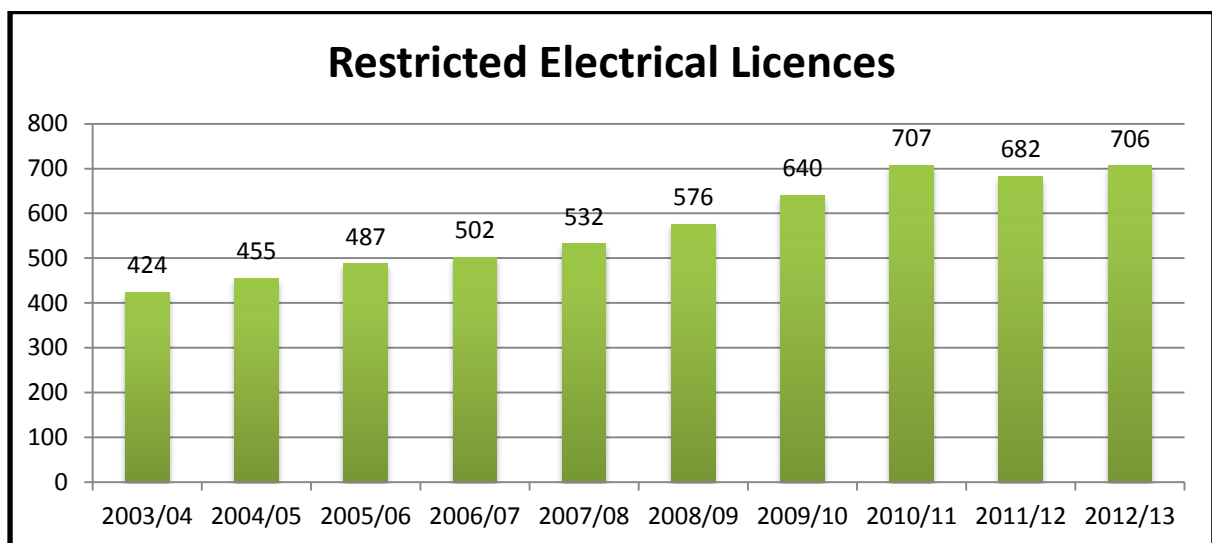


Restricted Electrical Worker Licences – R Grade

The development and introduction of a new national training package for restricted electrical licences ensures consistent training requirements for the eleven categories of Restricted Electrical 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 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.

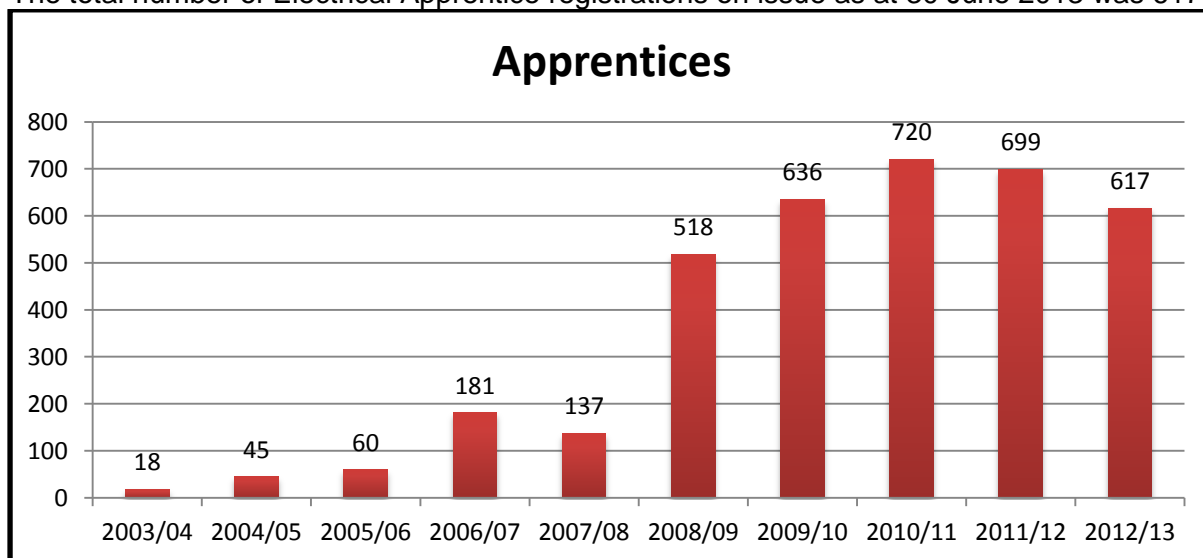
The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2013 was 706. The majority of restricted licences are held by workers in the refrigeration and air-conditioning trade.



Apprentices

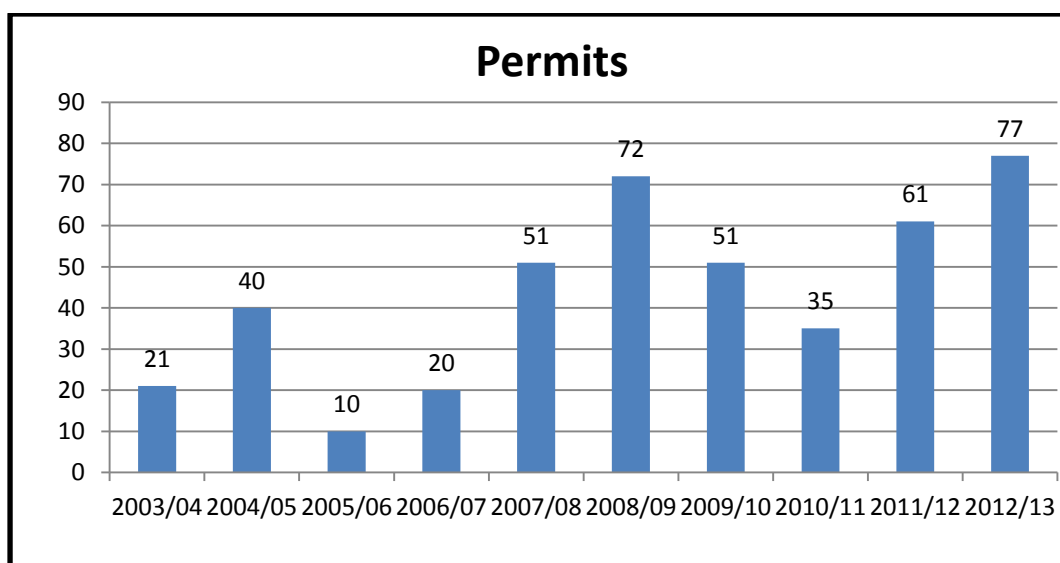
Apprentices to trades which require a person to hold an Electrical Worker Licence are required to be registered with the Board. In addition to mainstream electricians, these include apprentices in the major service industries of refrigeration and air-conditioning, electronics and appliance service trades.

The total number of Electrical Apprentice registrations on issue as at 30 June 2013 was 617.

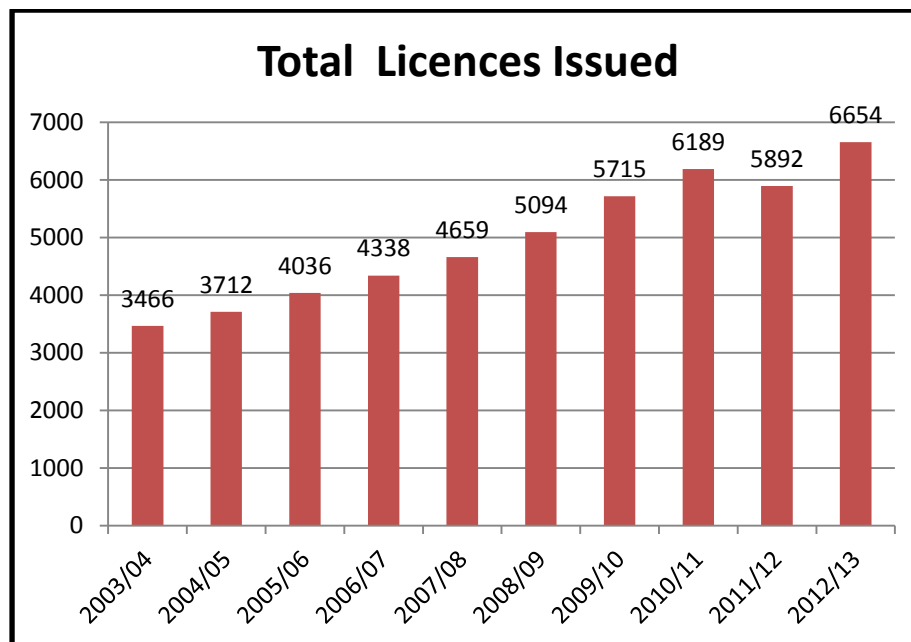


Temporary Permits

In conjunction with licences and apprentice registration cards, temporary permits are also issued. Temporary Permits are issued for a variety of reasons which include 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 2013 was 77.



Total Licences current at 30 June 2013 - 6654



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

Conclusion

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 Northern Territory, as a member of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), has agreed to the establishment of a National Occupational Licensing System (NOLS) to allow licences in specified occupations to work in all Australian jurisdictions. As part of this agreement, the National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA) has been established to develop and administer the national occupational licensing system.

Under this system, companies and individuals will be licensed to work anywhere in Australia, removing duplicated and inconsistent regulation between states and territories for specific occupations.

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