

# insites

The joint magazine of the Building Commission and Plumbing Industry Commission

BCA 2010 is  
now in force  
Full report page 9



## Also inside

- Women encouraged to become plumbers



## Commissioner's Comments

### Highlights

- ▶ Training is a key priority for the Plumbing Industry Commission.



### Highlights

- ▶ Victoria will adopt 6-Star in May 2011.

## Ministerial Welcome

### VICTORIA'S BUILDING AND PLUMBING INDUSTRIES HAVE EMERGED FROM THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS IN A REASONABLE POSITION, DESPITE DIFFICULTY FOR SOME SECTORS.



To ensure we prosper we must have an adequately trained and skilled workforce, particularly in relation to growing requirements for sustainable outcomes.

The Building and Plumbing Industry Commissions believe that professional development is essential to ensure Victoria's building and plumbing practitioners are prepared for the challenge as they continue to lead the nation in delivering a quality, safe and sustainable built environment.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has had strong take up in recent years, with steady growth in the number of building practitioners seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills. This edition of *Insites* reports on the 2009 CPD awards, which were presented by the Minister for Planning, Justin Madden, at a ceremony in the Goods Shed North.

Training is a key priority for the Plumbing Industry Commission as well, with the

Plumbing Industry Training Awards (PITAs) held earlier this month expected to encourage more plumbing practitioners to undertake education and training to improve their skills and industry awareness.

Ensuring the flow of new practitioners into the building and plumbing industries is equally important. Reflecting this, *Insites* features reflections from participants in the Building Commission's Building Surveyor Internship program on its benefits and opportunities.

Plumbing practitioners working in the caravan industry will be interested in an article emphasising the importance of compliant installations in caravans. These issues, along with the recent implementation of the BCA 2010 and changing requirements for gasfitters under the Plumbing Regulations 2008 all make valuable and interesting reading. I trust you will enjoy this edition of *Insites*.



#### Tony Arnel LFRAIA

Building and Plumbing Industry Commissioner

### VICTORIA'S BUILDING AND PLUMBING PRACTITIONERS ARE RECEIVING SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION FROM THE BUILDING COMMISSION AND PLUMBING INDUSTRY COMMISSION TO KEEP THEIR SKILLS CURRENT. THE 2009 CPD AWARDS RECOGNISED BUILDING PRACTITIONERS AND THE INAUGURAL PLUMBING INDUSTRY TRAINING AWARDS ENCOURAGE RECOGNITION OF PLUMBING PRACTITIONERS.

A skilled workforce is required if we are to increase the sustainability of Victoria's built environment. The Victorian Government's \$175 million Jobs for the Future Economy Action Plan will guide industry development and create opportunities out of the challenges of climate change.

The single largest investment in this Plan is the \$60 million Greener Government Buildings initiative, which will improve the energy and water efficiency of Victoria's hospitals, schools and government buildings.

The cost of this investment will be paid back in savings over an eight year period through the introduction of energy efficient lighting, heating

and air-conditioning. Each year \$7 million of cost savings will be achieved through reduced energy and water consumption, and every year will see a saving of 130,000 tonnes in greenhouse gases.



Where there are gains to be made in sustainability it follows that Victoria's building and plumbing practitioners will be involved on some level. The building and plumbing industries have evolved significantly in recent years and building and plumbing practitioners increasingly find themselves at the forefront, especially when it comes to advising consumers how to improve their green credentials at home.

The Victorian Government recognised the important work of plumbing practitioners with a \$10 million initiative under the Jobs for the Future Economy Action Plan. The 'Green Plumbing' component of the initiative invests \$10 million in new water efficiency measures for households and industry, which will deliver opportunities for thousands of licensed and registered plumbing practitioners. These actions will deliver 5,000 additional rebates for rain water tanks, 12,000 additional rebates for dual flush toilets, and bring the total low-flow shower heads exchanged to 500,000.

This initiative will keep Victorian plumbing practitioners busy and contribute significantly to our efforts to address climate change in this State.

Premier Brumby also announced that Victoria will adopt a 6-Star energy efficiency standard in May 2011. This will give industry time to prepare for its introduction.

I trust as always, *Insites* will be an informative read.

**Justin Madden MLC**  
Minister for Planning

## In this Issue

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### Welcome

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Insites*. This issue draws on the combined strengths of each Commission. If you have any contributions or story ideas, please email [publicrelations@buildingcommission.com.au](mailto:publicrelations@buildingcommission.com.au)

Enjoy the read.  
Tony Arnel

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Encouraging women to enter the plumbing industry.

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## Highlights

- ▶ Modifications to plumbing work are one-off and site-specific.

# Plumbing technical notes



the installation of flues on gas appliances; in particular the supporting and jointing of flues.

AS 5601-2004 *Gas Installations* Section 5.13 outlines general flue requirements for gas appliance installations. Sections 5.13.4.2 and 5.13.4.3 require the flue to be supported independently of the appliance flue connection and that the flue is securely fixed and adequately supported by bracket(s) fastened to the building structure at suitable points, to ensure the stability of the flue. Section 5.13.4.5 prescribes the requirements when joining flues; it reads:

*Flue joints shall be adequately sealed and comply with the following:*

- Where subjected to weather, have downward facing sockets.
- Where protected from weather, have upward facing sockets.

## Modifications to plumbing work

Where a plumbing installation, or part thereof, cannot comply with the relevant plumbing regulations, a property owner or plumbing practitioner may apply for a modification to the plumbing work. The modification process allows variations to the Regulations to provide solutions that achieve both performance and compliance with Compliance Certificate requirements.

Modifications to plumbing work can be made under Part 12A of the *Building Act 1993*. In general, modification applications:

- Are one-off and site-specific;
- Can only to be made by the property owner or Licensed Plumbing Practitioner;

- Must specify in what way you would like the Regulations modified (if compliance with Regulations is achievable, the application may be refused);
- Have the right of appeal through the Victoria Civil and Administrative Tribunal; and
- Require a fee of \$94.

To apply, complete the Modification Application form (download from [www.pic.vic.gov.au](http://www.pic.vic.gov.au)) and forward it to the Plumbing Industry Commission. For modifications to the Gas Installation Code, you should contact Energy Safe Victoria.

## Flue installations

Recent audit activity has identified an increase in fault items in relation to

## Gas central heater installation in roof space

A number of audits have been receiving a failed result due to non-compliant permanent walkways to service the appliance having been installed and/or the failure to provide permanent artificial lighting at the appliance with the switch located adjacent to the access opening. AS 5601 *Gas Installations* Section 5.3.11 (d), (e) and (f) prescribes the following:

*Where an appliance is to be located in a roof space the following, as appropriate, shall apply:*  
(d) A walkway is to be provided from the access point to the appliance and shall extend around the appliance to the point where access may be required for lighting or servicing. The walkway is to be—

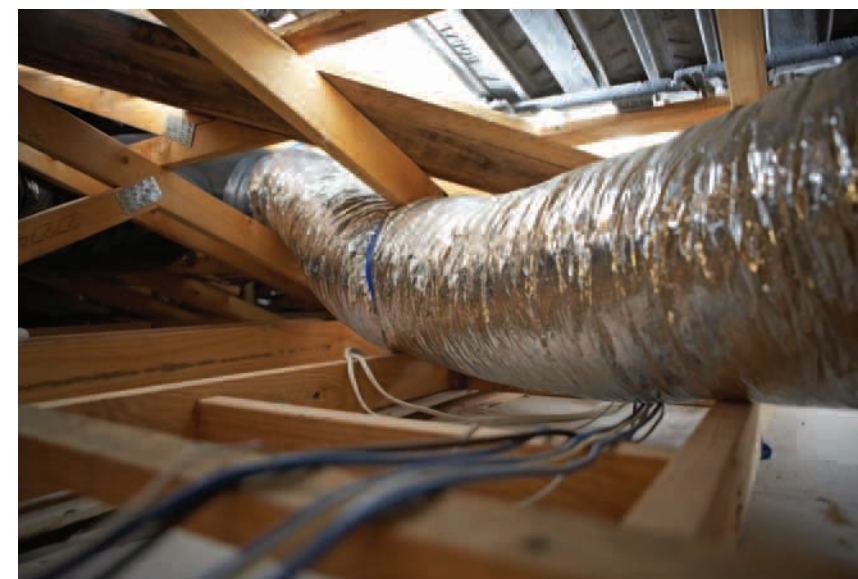
- (i) at least 600 mm wide from the access point to the appliance;
  - (ii) where required around the appliance, at least 750 mm;
  - (iii) permanently fixed to the building; and
  - (iv) capable of supporting the weight of a person.
- (e) Where the appliance is installed on a combustible platform and the appliance burner is less than 300 mm above the appliance base, then the platform shall—
- (i) be covered with fire resistant material to at least the perimeter of the appliance base, but extended at least 300 mm beyond the appliance base in front of any louvre or fixed opening into the burner compartment; and
  - (ii) have an air gap of not less than 25 mm between the appliance base and the fire resistant material; OR
  - (iii) be covered with corrosion resistant sheet metal having a minimum thickness of 0.6 mm extending to the perimeter of the appliance base, but extending at least 300 mm beyond the appliance base in front of any louvre or fixed opening into the burner compartment; and
  - (iv) have an air gap of not less than 100 mm between the appliance base and the sheet metal.
- (f) Permanent artificial lighting is to be provided at the appliance, with the switch located adjacent to the access opening.

Prior to commissioning and issuing a Compliance Certificate for the installation of the gas central heater in a roof space, the Licensed Plumbing Practitioner should ensure that a compliant walkway and artificial lighting has been installed. Failure to do so may result in an audit failure.

## Gas cook-top installation

Prior to commissioning a gas cook-top where the nearest burner of the cook-top is less than 200mm to any vertical combustible surface covered with toughened glass or sheet metal the Licensed Plumbing Practitioner must satisfy themselves that the glass is fit for purpose and that the surface behind the toughened glass or sheet metal is protected in accordance with Section 5.12.1.2 of AS 5601-2004 *Gas Installations*.

A letter is required from the responsible person stating that the combustible material behind the toughened glass or stainless steel has been protected with a fire resistant material and that the stainless steel is a minimum thickness of 0.4mm, or in the case of toughened glass an additional letter from the glass manufacturer is also required stating that the glass is fit for purpose at the minimum distance it has been installed from the nearest burner. This information should be noted on the Compliance Certificate and the letter/s produced at the time of an audit.



## Do you have the correct R-value?

With Plumbing Practitioners now more than ever in the front line when it comes to offering advice on energy efficient plumbing solutions, it is a timely reminder to all practitioners that HB 276-2004 A Guide to Good Practice for Energy Efficient Installations of Residential Heating, Cooling and Air Conditioning Plant and Equipment (the Guide) is now called up in the *Plumbing Regulations 2008*.

One of the areas that the Guide clearly covers is the minimum R-value for the insulation of ductwork for heating and

cooling of residential dwellings (new or existing). It prescribes that a minimum R-value of 1.0 is required for ductwork. It also states that where flexible ductwork is installed in roof cavities, the flexible ductwork should be sheathed in a reflective metallised/aluminium foil to reduce radiant heat gain to the duct.

**Note:** In Alpine areas, to comply with the Building Code of Australia, you may need to increase the insulation R-value of ductwork to 1.5.