

# Organisation and industry data update

Quarter 4, 2016 – 2017

**Disclaimer** – *Some of the information presented in this publication is based on data provided to the Victorian Building Authority. The Victorian Building Authority disclaims any liability (including for negligence) in respect of anything done or not done by any person in reliance upon anything included or omitted in this publication.*

**Rounding** – *Due to rounding the numbers in this report may not add up precisely to the totals provided.*



## Welcome to the VBA's quarterly organisation and industry data update

Introduced in July 2015, the update provides information on key activities undertaken by the VBA to regulate and build confidence in the Victorian building and plumbing industries.

Data includes information from a wide range of activities performed by the VBA, such as the issuing of new licences and registrations, customer interactions, inspections, audits, inquiries and prosecutions. Unless otherwise stated the figures presented represent activities undertaken within the three month period defined.

Industry data reported includes the number of building permits and plumbing compliance certificates reported to the VBA, and the number and type of practitioners holding current licences or registrations issued by the VBA.

The VBA is committed to the Victorian Government's open data policy. A wide range of data is available on the Victorian Government's data portal [www.data.vic.gov.au](http://www.data.vic.gov.au), and on our data page at [www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au).

## Contents

Welcome to the VBA’s quarterly organisation and industry data update .....	3
Licensing and Registration.....	6
Table 1: Applications for licence / registration / revocation of suspension of registration lodged .	6
Table 2: Application for licence / registration / revocation of suspension finalised .....	6
Table 3: Renewed licences / registrations .....	6
Table 4: Total licenced/registered practitioners – at quarter end.....	7
Table 5: Total registered building practitioners by category – at quarter end .....	7
Table 6: Total plumbing practitioners holding licence / registration by main class – at quarter end .....	8
Table 7: Total plumbing practitioners holding licence / registration by specialised class – at quarter end .....	8
Enquiries, Inspections and Complaints.....	9
Table 8: Volume of calls.....	9
Table 9: Calls by performance (abandoned).....	9
Table 10: Calls by service levels (60 seconds).....	9
Table 11: Volume of email, mail, in person .....	9
Table 12: Volume of new complaints by type .....	9
Table 13: Volume of Owner-Builder applications.....	10
Table 14: Plumbing Audit statistics.....	10
Table 15: Plumbing Compliance Certificates .....	10
Table 16: Pro-Active Inspection Program .....	10
Table 17: Terminations of Building Surveyor Applications .....	10
Compliance Enforcement and Legal Services .....	11
Table 18: Building Permit Activity.....	11
Table 19: Levy Audit .....	11
Table 20: Investigations (Building).....	11
Table 21: Investigations (Plumbing) .....	11
Table 22: Practitioner Discipline (Building).....	11
Table 23: Practitioner Discipline (Plumbing).....	12
Table 24: Prosecutions (Building) .....	12
Table 25: Prosecutions (Plumbing).....	12
Table 26: VCAT/AAT Appeals .....	12
Technical and Regulation .....	13
Table 27: Plumbing Phone Data – at month end.....	13

Table 28: Building Phone Data – at month end.....	13
Table 29: Temporary structures, modifications and accreditations – over quarter .....	14
Table 30: Volume of security of payment – over quarter.....	14
Table 31: Volume of applications for building modifications and appeals for the Building Appeals Board – over quarter .....	14
Table 32: Performance Audits (Cladding) –at month end .....	14
Strategy and Performance.....	15
Table 33: Website and mail reach .....	15
Glossary.....	16

# Licensing and Registration

## Purpose

Administer the licensing and registration system for building practitioners and plumbing practitioners, by only licensing and registering competent persons to enter into and remain within the building and plumbing industries.

## Key activities

- Deliver improved practitioner and consumer interactions
- Improve efficiency of assessors
- Prepare and implement process improvements
- Early engagement with plumbing apprentices and aspiring building practitioners regarding their registration obligations
- Effectively influence training courses that provide a pathway to registration/licence as a building or plumbing practitioner

**Table 1: Applications for licence / registration / revocation of suspension of registration lodged**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Building <sup>1</sup>	554	1001
Plumbing <sup>2</sup>	399	403
<b>Total</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>1,404</b>

**Table 2: Application for licence / registration / revocation of suspension finalised**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Building	565	577
Plumbing <sup>3</sup>	382	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>890</b>

**Table 3: Renewed licences / registrations**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Building <sup>4</sup>	7,550	7,639
Plumbing	4,532	4,620
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,082</b>	<b>12,259</b>

<sup>1</sup>A change in application form was implemented from 1 July 2017, and resulted in a surge of applications being lodged in Q4 2015-16

<sup>2</sup> Excludes reinstatement applications (effectively a late renewal) and amendment applications (because majority are upgrading between registration and licence due to insurance issues).

<sup>3</sup> Excludes reinstatement applications (effectively a late renewal) and amendment applications (because majority are upgrading between registration and licence due to insurance issues)

<sup>4</sup> Number of registrations where the practitioner paid the annual fee and provided proof of insurance cover (if required). It does not include the number of applications to renew a registration that were lodged (commenced being lodged from March 2017)

Table 4: Total licenced/registered practitioners – at quarter end

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Building <sup>5</sup>	22,658	22,377
Plumbing <sup>6</sup>	26,862	26,495
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,520</b>	<b>48,872</b>

Table 5: Total registered building practitioners by category<sup>7</sup> – at quarter end

Registration category*	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Builder - Demolition - Low Rise	252	240
Builder - Demolition - Med Rise	67	65
Builder - Demolition - Unlimited	44	40
<b>Demolition - Subtotal</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>345</b>
Commercial Builder - Limited	3,178	3,012
Commercial Builder - Unlimited	2,140	2,131
<b>Commercial Builder - Subtotal</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>5,143</b>
Domestic Builder - Limited	2,728	2,660
Domestic Builder - Manager	1,085	1,082
Domestic Builder - Unlimited	11,350	11,305
<b>Domestic Builder - Subtotal</b>	<b>15,163</b>	<b>15,047</b>
Building Inspector - Limited	231	223
Building Inspector - Unlimited	558	434
<b>Building Inspector - Subtotal</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>657</b>
Building Surveyor - Limited	124	108
Building Surveyor - Unlimited	558	558
<b>Building Surveyor - Subtotal</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>666</b>
Draftsperson Building Design (Architectural)	2,083	2,083
Draftsperson Building Design (Interior)	187	186
Draftsperson Building Design (Services)	174	172
<b>Draftsperson - Subtotal</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>2,441</b>
Civil Engineer	1,569	1,529
Electrical Engineer	304	300
Fire Safety Engineer	174	175
Mechanical Engineer	460	455
<b>Engineer - Subtotal</b>	<b>2,507</b>	<b>2,459</b>
Quantity Surveyor	141	134
Supervisor - Temporary Structure Class 1	33	38
Supervisor - Temporary Structure Class 2	82	79
<b>Temp. Structures - Subtotal</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,395</b>	<b>27,003</b>

<sup>5</sup> Fluctuations in the number of building practitioners between quarters are largely attributed to the suspension of registration, where a building practitioner has not paid the annual fee and/or provided proof of insurance by the anniversary date.

<sup>6</sup> Fluctuations in the number of plumbing practitioners between quarters are largely attributed to the suspension of registration/license, where a plumbing practitioner has failed to renew the licence/registration before the expiry date.

<sup>7</sup> An individual may be registered in more than one category.

**Table 6: Total plumbing practitioners holding licence / registration by main class – at quarter end**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
<b>Registered plumbers</b>		
Drainage	11,695	11,362
Fire protection	564	562
Gas fitting	12,068	11,737
Irrigation (non-agricultural)	11,656	11,272
Mechanical services	13,432	13,477
Roofing (storm water)	12,526	12,232
Sanitary	12,118	11,700
Water supply	11,618	11,236
<b>Licensed plumbers</b>		
Drainage	8,669	8,714
Fire protection	117	113
Gas fitting	8,537	8,461
Irrigation (non-agricultural)	9,459	9,447
Mechanical services	2,620	2,684
Roofing (storm water)	8,147	8,155
Sanitary	8,615	8,621
Water supply	9,423	9,413

**Table 7: Total plumbing practitioners holding licence / registration by specialised class – at quarter end**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
<b>Registered plumbers</b>		
Backflow prevention	592	576
Refrigerated air conditioning	887	846
Type A appliance conversion	162	154
Type A appliance servicing work	6,926	7,103
Type B gas fitting	318	318
Type B gas fitting advanced	41	42
<b>Licensed plumbers</b>		
Backflow prevention	1,487	1,433
Refrigerated air conditioning	1,140	1,148
Type A appliance conversion	568	575
Type A appliance servicing work	6,366	6,536
Type B gas fitting	350	360
Type B gas fitting advanced	133	138



# Enquiries, Inspections and Complaints

## Purpose

Provide quality customer service when responding to complaints and enquiries, Building Appeals Board (BAB) services and inspection services.

## Key activities

- Deliver front line customer service
- Process owner-builder applications for approval
- Manage building and plumbing complaints
- Provide accurate and impartial inspection services on behalf of the VBA
- Perform Municipal Building Surveyor functions on behalf of the VBA

**Table 8: Volume of calls**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
VBA Queues	48,145	59,208
Customer Service Unit Queues	25,993	30,177

**Table 9: Calls by performance (abandoned)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
VBA Queues	9.5%	5.6%
CSU Queues	5.6%	6.3%

**Table 10: Calls by service levels (60 seconds<sup>8</sup>)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
VBA All Queues	61%	71.4%
CSU Queues	66%	67.0%

**Table 11: Volume of email, mail, in person**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Email	3,356	5,172
Mail	24,190	26,570
In person	2,605	3,289

**Table 12: Volume of new complaints by type**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Total	929	951
Building	387	477
Plumbing	542	474

<sup>8</sup> Service standard changed from 20 to 60 seconds in November 2016  
Victorian Building Authority

**Table 13: Volume of Owner-Builder applications<sup>9</sup>**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Applications received*	1332	2,177
Certificate of Consent issued	1295	2,155

**Table 14: Plumbing Audit statistics**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Plumbing audits and Inspections completed	3,862	3,785
Audit non-compliance rate (%)	16.8	12.2

**Table 15: Plumbing Compliance Certificates**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Compliance certificates sold to practitioners	101,187	102,329
Compliance certificates lodged by practitioners	94,162	97,828
Revenue from compliance certificates sold	\$3,274,981	\$3,231,587

**Table 16: Pro-Active Inspection Program**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Actual number of inspections	1,776	N/A
Elements inspected	20,477	N/A

**Table 17: Terminations of Building Surveyor Applications**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Applications received	236	376
Applications closed	267	244

<sup>9</sup> Represents number of applications received within a 90 day period but may include processing of applications received in the previous quarter.

## Compliance Enforcement and Legal Services

### Purpose

The Compliance, Enforcement and Legal Services Division audits and investigates Victorian registered building and plumbing practitioners, oversees and monitors the submission and collection of building levies, undertakes analysis to provide data and intelligence to drive VBA compliance and enforcement functions and undertakes practitioner disciplinary proceedings. It also provides legal advice and related services to the VBA.

### Key activities

- Audit (Levy)
- Investigation (Building & Plumbing)
- Legal Services
- Practitioner Intelligence and Levy
- Practitioner Discipline

**Table 18: Building Permit Activity**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Number of building permits reported	28,145	30,119
Reported cost of building works (\$M)	8,701	9,301

**Table 19: Levy Audit**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Number of audits completed	14	9
Number of Desk Reviews completed	2	1
Number of audits with non-compliant result	2	0

**Table 20: Investigations (Building)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Investigations completed	151	188
Average days taken to complete investigations	260	N/A

**Table 21: Investigations (Plumbing)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Investigations Completed	180	194
Average days taken to complete investigations	73	N/A-

**Table 22: Practitioner Discipline (Building)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
BPB Disciplinary Proceedings conducted	21	25
Number of Shown Cause Notices issued	28	N/A
Number of finalised disciplinary outcomes	29	N/A

**Table 23: Practitioner Discipline (Plumbing)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Plumbing Disciplinary Inquiries conducted	7	12

**Table 24: Prosecutions (Building)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Prosecutions completed	9	15

**Table 25: Prosecutions (Plumbing)**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Prosecutions completed	6	4

**Table 26: VCAT/AAT Appeals**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
VCAT Appeals Heard (Building)	5	8
VCAT Appeals Heard (Plumbing)	0	0
AAT Appeals Heard (Building)	7	8
AAT Appeals Heard (Plumbing)	0	0

## Technical and Regulation

### Purpose

Assist and guide government, practitioners and consumers through the provision of technical information.

### Key activities

- Regulatory evaluation
- Regulatory policy and regulatory development
- Research
- Technical advice
- Administrative decisions
- Provide BAB services

**Table 27: Plumbing Phone Data – at month end**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Drainage	569	782
Roofing (Stormwater)	530	516
Gas Fitting	508	721
Water Supply	275	382
Compliance Certificate	260	354
Unregulated Plumbing	149	245
Sanitary	148	209
Modifications	148	162
Licensing and Registration	146	124
Mechanical Services	118	182

**Table 28: Building Phone Data – at month end**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
General Tech Advice	567	377
Defective Building Work	211	276
Building Permits	201	131
Contractual	131	121
Practitioner Registration	122	127
Insurance	100	80
Complaint	89	57
Pool/Spa	68	70
Health & Amenity	66	70
Plumbing	65	66

**Table 29: Temporary structures, modifications and accreditations – over quarter**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Volume of temporary structure occupancy permits issued	17	12
Volume of plumbing modification applications	133	136
Plumbing modification applications approval rate	95%	92%
Volume of building product accreditation certificates issued	0	0

**Table 30: Volume of security of payment – over quarter**

	Q4 2016-17 <sup>10</sup>	Q4 2015-16
Applications lodged	-	80
Applications determined	-	46
Applications not determined or not yet determined	-	34
Claimed amounts	-	\$14,994,284
Adjudicated amounts	-	\$3,554,219

**Table 31: Volume of applications for building modifications and appeals for the Building Appeals Board<sup>11</sup> – over quarter**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Appeal/Disputes/Other Proceedings applications	43	46
Modifications applications	198	276

**Table 32: Performance Audits (Cladding) –at month end**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Number of compliant buildings	161	N/A
Buildings audits in progress	62	N/A
Total number of buildings included in the Cladding Performance Audit Program	223	N/A

<sup>10</sup> Data not available at time of publication

<sup>11</sup> Includes applications subsequently withdrawn

## Strategy and Performance

### Purpose

Provide communication, governance and legal services to the VBA to enable it to effectively regulate Victoria's built environment and to manage the implementation of the VBA's business improvements.

### Key activities

- Develop and maintain a strong VBA presence and stakeholder engagement
- Deliver strategic and major projects arising from statutory obligations
- Influence and inform best practice policy and regulation
- Drive a culture underpinned by integrity that encourages leadership, energy and enthusiasm
- Embed strong governance
- Internal Review of registration decisions

**Table 33: Website and mail reach**

	Q4 2016-17	Q4 2015-16
Website visits	303,017	157,092
VBA mail distribution	151,732	54,993

## Glossary

Accreditations	A certificate of building product accreditation is proof that a product meets the performance requirements of the Building Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) or the Building Code of Australia (BCA).
AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
Building and plumbing industry	A part of the building and construction sector relating to building and plumbing practitioners.
Building Appeals Board (BAB)	An independent statutory body established under the <i>Building Act 1993</i> . The BAB is empowered to determine any matter relating to the <i>Building Regulations 2006</i> , the <i>Building Code of Australia 2006</i> and specified provisions of the <i>Building Act 1993</i> .
Building modification	A variation of the <i>Building Regulations 2006</i> . Where a practitioner believes they are unable to complete a job in compliance with the relevant regulations or codes and standards, they may apply for a modification.
Building permit	Written approval from a registered building surveyor that shows plans fit within building regulations.
Building practitioners	Includes building surveyors, building inspectors, draftspersons, engineers engaged in the building industry, commercial and domestic builders, demolishers, people who erect temporary structures and quantity surveyors.
Building Practitioners Board (BPB)	An independent statutory body established under the <i>Building Act 1993</i> . The BPB oversees the quality and standard of professional services in the Victorian building industry. In doing so, it administers a registration system and monitors the conduct and ability of registered building practitioners.
Building Surveyor	A building surveyor is a professional trained in understanding the building control process. Building surveyors are responsible for ensuring buildings are safe, accessible and energy efficient and therefore have an impact on the design, planning and functionality of buildings.
Cancellations	Refers to practitioners who have had their registration cancelled.
Certificate of consent	A certificate of consent under Division 3A of Part 3 of the Building Act.
Compliance Certificate	A certificate issued by a licensed plumber, to the consumer who commissioned the work, to certify the work they do complies with the relevant plumbing standards, codes and regulations. Sold means templates purchased from the VBA by licensed plumbers Lodged means provided to the VBA – plumbers must also lodge with the VBA details of any compliance certificate they issue.
Conduct reviews	A review into the conduct of a building practitioner. The BPB may decide to conduct an early conduct review, or conduct review rather than an Inquiry.
Failure rate (audits)	The percentage of works that are audited and are found to be non-compliant.
Freedom of Information	Requests made to the VBA to release information under the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> .
Inspection	An examination of building or plumbing works that is the subject of dispute.
Levy	Building permit levy. In order to fund the Building Control and Domestic Dispute Resolution System



	in Victoria, the <i>Building Act 1993</i> imposes a building permit levy. The levy amount is based on the cost of the building work and must be paid by the applicant to the relevant building surveyor before a building permit can be issued.
Occupancy permit	Issued by the building surveyor after final inspection of the building; it shows that the building is safe and suitable for occupation.
On-site conciliation technical inspections	Inspections conducted by the VBA to help resolve a domestic building dispute between parties that are willing to participate in the conciliations process. If Building Advice and Conciliation Victoria are assisting a consumer with a domestic building dispute, the VBA may be asked to conduct a technical inspection to help resolve the items in dispute.
Open Investigation	Investigation being conducted by the VBA that has not concluded.
Owner-builder	Someone who carries out building on their own property. Owner-builders are not in the business of building.
Planning permit	A permit obtained from the relevant local council that relates to the zoning, use and development of land.
Plumbing modification	A variation of the <i>Plumbing Modifications 2008</i> . The modification process allows for one-off and site-specific variations to the technical requirements to provide acceptable solutions that achieve the necessary performance.
Plumbing practitioner	Includes fire protection, water supply, sanitary, roofing (stormwater), mechanical services, irrigation (non-agricultural), gas-fitting and drainage classes.
Practitioner	A building practitioner and plumbing practitioner.
Quantity Surveyor	A quantity surveyor is a trained professional who estimates and manages the cost of construction projects.
Registered builder	A building practitioner registered with the Building Practitioners Board to complete limited or unlimited work.
Registered or licensed plumber	A plumbing practitioner registered or licensed with the VBA to legally carry out any work within the defined classes.
Security of payment	Refers to the <i>Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 2002</i> , which helps ensure that any person who carries out construction work or supplies related goods and services under a construction contract gets paid.
Suspensions	Refers to practitioners who are suspended from practising.
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Temporary structure	Includes a booth, tent, marquee or other temporary enclosure, whether or not a part of the booth, tent, marquee or enclosure is permanent; or a seating structure whether enclosed or not, including a mobile seating structure.
VBA	Victorian Building Authority.