

# Organisation and industry data update

Quarter 3, 2015 – 2016

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***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 include information from a wide range of activities performed by the VBA, such as issuing new licences and registrations, customer interactions, inspections, audits, inquiries and prosecutions.

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).

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# 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 improvement
- 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: Volume of new applications for licence / registration / reinstatement lodged – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16
Building	647
Plumbing	889
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,536</b>

Table 2: Application for registration as a practitioner finalised – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16
Building	754
Plumbing	813
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,567</b>

Table 3: Volume of renewed licence / registration – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16
Building	6,244
Plumbing	4,394
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,638</b>

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

	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16	As at Dec-15
Building	22,254	22,223	22,183	22,224
Plumbing	26,467	26,474	26,680	26,688
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,721</b>	<b>48,697</b>	<b>48,863</b>	<b>48,912</b>

Note: Fluctuations in the total number of registered/licensed practitioners from month-to-month is largely attributed to the suspension of licences/registration due to a failure to renew before the expiry of the licence/registration, and subsequent renewal of the licence/registration.

Table 5: Total registered building practitioners by category – at quarter end

Registration category	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14	Q3 2012-13
Builder - Demolition - Low Rise	235	226	209	191
Builder - Demolition - Med Rise	63	62	62	62
Builder - Demolition - Unlimited	41	37	34	35
<b>Demolition - Subtotal</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>288</b>
Commercial Builder - Limited	2,985	2,777	2,422	2,254
Commercial Builder - Unlimited	2,143	2,133	2,106	2,204
<b>Commercial Builder - Subtotal</b>	<b>5,128</b>	<b>4,910</b>	<b>4,528</b>	<b>4,458</b>
Domestic Builder - Limited	2,651	2,494	2,086	1,986
Domestic Builder - Manager	1,078	1,135	1,128	1,132
Domestic Builder - Unlimited	11,258	11,239	11,079	11,126
<b>Domestic Builder - Subtotal</b>	<b>14,987</b>	<b>14,868</b>	<b>14,293</b>	<b>14,244</b>
Building Inspector - Limited	223	222	201	180
Building Inspector - Unlimited	432	420	415	397
<b>Building Inspector - Subtotal</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>577</b>
Building Surveyor - Limited	106	95	72	61
Building Surveyor - Unlimited	555	538	524	521
<b>Building Surveyor - Subtotal</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>582</b>
Draftsperson Building Design (Architectural)	2,078	2,055	1,994	1,989
Draftsperson Building Design (Interior)	189	174	158	163
Draftsperson Building Design (Services)	169	165	172	178
<b>Draftsperson - Subtotal</b>	<b>2,436</b>	<b>2,394</b>	<b>2,324</b>	<b>2,330</b>
Civil Engineer	1,494	1,443	1,380	1,295
Electrical Engineer	288	287	274	240
Fire Safety Engineer	167	148	140	134
Mechanical Engineer	441	437	413	394
<b>Engineer - Subtotal</b>	<b>2,390</b>	<b>2,315</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>2,063</b>
Quantity Surveyor	134	133	130	118
<b>Quantity Surveyor – Subtotal</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>118</b>
Supervisor - Temporary Structure Class 1	33	31	30	33
Supervisor - Temporary Structure Class 2	79	78	79	81
<b>Temp. Structures - Subtotal</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,842</b>	<b>26,329</b>	<b>25,108</b>	<b>24,774</b>

Note: One person may be registered in more than one category of building practitioner.

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

	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16	As at Dec-15
<b>Registered plumbers</b>				
Drainage	11,275	11,257	11,446	11,449
Fire protection	560	560	567	570
Gas fitting	11,678	11,662	11,835	11,835
Irrigation (non-agricultural)	11,193	11,182	11,368	11,368
Mechanical services	13,518	13,523	13,738	13,788
Roofing (storm water)	12,144	12,120	12,322	12,343
Sanitary	11,628	11,609	11,775	11,769
Water supply	11,158	11,147	11,331	11,331
<b>Licensed plumbers</b>				
Drainage	8,756	8,773	8,770	8,775
Fire protection	111	111	111	111
Gas fitting	8,469	8,483	8,464	8,462
Irrigation (non-agricultural)	9,464	9,470	9,453	9,454
Mechanical services	2,717	2,723	2,719	2,724
Roofing (storm water)	8,192	8,215	8,202	8,193
Sanitary	8,633	8,649	8,642	8,646
Water supply	9,431	9,437	9,422	9,424

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

	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16	As at Dec-15
<b>Registered plumbers</b>				
Backflow prevention	540	537	537	539
Refrigerated air conditioning	853	851	846	848
Type A appliance conversion	153	146	143	143
Type A appliance servicing work	7,139	7,132	7,358	7,413
Type B gas fitting	315	314	317	319
Type B gas fitting advanced	40	39	39	39
<b>Licensed plumbers</b>				
Backflow prevention	1,420	1,396	1,404	1,396
Refrigerated air conditioning	1,143	1,123	1,130	1,123
Type A appliance conversion	566	555	560	555
Type A appliance servicing work	6,595	6,621	6,613	6,621
Type B gas fitting	362	358	360	358
Type B gas fitting advanced	137	140	140	140



Table 8: Plumbing Examinations pass rate – at month end

	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16	As at Dec-15
Journey man - 1st attempt	15%	23%	23%	56%
Journey man - subsequent attempt	59%	56%	56%	53%

# Enquiries and Dispute Resolution

## 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
- Perform statutory decision-making functions
- Process owner-builder applications for approval by the BAB Registrar
- 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
- Provide BAB services
- Enhance divisional capability

Table 9: Volume of calls – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
VBA Queues	53,260	55,719
Customer Service Unit Queues	26,775	23,075

Table 10: Calls by performance (abandoned) – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
VBA Queues	4.05%	4.50%
CSU Queues	3.86%	6.33

Table 11: Calls by service levels (calls answered in 20 seconds) – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
VBA All Queues	77.21%	77.00%
CSU Queues	75.98%	71.33%

Table 12: Volume of email, mail, in person – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
Email	4,925	5,628
Mail	23,413	25,787
In person	2,527	3,928

Table 13: Volume of new complaints by type – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
Total	686	666
Building	331	299
Plumbing	355	367

Table 14: Volume of Owner-Builder applications – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14
<sup>1</sup> Applications received	1,972	1,916	1,986
Certificate of Consent issued	2,386	1,887	1,845

Table 15: Volume of building modifications and appeals for the Building Appeals Board – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14
*Appeal/Disputes/Other Proceedings applications	43	36	n/a
** Modifications	180	183	n/a
* includes matters that were scheduled but adjourned or withdrawn			
** matters determined, some applications will have more than one matter			

Table 16: Terminations of Building Surveyor Applications – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14
Applications received	129	117	70
Applications closed	39	71	51

<sup>1</sup> Table 14 - Represents number of applications received within a 90 day period but may include processing of applications received in the previous quarter.

# Compliance and Performance

## Purpose

Undertake investigations and audits, oversee the collection of building permit levies, co-ordinate and support practitioner disciplinary proceedings and analyse industry information to identify risks and trends.

## Key activities

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

Table 17: Levy collected – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
Levy collected	\$8,931,807	\$7,777,017

Table 18: Building statistics – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
Number of reporting building surveyors and lodging organisations	1,001	1,011
Number of building permits reported	23,749	24,930
Reported cost of building works	6,329	6,466

Table 19: Plumbing statistics – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14
Compliance certificates sold to practitioners	83,744	79,427	77,962
Compliance certificates lodged by practitioners	79,523	76,583	74,864
Revenue from compliance certificates sold (\$)	\$2,652,263	\$2,451,148	\$2,339,980

Table 20: Audit statistics – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16
<b>Plumbing audits</b>	
Plumbing audits completed	2,370
Plumbing audits as a percentage of lodged compliance certificates	2.98%
Failure rate	13.63%

Table 21: Investigations completed – over quarter

Q3 2015-16	
<b>Plumbing Investigations</b>	
Number of Plumbing practitioner investigations completed	172
<b>Building Investigations</b>	
Number of Building practitioner investigations completed	126

Table 22: Levy Audit – over quarter

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14
Number of Field Audits Completed	17	12	21
Number of Desk Audits Completed	2	1	2
Number of Desk Reviews Completed	6	2	6
<b>Total Audits and Review Completed</b>	25	15	29
Levy Recovered from Normal Audits	\$58,592.86	\$32,363.67	\$29,024.29
Unusual Audit Findings	\$54,531.34*	\$36,238.05#	\$79,598.10^
<b>Net Levy Recovered After Unusual Audit Findings</b>	\$113,124.20	\$68,601.72	\$108,622.39

\* A private building surveyor was found to have 2 building permits issued but not reported to the VBA and 6 staged building permits reported to the VBA with the incorrect cost of work. While the number of findings was low, the unpaid levies were high because they related to large building projects. The building surveyor has been issued a warning. A follow-up audit will be carried out in 2016-17 to determine if there will be any repeat non-compliance.

# A private lodging organisation was found to have 1 staged building permits issued not reported to the VBA. Due to the significant audit finding, a follow-up audit was scheduled in 2015-16. This follow-up audit is currently underway.

^ A private building surveyor was referred for an audit due to several months of outstanding levy returns. The audit found 242 building permits issued but not reported to the VBA, totalling unpaid levies of \$40,687.30. The audit was escalated to Building Investigation and subsequently referred to the Building Practitioner Board. He was found guilty of 17 allegations including failure to pay the building permit levies. The private building surveyor was reprimanded, issued with a fine of \$14,436 (maximum amount) and ordered to pay the cost of \$9,276.40.

^ A private lodging organisation was found to have 20 building permits issued but not reported to the VBA and 1 building permit reported to the VBA with an incorrect cost of work. The unpaid levies totalled to \$38,910.80. The private lodging organisation was issued with a warning. A follow-up audit was carried out in 2014-15. The audit noted significant improvement in compliance and no further issues were found.

## Technical and Regulation

### Purpose

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

### Key activities

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

**Table 23: Plumbing Phone Data – at month ending**

The Top 10 call categories for the period Oct – Dec 2015 make up 85% of the total inbound calls (3,941) for which technical advice was provided.

	Q3 2015-16 Call volume	Q3 2015-16 % of total call volume*	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16
<b>Top 10 call categories sorted by Q2 total</b>					
Drainage	690	18	251	262	177
Gas Fitting	603	16	187	232	184
Roofing (Stormwater)	453	12	162	211	80
Compliance Certificate	326	9	140	102	84
Water Supply	364	10	136	124	104
Unregulated Plumbing	244	6	106	88	50
Legislation	195	5	72	72	51
Sanitary	261	7	70	99	92
Modifications	160	4	62	48	50
Mechanical Services	154	4	57	70	27

\* Discrepancies due to rounding (+/- 1%)

**Table 24: Building Phone Data – at month ending**

The Top 10 call categories for the period Oct – Dec 2015 make up 51% of the total inbound calls (2,844) for which technical advice was provided.

	Q3 2015-16 Call volume	Q3 2015-16 % of total call volume*	As at Mar-16	As at Feb-16	As at Jan-16
<b>Top 10 call categories sorted by Q2 total</b>					
Building Permits	301	10%	103	127	71
Defective Building Work	286	9%	100	118	68
Australian Standards	201	7%	80	64	57
General Technical Advice	156	5%	67	56	33
Practitioner Registration	142	5%	43	38	61
Pool / Spa	135	4%	45	52	38
Contractual	123	4%	47	49	27
Protection Work	114	4%	42	42	30
Insurance	100	3%	49	34	17
Health & Amenity	86	3%	33	33	20

**Table 25: Temporary structures, modifications and accreditations – over quarter**

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15	Q3 2013-14	Q3 2012-13
Volume of temporary structure occupancy permits issued	16	37	28	26
Volume of plumbing modification applications	130	122	97	75
Plumbing modification applications approval rate	93.8%	95.9%	95.9%	96.0%
Volume of building product accreditation certificates issued	0	2	0	0

**Table 26: Volume of security of payment – over quarter**

	Q2 2015-16	Q2 2014-15	Q2 2013-14
Applications lodged	88	100	56
Applications determined	49	65	43
Applications not determined or not yet determined	39	35	13
Claimed amounts	22,559,521	59,502,757	25,691,945
Adjudicated amounts	6,033,564	7,967,754	3,585,073

## Office of the CEO

### 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

Table 27: Inquiries and prosecutions

	Q3 2015-16 finalised	Current not finalised
<b>Building</b>		
Building practitioner disciplinary hearings held by BPB	23	60
Prosecutions completed	13	24
<b>Plumbing</b>		
Plumbing practitioner disciplinary hearings held	1	16
Prosecutions completed	10	7

Table 28: Website and mail reach

	Q3 2015-16	Q3 2014-15
Website visits	157,092	118,566
VBA mail distribution*	54,993	87,634

\* Note there were only three mail distributions in Q3 2015-16 compared to five mail distributions in Q3 2014-15.



## Glossary of Terms

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).
Building and construction sector	A defined secondary sector of the economy.
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.
Built environment	The physical and human-made world.
Cancellations	[See Table 22] 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.
Completed inquiries	[see Table 22] A BPB Inquiry is a hearing into a registered building practitioners' conduct and/or ability to practice. These inquiries are held for building practitioners who are currently registered or were registered at the time of an alleged offence or misconduct.
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. [See Table 19] 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	[see Table 21] 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.
Request for inspection under s.44	Inspections requested directly to the VBA by an owner or builder in dispute.
s.44	Section 44 of the <i>Building Act 1993</i> – Refusal of occupancy permit.
Security of payment	[see Table 24] 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.
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.