



PPTEU

STATE JOURNAL

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Victoria

WINTER EDITION 2026



CONTACT

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PLUMBING AND PIPE TRADES EMPLOYEES' UNION VICTORIA

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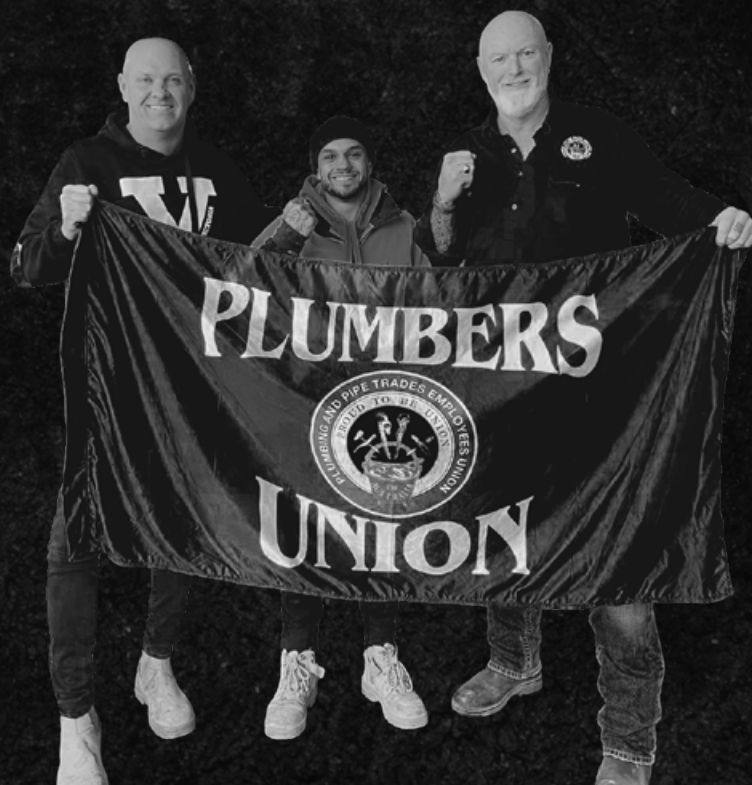
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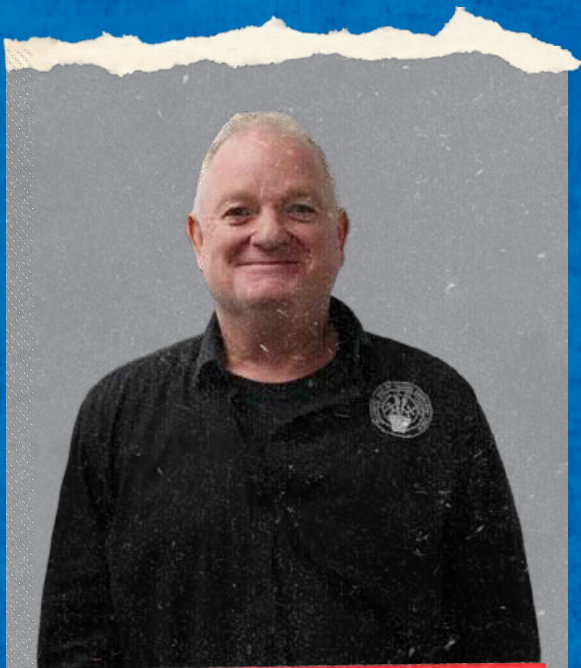
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STANDING TOGETHER STANDING TOGETHER STANDING TOGETHER STANDING TOGETHER

FOR VICTORIA'S FUTURE



Earle Setches
Victorian State Secretary

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME TO BE A UNION MEMBER.

Every day across Victoria, our members are building, maintaining and protecting the essential infrastructure that keeps our communities functioning. From hospitals and schools to water treatment plants, housing developments and major transport projects, plumbers are at the heart of building a stronger Victoria. It's work that often goes unnoticed by the public, but without skilled union plumbers, our state simply wouldn't function.

The PPTEU has always stood for something bigger than wages and conditions. We stand for dignity at work, respect for the skills of our members, safe workplaces, quality apprenticeships and ensuring every worker returns home safely to their family at the end of every shift.

THESE VALUES HAVE NEVER CHANGED.

Every condition our members enjoy today has been fought for by generations of union members before us. Fair wages, redundancy entitlements, income protection, apprentices' rights, safety standards, industry superannuation and fair enterprise agreements didn't appear overnight - they were won because workers stood together with one voice.

SAFETY REMAINS ONE OF OUR HIGHEST PRIORITIES.

Your union, the mighty PPTEU, will never stop advocating for stronger safety standards, high quality industry led training and the development and maintenance of culturally safe and inclusive workplaces for all the men and women who participate in the industry.

The demand in the economy for well trained, qualified and skilled plumbers and pipe fitters is very strong and rapidly growing. Achieving national housing targets, delivering critical infrastructure, like data centres, and building the schools and hospitals the community needs, are all dependent on the skills of the men and women of our union.

We are expanding our training capability to continue to meet this demand. As we put to members at the



mass meeting in February 2024, we are, in partnership with our Industry partners, developing a new training facility in Melbourne's west. The decision to expand our training reach and add capacity in the west to our three existing Victorian PICAC training centres in Brunswick, Narre Warren and Geelong is a positive step forward for our industry, and will create an enduring asset for our industry and the community for generations to come.

Our decision to purchase land to establish a training centre in the heart of the growth western growth corridor in Melton, was unanimously supported by members at the mass meeting. I am now pleased to advise members that a site for the new development has been secured and works will commence in the second half of this year.

In the next edition of the Journal I will be able to provide members with more information about the exciting new PICAC West Melbourne development. This will include some pictures of the site, and an overview of the project timelines and more information about exactly what training capability the new PICAC facility will include.

The new facility is about opportunity, capability and currency. It will be designed to train hundreds of new apprentices year on year when fully up and running, as well as upskilling and re-skilling opportunities, ensuring the skills of our members remain current and up to date with the latest products and energy efficient systems in plumbing, gas, HVAC-R and fire protection. It will bring opportunity for young men and women in the west to learn skills that will set them up for a lifelong career in our industry.

We also continue to champion apprenticeships because they represent the future of our trade. Preserving the apprenticeship pathway into our trades is vitally important. In a national policy context where skilled workers are in short supply, policy makers often seek to change the apprenticeship model in the name of efficiency. We will always support the premise that a Certificate III level qualification obtained under an apprenticeship is the best and only way to ensure plumbers and sprinkler fitters have the breadth of training and competence necessary to work safely and effectively in the Industry.

The work of our members protects community health, prevents fire catastrophes and ensures that the systems which sit behind the walls and under the floors of our hospitals, schools, and infrastructure are safe and effective.

Looking ahead, Victorians will head to the polls in November for the Victorian State Election. Regardless of your political views or who you choose to support, one message is clear - your vote matters. Victoria's next government will make decisions that directly affect our industry, our jobs, infrastructure investment, apprenticeship opportunities, workplace laws and the future of construction across our state. The scheduled election on 28 November 2026 will determine the direction of Victoria for years to come.

Importantly, only Labor will protect your licensing and registration. This is a critical point to keep in mind when casting your vote. Our system of registration and licensing in all aspects of plumbing and fire protection protects our trades and ensures your skills, training and experience is recognised and reflected in the great EBA rates our members enjoy. History tells us that whenever they get a chance, those on the conservative side of politics will look for opportunities to strip back licensing and registration. We are determined to not let that happen in plumbing and fire protection.

The future will always present new challenges, but it will also present new opportunities. As long as we remain united, committed to our values and focused on protecting the interests of working people, our union will continue to grow stronger.

STANDING TOGETHER HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR GREATEST STRENGTH.

IT STILL IS TODAY.

AND IT WILL REMAIN THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING WE ACHIEVE TOMORROW.

STANDING STRONG

STANDING STRONG
STANDING STRONG
STANDING STRONG

IN CHALLENGING TIMES



Jake Cranny
Assistant Secretary, PPTEU Victoria

The strength of our union has never been measured by the challenges we face. It has always been measured by how we respond to them.

Across Victoria, our members continue to demonstrate why union plumbers, sprinkler fitters and in fact everyone in the PPTEU are regarded as the best in the industry. Every day, they're delivering the hospitals, schools, transport infrastructure, commercial developments and residential projects that keep our state moving forward. Their professionalism, skill and commitment remain the backbone of an industry that continues to play a vital role in Victoria's economy.

While the construction industry continues to perform strongly, there is no doubt that workers and employers alike have experienced a changing landscape over the past 12 months. Rising costs, increased compliance requirements, labour shortages and economic uncertainty have all presented challenges. Yet despite those pressures, Victoria still boasts one of the largest infrastructure pipelines in Australia, creating thousands of secure jobs for skilled tradespeople and apprentices.

Projects such as the Metro Tunnel, Northeast Link, Suburban Rail Loop, major hospital redevelopments, renewable energy infrastructure and countless commercial developments continue to provide opportunities for our members across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Every one of these projects relies on skilled union labour to deliver the quality that Victorian communities expect.



OUR MEMBERS SHOULD BE PROUD OF THE REPUTATION THEY HAVE BUILT.

The PPTEU has always stood for quality workmanship, safe workplaces, fair wages and strong apprenticeship pathways. Those principles haven't changed, and they never will. Every enterprise agreement we negotiate, every safety issue we resolve and every member we represent is about protecting those standards for today's workforce and the generations that follow.

One of our greatest responsibilities is ensuring that young people entering our industry receive the support, training and mentoring they deserve. Apprentices are not simply the future of our trade – they are the future of our union. Investing in them today ensures our industry remains strong, highly skilled and respected well into the future.

SAFETY ALSO REMAINS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

No project, no programme and no deadline is worth risking a worker's life. Our delegates, Health and Safety Representatives and organisers continue to play an essential role in identifying hazards, improving safety outcomes and ensuring every member has the confidence to speak up if something isn't right. That culture of looking after your workmate is something union members should never take for granted.

THE PAST YEAR HAS ALSO REINFORCED THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY.

In an industry that is constantly evolving, there will always be attempts to reduce conditions, cut corners or undermine the value of skilled labour. History has shown that the best way to protect workers is through unity. When members stand together, employers listen. When we negotiate collectively, we achieve outcomes that benefit everyone, not just individuals.

Our union exists because generations before us understood that principle. The wages, allowances, redundancy entitlements, income protection, training opportunities and safety standards our members enjoy today were won because workers stood together and refused to accept less.

THAT LEGACY CONTINUES TODAY.

As Assistant Secretary, I'm fortunate to regularly visit projects across Victoria and speak directly with our members. Whether it's a major hospital redevelopment, a commercial tower in Melbourne's CBD or an industrial project in regional Victoria, one thing remains consistent – the pride our members take in their work.

THAT PRIDE IS WHAT DEFINES OUR UNION.

Looking ahead, the opportunities for our industry remain significant. Victoria's population continues to grow, communities continue to expand and governments will need to invest in the infrastructure that supports that growth. Skilled plumbers and sprinkler fitters will remain central to delivering that future.

The PPTEU will continue doing what it has always done – standing beside our members, protecting their interests and ensuring that union plumbers and sprinkler fitters remain the benchmark for quality, safety and professionalism across the construction industry.

TOGETHER, WE HAVE BUILT A STRONG UNION.

TOGETHER, WE WILL CONTINUE BUILDING VICTORIA.



2026 RDO CALENDAR

www.ppteu.asn.au

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Public Holiday Annual Leave RDO Lock Down Weekends School Holidays Picnic Day World Plumbing Day Return to work on 12th Jan 2027

VICTORIAN SCHOOL TERM DATES

TERM 1: 28 January 2026 - 2 April 2026
TERM 2: 20 April 2026 - 26 June 2026
TERM 3: 13 July 2026 - 18 September 2026
TERM 4: 5 October 2026 - 18 December 2026

PUBLIC HOLIDAY DATES

New Year's Day: Thursday 1 January
Australia Day: Monday 26 January
Labour Day: Monday 9 March
Good Friday: Friday 3 April

Easter Saturday: Saturday 4 April

Easter Sunday: Sunday 5 April

Easter Monday: Monday 6 April

Anzac Day: Monday 27 April

Kings Birthday: Monday 8 June

Grand Final Eve: Friday 25 September (TBC)

Melbourne Cup Day: Tuesday 3 November

Christmas Day: Friday 25 December

Boxing Day: Monday 28 December

PPTEU

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President:
Glenn Menzies

State Secretary
Earle Setches

Assistant Secretaries
Paddy McCrudden, Jake Cranney

Organisers
Ryan Russell, Simon Jewell, Billy Ramsay, Billy Jovanovski, John Haitas,
Nick McCubbin, Herc Kolokithas, Warrick Burke, Nathan Tzimopoulos

OH&S
Steve Rocco, Chris Giblin

Legal Officer
Kristen Reid

Industrial Officer
Paul Coffey

GENERAL MEETING DATES - Melbourne

5.00pm at Venue To Be Advised
31st March* | 30th June* | 22nd September* | 24th November*

GENERAL MEETING DATES - Geelong

5.00pm at PICAC Building - 66 Tanner Street, Breakwater
25th March* | 24th June* | 23rd September* | 25th November*

*Subject to change, see PPTEU website for updates

Tune-in to the Plumbers Union

Radio Program 'Fire Up', every
second Thursday morning at
6.30am on 3CR - 855 on the AM dial

CBUS (SUPERANNUATION)

Wesley Place, Level 19, 130 Lonsdale Street,
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
TEL: 1300 361 784

INCOLINK (REDUNDANCY)

1 Pelham Street, CARLTON VIC 3053
TEL: 1800 337 789



PICAC and CEPUTEK

offer a range of courses to union members, including:

CI Induction (Red card)
Initial 5 Day Occupational Health & Safety Training Course
First Aid Level One - Two - Three
Traffic Management
Poly Butt Welding
Fire Training (Sprinkler Fitters Only)
Computers - Basic - Intermediate - Advanced
Confined Space Entry
Backflow Prevention
Earthmoving
Asbestos Removal
Asbestos Awareness
Elevated Work Platform
Boom Lift
Forklift
Install primary Ground (Trench Shoring)
Safe Work Roofs
Welding (MIG & TIG)
Installation of Split Air Con (Mechanical Plumbers Only)
Gas Type A
Gas Type B
Disconnect/Reconnect
Thermostatic Mixing Valves
Cert IV WHS
Diploma WHS
HSR Refresher OHS Training Course

For further information contact your
training office on 1300 222 727



2027 CALENDAR

www.ppteu.asn.au

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
31 1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3
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24 25 26 27 28 29 30	28	28 29 30 31	25 26 27 28 29 30
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
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30 31 1	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
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23 24 25 26 27 28 29	27 28 29 30	25 26 27 28 29 30 31	29 30 31
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4	31 1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4
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19 20 21 22 23 24 25	17 18 19 20 21 22 23	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30	24 25 26 27 28 29 30	28 29 30	26 27 28 29 30 31

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 Kings Birthday: Monday 14 June

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 Computers - Basic - Intermediate - Advanced
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 Backflow Prevention
 Earthmoving
 Asbestos Removal
 Asbestos Awareness
 Elevated Work Platform
 Boom Lift
 Forklift
 Install primary Ground (Trench Shoring)
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 Welding (MIG & TIG)
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 Gas Type A
 Gas Type B
 Disconnect/Reconnect
 Thermostatic Mixing Valves
 Cert IV WHS
 Diploma WHS
 HSR Refresher OHS Training Course

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INFORMED CHOICES

INFORMED CHOICES
INFORMED CHOICES
INFORMED CHOICES

STRONGER FUTURES



Paddy McCrudden
Assistant Secretary

AS UNION MEMBERS, WE KNOW THAT LOOKING AFTER ONE ANOTHER DOESN'T STOP AT THE WORKPLACE. IT EXTENDS TO THE DECISIONS WE MAKE AS CITIZENS, THE PLANS WE PUT IN PLACE FOR OUR FAMILIES, AND THE PROTECTIONS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.

With the Victorian State Election approaching, now is the time to make informed decisions about the future of our workplaces and our communities. Every vote matters – but just as importantly, understanding how your vote works matters too.

Victoria's preferential voting system means that your vote doesn't simply end with your first preference. If your preferred candidate isn't elected, your vote may continue to influence the outcome through your subsequent preferences. Taking the time to understand where your preferences flow can help ensure your vote reflects your values and priorities all the way through the count.

It's also worth looking beyond campaign slogans, personalities and popularity. Elections are ultimately about policies, and those policies have real consequences for working people. Issues such as workplace safety, job security, skills and training, wages, public services and industrial relations all affect our members, their families and the industries we represent.

Not every political party presents detailed positions across every area of industrial relations. In some cases, policies relating to matters such as workplace protections, penalty rates or family leave arrangements may be limited, unclear or still developing. That's not a criticism of any particular party – it's simply a reminder that informed voting starts with informed research. Before casting your ballot, take the time to review policies from all candidates and parties so you understand how their commitments align with the issues that matter most to you.

As a union, our role has always been to empower members with information, advocate for fair outcomes and encourage participation in the democratic process. How you vote is entirely your decision but making that decision based on facts rather than assumptions is one of the strongest contributions you can make to shaping the future.



Looking beyond the election, there is another important conversation we should all be having – one that often gets put off until it's too late.

None of us like to think about serious injury or illness. Yet every year, working people experience unexpected events that leave them temporarily or permanently unable to make decisions for themselves. When that happens, important questions arise. Who can make decisions about your medical treatment? Who can manage your finances or deal with your personal affairs? Have you made your wishes known, and do the people closest to you know what you want?

These are not just legal questions – they are practical ones that can place enormous pressure on families during already difficult times. Having appropriate plans in place can provide clarity, reduce stress and ensure that your interests are protected if you're unable to speak for yourself.

Planning ahead isn't about expecting the worst. It's about taking sensible steps to protect yourself and the people who matter most. Just as we encourage members to think ahead about their superannuation, insurance and retirement, it's equally important to consider who you trust to act on your behalf if circumstances change unexpectedly.

This is an area our union has been actively considering. We're exploring ways to better support members in planning for these situations, including potential mechanisms that would allow members to nominate trusted people who could step in to assist if they become incapacitated or unable to manage their own affairs.

While this work is still developing, it reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting members beyond the traditional industrial landscape. Protection isn't just about wages and conditions – it also means helping members prepare for life's unexpected challenges and ensuring they have access to the information and support they need.

We'll have more to share as this work progresses, and we look forward to engaging with members about how these initiatives can provide greater peace of mind for workers and their families.

Whether it's casting an informed vote, understanding the policies that shape our working lives, or planning ahead to protect those we care about, knowledge remains one of our greatest strengths.

AN INFORMED MEMBERSHIP IS A STRONGER MEMBERSHIP – AND A STRONGER UNION BENEFITS US ALL.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge an important development within our union leadership, from a national perspective. Following recent appointments, Paris Andriske has stepped into the role of Queensland Branch Secretary, with Alan Temporini appointed Queensland Branch Assistant Secretary. Both have long demonstrated a strong commitment to our members and the values of our union movement.

On behalf of the union, I congratulate Paris and Alan on their new positions and wish them every success as they take on these important responsibilities. I look forward to working alongside them as we continue strengthening our union and advocating for better outcomes for workers and their families.

The Victorian Government's decision to establish a Royal Commission into the construction sector, announced by Premier Ben Carroll, will no doubt attract significant attention in the months ahead. The PPTEU does not believe the Royal Commission will deliver meaningful outcomes for workers and questions whether it represents the best use of taxpayer funds.

Our union has always acted in the interests of its members, and we remain confident in the work we do every day to represent and support working people. We remain focused on the issues that matter most to our members: safe workplaces, secure jobs and fair conditions.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Glenn Menzies
President

Members of our great union are generally very aware of the key role the union, and union officials, play in terms of delivering your great pay, conditions and safety on site. However, many members may be less aware of the work done behind the scenes on your behalf, to ensure that the policy and regulatory settings which govern our trades and our industry are fair, protect our trades, and work in the interests of the plumbing and fire protection industry and the men and women who work in it.

At a national, and state and territory level, your union is "at the table", representing you. At any given time, the union and its industry partners are represented on up to a dozen different committees, review panels, stakeholder forums and technical working groups. Like pay, conditions, training and safety, this work is union "core business", and it has never been more important.

Our industry, and the skills of our members, are central to just about every significant policy challenge Australia confronts. Whether you are talking about the energy transition, infrastructure, housing, skills shortages, the boom in data centres, water scarcity and climate change, construction sector productivity and economic growth – our industry is a key player. As all these issues have come into sharper focus over recent years, the extent of engagement with government policy agencies has increased significantly.

As well as participating in a broad range of committees and working groups, the union, together with its industry partners, regularly makes written, whole of industry submissions to consultation processes. This work has expanded sharply in recent years. In the half year to June 2026, we have made over 20 written submissions. In years gone by, we would be lucky to make 20 submissions in a year.

These cover a range of issues and proposals, including from Safe Work Australia, the Productivity Commission, the Commonwealth Treasury and other departments, state regulators in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

Industry is able to successfully leverage the collaborative architecture of the PICAC industry partnership model to bring the different stakeholder views together and



speak with one industry voice to government policy makers. The Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre is itself a partnership between the union and the leading sector employer representatives. When PICAC makes a submission to a Parliamentary Inquiry or responds to a consultation paper or reform proposal, it is speaking with the voice of the whole of the industry.

The union takes this policy and advocacy work very seriously because decisions made today will directly affect how the industry looks tomorrow.

At a national level, the policy focus is very much on construction sector productivity, worker mobility, regulatory efficiency and meeting the increasing demand for skilled workers (housing and energy transition). Focus is also on the changing nature of the industry (merging scopes of work between HVAC-R, mechanical services, electrical), and the importance of ensuring alignment between contemporary work practices, training packages and frameworks, and licensing and regulation.

Through the union, you are represented on a range of national committees and working groups, including those formed by the Jobs and Skills Councils, BuildSkills and Powering Skills. Our key focus is to ensure that the training and licensing pathways into our trades are as effective and current as they can be, and that the integrity of our trades is not undermined in the government rush to grow the construction workforce.

We are on major projects looking at the migrant plumbing workforce, and the training requirements to work safely with hydrogen and other renewable gases. On the migrant plumber project, we have successfully argued that migrant plumbers are welcome and important but can only be registered or licenced where there is genuine equivalence between their skills and training and that of Australian practitioners.

Our collaborative, whole of industry approach to engaging with governments is having a positive impact. The collective voice of industry carries weight. For example, our advocacy has helped to pave the way for a new licensing scheme for fire protection in NSW which is planned for next year. We have also put fire protection licensing high on the agenda in WA. Similarly in the

ACT, fire protection is set to be licensed as well as roof plumbing. Industry advocacy has seen the development of a new license pathway created in Victoria, opening up the installation and commissioning of split system heat pump water heaters that circulate refrigerants to mechanical services plumbers.

An issue that is attracting significant government attention, at a national and state level, is data centres. A key relevant issue and opportunity for the industry is around the skills required to build and maintain the rapidly growing number of data centres. Industry has been making the point, to the NSW Parliament and other forums that like water and energy, a workforce strategy for data centres (including apprenticeships pathways) is critically important, especially in advanced mechanical services work and fire protection.

Members may have seen media coverage about the industry's advocacy around the transition to lead free plumbing products. In December 2025 the ABCB decided to extend the transition timeline for two more years (May 2028). Industry stakeholders have been bringing focus to this disappointing decision, writing to the ABCB and the relevant state and territory ministers, engaging with media (ABC), social media etc and expressing the strong view that the decision is a poor one, is inconsistent with public health objectives of the NCC and should be re-considered.

Here again, Industry's advocacy has had impact. In March this year, the Victorian Minister for Housing and Building, Minister Shing, announced that Victoria will be the first state in Australia to mandate lead-free plumbing products in new buildings. Victoria will push ahead with adopting the National Construction Code (NCC) 2025 updates on 1 May 2026. From 1 May 2026, all regulated plumbing work in Victoria must use lead-free products.

These are just a few examples of some of the work being done to protect the industry, preserve the apprenticeship model, preserve the registration and licensing system that underpins our great industry; and ensure that the Australian economy continues to have access to the plumbing and related skills it will need to transition the energy grid, build the infrastructure and housing we all need and mitigate the risks of a changing climate.

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The \$400 million redevelopment of Ballarat Base Hospital is transforming one of regional Victoria's most important health facilities while providing secure employment for PPTEU members and creating opportunities for the next generation of skilled plumbing tradespeople.

With completion scheduled for 20 March 2027, the project is progressing well and stands as another example of the high-quality work being delivered by union labour across Victoria.

The redevelopment brings together a number of leading union contractors, with Cooke & Dowsett delivering hydraulic plumbing services, Entire Mechanical completing the mechanical installation, Leemark Fire responsible for fire protection systems, Industry Roofing and Cladding undertaking the roofing and facade works, Medgas installing the specialist medical gas systems, Lagwell delivering insulation services and Mulgrave Plumbing contributing to the project's successful delivery.

For PPTEU Area Organiser John Haitas, the Ballarat Base Hospital redevelopment represents far more than another construction project.

"Projects like Ballarat Base Hospital show exactly why investment in public infrastructure matters," John said.

"Not only are we delivering a first-class hospital for the local community, but we're also creating secure jobs, supporting apprentices and ensuring our members have ongoing opportunities to work on major projects close to home. That's good for workers, good for Ballarat and good for Victoria."



John said the professionalism displayed by PPTU members across every stage of construction continued to reinforce the value of employing highly skilled union tradespeople.

"Every contractor on site understands the importance of getting it right. Hospitals demand the highest standards because people's lives depend on the systems we're installing. Our members take enormous pride in delivering work that meets those expectations."

Safety continues to be a major focus throughout the redevelopment, with PPTU Health and Safety Representative James Menzies playing a vital role in ensuring workers have a safe and productive workplace.

"Everyone on this site has a responsibility to look after each other," James said.

"Construction is always changing, particularly on a project of this size, so it's important that workers feel confident raising concerns and that issues are addressed quickly. The goal is simple - everyone goes home safely at the end of every shift."

James said the strong safety culture on site had been built through cooperation between workers, contractors and union representatives.

"When everyone works together, we achieve better outcomes. Good communication and experienced tradespeople make a real difference, and that's something we're seeing every day on this project."

Hospital construction is among the most technically demanding sectors of the plumbing industry. Every hydraulic service, medical gas installation, drainage system, fire service and mechanical component must be completed to exacting standards before the facility can begin serving patients.

The redevelopment is also creating valuable opportunities for apprentices to gain experience on a major health infrastructure project, ensuring the industry continues to develop the highly skilled workforce needed to meet future demand.

As work continues towards the March 2027 completion date, the Ballarat Base Hospital redevelopment stands as another example of what can be achieved through skilled union labour, experienced contractors and a shared commitment to quality, safety and professionalism.

When the doors open in 2027, the Ballarat community will benefit from a modern, world-class healthcare facility. PPTU members can take enormous pride in knowing their craftsmanship will form part of a hospital that will care for generations of Victorians, while once again demonstrating that union plumbers continue to build the essential infrastructure our communities rely on every day.

BALLARAT BASE HOSPITAL

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FUTURE-PROOFING VICTORIA'S PLUMBING WORKFORCE WITH FREE HEAT PUMP TRAINING

The plumbing industry is changing rapidly, and heat pump hot water systems are becoming an increasingly common part of the work many plumbers undertake. More customers are asking about them, more suppliers are expanding their product ranges, and more projects are requiring knowledge of electrified hot water solutions.



THIS ISN'T A FUTURE TREND. IT'S HAPPENING NOW.

As Victoria continues its move towards more energy-efficient homes and businesses, heat pump technology is becoming an increasingly important part of everyday plumbing work. That's why PICAC continues to invest in practical, industry-focused training that helps plumbers stay current with changing technologies, installation requirements and customer expectations.

The good news is that, thanks to new funding from Solar Victoria, PICAC's highly successful Heat Pump Training program has been extended until 30 June 2027, giving Victorian plumbers and fourth-year apprentices another 12 months to access the fully funded training program.

Unlike many training programs that focus heavily on theory, PICAC's Heat Pump Training has been designed specifically for tradespeople who want practical knowledge they can use on the job.

The course combines self-paced online learning with hands-on workshop training, allowing participants to build a solid understanding of heat pump technology before applying that knowledge in a practical environment. Topics covered include system design, sizing, installation best practice, commissioning, troubleshooting, refrigerants, system performance and the factors that influence efficiency outcomes in different applications.

For most plumbers, heat pump training is simply about staying up to date with the technology and systems they're increasingly seeing on site.

Heat pump hot water systems are becoming more common across both new builds and replacement installations. Customers are increasingly looking for solutions that can reduce energy consumption and lower running costs, while builders and developers are responding to evolving energy efficiency requirements. As a result, plumbers who understand how to correctly specify and install these systems are likely to be in growing demand over the coming years.



Importantly, the training goes beyond simply identifying different heat pump products. Participants gain a deeper understanding of system selection, placement considerations, environmental factors and performance outcomes – knowledge that can help avoid installation issues and deliver better results for clients.

THE INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE TO THE PROGRAM OVER THE PAST YEAR DEMONSTRATES JUST HOW RELEVANT THIS TRAINING HAS BECOME.

During the 2025–26 campaign period, PICAC delivered a statewide awareness campaign promoting Heat Pump Training to Victorian plumbers. Through a combination of targeted radio, digital audio and Meta advertising, the campaign generated more than 10 million impressions and drove more than 66,000 visits to the Heat Pump Training website. Radio activity across Triple M and SEN also delivered extensive reach among Victorian tradies, helping ensure the message reached plumbing professionals where they work, travel and consume media.

The strong engagement confirms what many plumbing businesses are already experiencing firsthand. Interest in heat pump technology is growing, and plumbers want access to training that helps them confidently meet customer demand.

Another important benefit of the program is accessibility. The training is available free of charge to registered and licensed plumbers across Victoria, as well as fourth-year plumbing apprentices. Participants do not need to be part of the Solar Victoria installer network to enrol, making it an ideal opportunity for plumbers who want to broaden their knowledge and future-proof their skill set.

At PICAC, we recognise that the best training is training that reflects what is happening on site. Our goal is not simply to teach a new technology, but to ensure Victorian plumbers have the confidence and capability to work effectively with systems that are becoming a larger part of the market every year.

The extension of funding through to June 2027 means more plumbers will have the opportunity to gain those skills without the barrier of course fees. Whether you're already installing heat pumps regularly, looking to expand your service offering, or simply wanting to stay ahead of where the industry is heading, now is the perfect time to take advantage of the training available.

The plumbing industry has always adapted to new technologies, regulations and customer needs. Heat pump hot water systems are simply the next chapter in that evolution. By investing a small amount of time in upskilling today, you'll be better positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that tomorrow brings.

PLUMBING INDUSTRY
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All figures as at 31 December 2025, unless otherwise stated.

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