EBA MASS MEETING

OUR MEMBERS ARE PROPERLY REWARDED

PICAC Wins

Australia’s ICE Problem Is Everyone’s Problem

Exciting Time To Be A Sprinkler Fitter
2016 is a very important year for our Union and for working Australians generally. Not since the days of Howard and Reith have we seen a Government so hell bent on attacking Unions. Construction sector Unions, like ours, have been unfairly maligned and accused of all manner of corrupt activities by the Abbott and Turnbull Governments. We have been subjected to a Royal Commission that has proven to be nothing more than a $50M taxpayer funded witch hunt.

As you will read about in this Winter Edition of the PTEU Journal, despite all the venom and public derision of the Unions by Turnbull and co, we are getting on with the job, and doing it very well. As the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary outline in their Reports, our Union and our Industry is going from strength to strength. The newly agreed Plumbing and Fire Enterprise Agreement 2015-19 locks in the best terms and conditions the Industry has ever known and the economic outlook in Victoria is positive, with continued growth forecast for the medium term, particularly in the high-rise apartment sector and major community infrastructure like hospitals.

Unfortunately the Federal Government seems to think the way to sustain productivity and foster growth is to drive down workers’ wages and conditions, deregulate everything in sight and engage wherever it can in old fashioned Union busting. On the other hand, we know, and so does the Andrews Government here in Victoria, that the three most important ingredients of a productive and sustainable future are skills, skills and more skills.

This is why we have been and continue to be focused on developing and delivering the best Industry training an Australian Plumbing or Fire Protection Apprentice can get. And, as you can read about inside this issue, I am very proud that PICAC is being recognised for its leadership and excellence, winning the Australian Small Training Provider of the Year Award for 2015.

Every year since its establishment in 2010, PICAC has added to its physical training delivery capability. Along the way the Brunswick site has been expanded on two sides, and added have been new training systems like the Mobile Training Units for Backflow Prevention Training and new fully interactive classrooms as well as Centres of Excellence in Fire Protection Training, OH&S and Welding. These additions to our infrastructure stock allow us to train more students, in more skills, using more up to date facilities than ever before.

And now we are training the next generation of plumbing and fire protection professionals in more places too. The new Centre at Geelong is ready to go and planning has been approved for and design well underway for PICAC Narre Warren, in Melbourne’s south eastern growth corridor and region where skills development is badly needed, and Geelong, a region facing significant economic structural adjustment challenges. These new Training Centres, like PICAC in Brunswick will be run not for profit, funded in part by a levies on employers as part of our EBA and partly by the Victorian Government, will house the best in training equipment and provide services to the western regions of Victoria.

These acquisitions are designed to meet the training needs of all parts of the Industry and, importantly, to also re-train highly skilled workers being forced to exit the manufacturing sector with large companies closing or reducing operations. For existing qualified tradespeople including welders, metal fabricators, machinists, fitters and turners PICAC’s customised training allows these skilled workers to leverage their experience and will enable displaced workers to re-enter the industry quickly. It is anticipated that more than 400 of these workers would be trained at the facilities year on year, representing a secure new start in life for them and their families.

As well as delivering great terms and conditions and fantastic training opportunities for its Members, the Union is working hard, each and every week, to keep Members as safe as possible in the workplace. Our dedicated OH&S team work closely with Organisers and Shop Stewards on site to ensure risks and hazards are identified and addressed and that safety based communication – a vital component of workplace safety – is open and clear.

And we are looking out for each other at all stages of career and life. All our Members, current, retired Members, Members who have fallen on hard times or are unwell, are all a valued part of our Union family. I am always proud of how generous we are in helping our mates. Like at the Mass Meeting in February when the buckets went around the room to raise money for the family of Anthony Dokos, a Member who, together with his wife, tragically lost his life to cancer leaving three children without Mum and Dad. That sort of giving and solidarity goes to the essence of what Union solidarity is all about.

It will be that very level of solidarity that will be needed to take on and defeat the Turnbull Government and its anti-worker agenda. For all the reasons outlined by Earl and Paddy in the following pages, we must and we will prevent the re-establishment of the ABCC and we must and we will defeat the Turnbull Government this July.

Nazza Ottobre
PTEU President
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Plumbing & Pipe Trades Employees Union – Victorian Branch

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Earl Setches

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Paddy McCrudden

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2016 GENERAL MEETING DATES

Melbourne
52 Victoria Street, Carlton South
June 28th
September 27th
November 29th

Geelong
127 Myers Street, Geelong
June 29th
September 28th
November 30th
Secretary’s Report

I am very proud to present to you the PTEU Journal Winter 2016 edition. In this Report to Members, the first in what promises to be a year of continued prosperity and growth for our Union and our sector, but also one in which some key political and industrial battle lines will be drawn, I want to convey several important messages to Members.

Our Union is stronger and more united than ever and thanks to the hard work of the negotiation team our new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) locks in excellent conditions for our Members for the next four years. The Assistant Secretary’s Report goes into more detail about the 2015-19 EBA which, as well as ensuring our Members are properly rewarded for their skill and training, and that their value in terms of community health is properly recognised, preserves existing conditions – like the RDO calendar, the Long Service Leave payment system, and the definitions of what is exclusively Plumbing or Fire Protection work – which is more important than ever before.

The future for our industry, both here in Victoria but also nationally, is very bright. The construction sector, especially in terms of multi-story apartment developments, is providing a steady pipeline of work for our Members. Our skills will be in high demand in the years to come and our industry training school at PICAC is, as voted by a panel of experts, Australia’s leading training provider delivering world class Plumbing and Fire Protection training in more places, more often, and to more people than ever before.

In the recent State Budget the Andrews Government showed its support and understanding of the significance of our Industry by allocating $5M for the development of two new PICAC Training Centres in Geelong and Narre Warren. Over 8,000 courses are delivered every year at PICAC and this announcement means that plumbers throughout the State can get the training they need to stay at the leading edge of industry practice.

The Turnbull Government is not anti-Union corruption, it is simply anti-Union. The proposed Australian Building and Construction Bills, which were held to the head of the Senate as the potential double dissolution trigger are Bills intended to do little else but strip Union Members of basic rights, increase coercive powers over workers and remove safeguards afforded under the current Fair Work arrangements. The productivity improvement arguments put forward by the Government have been widely discredited and nothing will do more harm to productivity than a return to the bad old days of the ABCC and their combative and hostile approach to industrial negotiations.

Our Union is anti-corruption – and I am as keen as anyone to get rid of any crooks from the sector who use organizations (be they Unions, or corporations, or government departments or regulators) as a cover for criminal conduct. But The ABCC laws, which date back to 2005, represent the last and most extreme vestiges of the WorkChoices era and do nothing to address corruption or productivity. These 2013 Bills are an attempt to revive those laws and to breathe life back into an approach to workplace relations that was roundly rejected by the Australian electorate. These Bills revert to the notion that it is acceptable to single out a sector of the community and allow them fewer workplace rights (and greater exposure to penalties) than the remainder of the general public.

They attempt to normalise the existence of a publicly funded and politicised regulator with invasive powers - which are without precedent in an industrial relations context - being permitted to devote their resources to employee and trade union prosecutions.

Our Union will stand proud with Federal leader Bill Shorten and his team to fight and win Election 2016. Whether it is held in July or later in the year, whether it is a double dissolution election or not, and irrespective of whatever mud the Conservatives try and throw at the Labor movement, we will organize hard and campaign harder to make sure we defeat the anti-worker, anti-fairness, anti-equity, free market, big business agenda. Be very clear, the Turnbull Government, if given a mandate by the Australian people, will set out to destroy all that we value, like fairness, equality, and the freedom to negotiate collectively for fair pay and safe conditions. This is a fight we must win, and, with the support of all our Members and the Members of Unions and their families, right across the community, it is a fight we can win.

We are as focused as ever on the health and safety of all our Members, and work hard to make sure Members’ safety at work is protected and improved, and also that their health and families are looked after. Our OH&S Team is second to none in terms of identifying and communicating OH&S issues to Members and Employers, and making sure our Member training around OH&S remains current.

And we care about the well-being of our Members outside of the workplace too, and in this edition you can read about some of the support the Union can offer through Incolink Member Services when things go wrong and addiction or mental illness become major issues. Or, as in the tragic case of the Dokos family in which three children were left orphaned when both their parents succumbed to cancer late last year, we offer as much support as we can. Thank you to all of you who so generously helped fill the buckets that were circulated at the Mass Meeting for the Dokos family. Together we raised some good coin that day but more is needed so please read the story at page 32 and contribute of what you can.

We support our members, through providing great training, great skills and conditions and by improving the safety of the workplace as well as helping Members in a range of aspects of their lives.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and I look forward to continuing to work together to benefit our Members and fight the anti-Union agenda of Turnbull and his corporate cronies.

Earl Setches
PTEU Secretary
Assistant Secretary’s Report

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to write directly to Members at what is a crucial time for our Union.

This is the first Journal since negotiating and agreeing the Plumbing and Fire Enterprise Agreement 2015-19 (the EBA – see page 10 for more info). Our new EBA, which was unanimously supported by Members in February, sets out pay increases over the next four years ensuring our Members are properly rewarded for their skill and training, and that their value in terms of community health is properly recognised. It is a great EBA which not only includes excellent wage rates and annual increases, but also seeks to preserve existing conditions - like the RDO Calendar, the Long Service Leave payment system, and the definitions of what is exclusively Plumbing or Fire Protection work.

This is more important than ever before. It is more important than ever before because a returned Turnbull Government would put all our conditions in jeopardy.

The Turnbull Government’s attitude to working Australians was made very clear when it failed to strongly advocate for a raise in the minimum wage in the recent Fair Work Commission process. As a result Australia's 1.8 million minimum wage workers received a measly increase to just $17.70 per hour (about the same as the Plumbing Award in the late 1990's), or just under $16 per week. Our EBA provides for pay rises of about $280 per week over four years, which will put our rates at more than 100% above the Award. But if Turnbull has his way, and the licensing and registration system that protects our trade is undermined by letting in unskilled workers and sham contractors, employers will seek to drive a race to bottom in terms of wages. Only Labor will protect our trade and our conditions.

The first thing the Turnbull Government will do if it gets back will establish the ABCC and bring in legislation that could effectively override the conditions in the EBA. We know the Government will review all existing EBAs against the new legislation and deem some provisions “non-compliant” with the new industrial regime. In other words, the Government will set about picking apart EBAs including ours, and, in the name of “productivity”, remove conditions that protect workers and Unions’ rights to represent them.

The Government’s industrial regime will give employers the right to do virtually whatever they like around pay and conditions, termination of staff, employment of sham contractors and unskilled casuals, and a range of other things. The legislation allows them to do this providing it is in order to “manage their business or improve productivity”. Agreed conditions which are very important to our Members like our RDO Calendar, like Christmas shutdowns and Overtime rates will be at risk. As your representatives, our rights too - in terms of access to site, compulsory consultation around dispute resolution or retrenchment criteria and conditions - would be seriously impacted.

As all of you who work on site, and have done for years know, there is no productivity crisis in the building and construction sector. It is a complete fallacy. Jobs are leaner and more efficient in terms of numbers on site than they have ever been. On jobs where as recently as 10 years ago you could expect to find 20 Members on site there might now be two or three. The productivity of our Members is as high as anywhere in the world.

The Government says we need the new regime to “improve productivity and stamp out corruption” in the sector. We are not unproductive and we are not corrupt. Another fallacy. We have fully cooperated with the farcical Royal Commission into alleged Trade Union corruption and welcome any scrutiny of our financial dealings or records. I am very proud of our robust and transparent governance arrangements.

The powers Turnbull wants to give the ABCC are genuinely alarming. For example, the ABCC will have the power to:

- Compel workers to give evidence and be interviewed, while stripping them of their right to silence and representation from a lawyer of their choosing.
- Force workers to produce documents or information relevant to an investigation.
- Enter premises without a warrant, and demand people provide their name and address.
- Exercise these powers retrospectively in many cases.
Assistant Secretary’s Report Continued

The ABCC powers would also mean that in many cases workers would have to show they acted within the law, rather than the ABCC having to prove they didn’t. Even suspected murderers and rapists are considered innocent until proven guilty. The ABCC would also have the ability to impose extraordinary fines and new civil penalties would also be introduced for unlawful picketing, and other penalties for unlawful industrial action would be brought back.

This is why it is so important that the Turnbull Government not be re-elected. The Government is completely driven by ideology, not reality. The reality is that the Members of our Union are amongst the most productive, efficient and skilled workers in the world. They work in an industry which is dangerous, but thanks to Unions like ours, is much safer for workers than it once was. Central to preserving our industry is protecting our registration and licensing, the core of our trade, from cheap unskilled labour, and protecting our jobs against sham contractors. The only way to guarantee that is to keep Turnbull out.

As can be seen from the themes of many of the stories in this Journal, the Plumbing and Fire Protection Industry is flying along and leading the way on a whole range of fronts - training, workplace safety, rates and conditions. As a Union, we are also supporting our comrades in their old age, or their ill health or when they need a helping hand. It is a very exciting time to be in the Plumbing Industry but also a key time to fight for our rights.

The time is now to fight for our trade, our entitlements and our rights - rights that were hard won by those that went before us and which are never ours to give away.

Paddy McCrudden
PTEU Assistant Secretary
Hamilton Marino

There is a great deal of talk at present about the boom in apartment building in Melbourne’s CBD. But just beyond the CBD, in inner city suburbs like Richmond and Abbotsford, there is enormous activity in unit construction going on too. An example of the high quality, high density apartment buildings going up, and one where our Union has about 50 Members currently on site, is the fantastic Hamilton Marino development in Flockhart Street Abbotsford.

This $70M project to build 300 plus apartments is a challenging build, with tight access constraints and the usual time and management issues a large complex site brings. Despite these challenges, Ryan ‘Rusty’ Russell, the PTEU Shop Steward on site, is doing a great job working co-operatively with the developer to iron out any issues as they arise and keep everything running smoothly. The project is on track to be completed in September 2016.

Members from a range of companies including BP and Trio Plumbing, All Systems are doing the ventilation, Cold Flow the Air Conditioning and SRD Fire Protection are also on site.
Development of apartments in Melbourne CBDs has been the mainstay of construction work in Victoria for the past few years, and the trend looks likely to continue. According to national housing data (Commbank property report 205-16) Metropolitan Melbourne is currently Australia’s major centre for apartment development, accounting for 46% of the national total. Developers have been attracted to Melbourne over Sydney due to lower land prices, a generous planning system, and strong buyer interest, especially from offshore. Access to amenities and an effective transport system have encouraged a heavy concentration of apartments in Melbourne’s CBD and adjoining suburbs. An estimated 70% (86,000) of the apartments under construction or proposed in metropolitan Melbourne are located in the inner areas — with 25% (31,000) in the CBD alone.

This represents an outstanding pipeline of work for our Members, and in many cases an opportunity to work on some of the most exciting developments Melbourne has seen for some time. These buildings are being constructed using some of the most sophisticated materials and techniques in the world. Our Members are installing state of the art hot and cold water and reticulation and recycling systems, high tech fire protection systems and the most contemporary and efficient heating, cooling and air conditioning systems.

Buildings currently under construction by our Members in Melbourne include Vision Apartments, Empire Apartments, Eporo Apartments, Melbourne One, EQ Tower, and Lighthouse Apartments. These developments taken together dramatically are rapidly changing the Melbourne skyline, especially through the northern end of Elizabeth Street, where building heights are well above 170 metres.
Melbourne One, a Central Equity development, is under construction and when completed will be a 47-story residential apartment tower, in total 479 apartments.

Upper West Side Apartments (stage 3) tower four spans over 30 levels comprising of 282 apartments. A fifty level tower being the fifth and final tower in the Upper West Side series, comprising of 402 apartments.

85 Spring Street, a 39 level tower comprising of approximately 183 apartments Conservatory Apartments is going to be a 42 level tower at Mackenzie Street consisting of 446 apartments.

The Ritz Carlton at 250 Spencer Street which when complete will be the tallest hotel in Australia containing 79 levels - almost 30 levels more than Melbourne’s current tallest hotel, the Sofitel on Collins Street.
Federal and State Secretary Earl Setches proudly addressed the assembled Members, and to put to them for their endorsement an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) for the next four years to 2019 which locks in our Members’ existing entitlements, and which also builds in wage increases for the next four years.

In terms wage increases, under the new EBA Members working a 36 hour week will receive wage increases of at least $53.85 per week from 1st of March 2016, with annual increases to $55.90 per week in March 2016, $75.85 in 2017 and then to $96.45 per week from the 1st of March 2019.

As well as ensuring our Members are properly rewarded for their skill and training, and that their value in terms of community health is properly recognised, the new EBA preserves existing conditions - like the RDO calendar, the Long Service Leave payment system, and the definitions of what is exclusively Plumbing or Fire Protection work – which is more important than ever before.
This is because our core conditions, like our registration and licensing system, have been the subject of relentless attack by the Federal Government and also the former Liberal State Government over recent years as they attempt to “water down” our trade base and scope, threatening the very core of our trade. The Federal Abbott and now Turnbull Governments have made no secret of their ideological agenda to reduce the role and influence of Trade Unions and show no regard for the rights of working Australians.

The Plumbing and Fire EBA 2015-19 locks in those important conditions, conditions which were hard-won by generations of our forefathers in this great Union and which are not ours to negotiate away. The EBA 2015-19 protects our Members and our industry from these threats for the next four years.

Thank you to all Members for their endorsement of the EBA which protects our rights and our Trade for the next four years, and to Assistant Secretary Paddy McCrudden, who led the long and sometimes challenging negotiations with employer representatives on this EBA, and ensured our Members got the best deal possible.

The next few pages show the rates that were outlined at the Mass Meeting. Details of the breakdown of all payments and entitlements in the new EBA, including full apprentices wage rates are available on our website at www.pteu.asn.au
### REGISTERED PLUMBERS

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<th></th>
<th>Plumber</th>
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<th>Irrigation Installer</th>
<th>Plumbers Labourer</th>
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<td>$107.70</td>
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<td><strong>Travel (per day)</strong></td>
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### APPRENTICES

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<td><strong>Hourly Rate</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fares (per day)</strong></td>
<td>$19.35</td>
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<td>$19.35</td>
<td>$19.35</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X5 (weekly)</strong></td>
<td>$96.75</td>
<td>$96.75</td>
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<td><strong>Travel (per day)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Income (weekly)</strong></td>
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### SITE ALLOWANCES FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2015

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<tr>
<th>Project Value in $ Millions</th>
<th>Site Allowance Per Hour</th>
<th>Project Value in $ Millions</th>
<th>Site Allowance Per Hour</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$3.0 – 7.7 Million</td>
<td>$2.30</td>
<td>$75.7 – 151.4 Million</td>
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<tr>
<td>$7.7 – 18.9 Million</td>
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<td>$18.9 – 37.9 Million</td>
<td>$2.80</td>
<td>$227.1 – 302.7 Million</td>
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<tr>
<td>$37.9 – 75.7 Million</td>
<td>$3.30</td>
<td>$302.7 – 454.2 Million</td>
<td>$4.35</td>
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For projects above $454.2 Million, there shall be an increment of 10 cents per additional $100m or part thereof.

**Height Allowances**

- From commencement of building 15th Level $0.46 per hour
- From level 61 onwards $1.38 per hour
SITE ALLOWANCES FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2015

City of Melbourne & Inner Suburbs New Projects and Shopping Centres

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<th>Project Value in $ Millions</th>
<th>Site Allowance Per Hour</th>
<th>Project Value in $ Millions</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>$3.0 Million - $227.1 Million</td>
<td>$4.05 per hour</td>
<td>$227.1 Million - $302.7 Million</td>
<td>$4.20 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$302.7 Million - $454.2 Million</td>
<td>$4.35 per hour</td>
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</table>

For projects above $454.2 Million, there shall be an increment of 10 cents per additional $100m or part thereof.

Height Allowances
From commencement of building 15th Level $0.46 per hour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 16th to 30th Level</th>
<th>From 31st to 45th Level</th>
<th>From 46th to 60th Level</th>
<th>From level 61 onwards</th>
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<tr>
<td>$0.56 per hour</td>
<td>$0.85 per hour</td>
<td>$1.09 per hour</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Union would like to acknowledge and thank Bob Oakley who recently retired from a 50 year career and 45 plus years of loyal union Membership.

Bob started his career as a Plumbing Apprentice aged 16 years old way back in 1966 at Kodak Australia. He wanted to join the union early, but was advised by his parents that he could not join until I was a Tradesman.

Bob was employed by Kodak for 25 years where Bob says there were plenty of disputes with Management over wage claims, demarcation disputes with the fitters performing Plumbing duties and other such issues. He recalls one major dispute over wage claims in the late 1970s or early 1980s that had Bob and his mates out on strike for over 18 weeks (ultimately winning and receiving an extra $2 per week).

Bob recalls that in 1991 after years of handouts from the Federal Government, Kodak shut down the Engineering section making 98% of them redundant, including Bob. In April 1991 Bob started with Western Hospital as a leading hand Plumber in the Engineering Department. Bob says that in the Jeff Kennett years they went from a combined Western Health Engineering Department of 55 people down to 17, and that fortunately he survived.

After 25 years as a Plumber/leading hand plumber/Engineering team leader and acting Facilities Manager Bob is retiring, calling time after 50 years in the workforce. With his wife of nearly 45 years, 8 children and 14 grandchildren Bob expects that he will be kept pretty busy.

Good luck Bob and thanks.
SKILLS KEY TO CLOSING THE GAP

Our Industry is making first class training available to all Australians

In February this year the Federal Government delivered the 8th Annual “Closing the Gap” Report. The Report provides a snapshot of our national progress in terms of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia in terms of health, education, life expectancy and a range of other indicators including employment opportunities and outcomes. The latest Report card delivers mixed news, and yet another reminder that, despite decades of programs and policies and interventions, there are still in effect two Australias – Indigenous Australia and non-Indigenous Australia.
The Report tells us that there has been some progress made, in, for example, reducing the gap between black and white Australia in infant and child mortality rates. It tells that across the country more Indigenous young people are achieving Year 12 equivalent education levels than ever before, and that Indigenous participation in secondary education has increased overall by about 70 per cent. These numbers are encouraging.

However, the Report also informs non-Indigenous Australia what Indigenous Australia already knows - that in some parts of the country, in particular in the Northern Territory and Western Australia - levels of Indigenous disadvantage remain very high and, in some cases, are getting worse.

For example, the data tells us that in 2016 an 18-year-old Indigenous male is more likely to go to jail than to University or TAFE, and will die 10 years sooner than his non-Indigenous countrymen. Relatedly, it tells us that Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander children represent 4.6 per cent of the Australian population, one third are in ‘out of home care’. According to the Federal Government’s 1997 Bringing Them Home report, the number of indigenous children removed from their families at the time was 2785. Fast forward fifteen years to 2012, where a report by the Federal Government’s Australian Institute of Health and Welfare recorded the instance of removal had risen almost 400 per cent to 13,299. In many of the cases where children are removed from communities one of the key reasons cited for their removal (and, often, one of the main reasons for “returns” being prevented) is the lack of safe water and sanitation.

As a Union and as an Industry, we cannot on our own close these gaps, but we can play a key role, both in the classroom and on the ground in Communities where the need is greatest. By, for example, focusing on making plumbing skills development available and accessible to as many young Indigenous Australians as we can, we can make a difference. And, through the work of the Indigenous Plumbing and Sanitation Foundation - an organisation whose Board Members include our Secretary Earl Setches and Chaired by Michael Long - we are seeking to identify and fund projects which directly address the sometimes third world sanitation situation in some parts of Australia. We recognise the basic fundamental connection (for all Australians, not just Indigenous Australians) between skills development and economic and therefore health and education outcomes. That is why we partner with RAW Recruitment, an organisation established to provide opportunities and business enhancement through Group Training and Employment Services for Aboriginal job seekers and employers of Aboriginal people. RAW currently has about a dozen Indigenous Apprentices on its books, including several Apprentices currently receiving world class training at PICAC.
At the start of their apprenticeship most first year apprentices at PICAC do a 6 week block of intensive “boot camp”. This stage focuses the apprentices as much on how to learn as on how to work. In this phase of their Apprenticeship basic skills in how to work as part of a team on a work site, how to work safely and how to identify various tools and other equipment.

Pictured below are the current group of first year apprentices currently doing “boot camp” training at PICAC. The group include several apprentices employed by Plumbing Apprenticeships Victoria (PAV), the Master Plumbers Group Training Scheme. This company works similarly to RAW in that it employs and then places apprentices with plumbing businesses around Melbourne and in regional Victoria.

The current crop of first year Apprentices, which include 5 Indigenous Apprentices from Victoria and South Australia, say the facilities and training offered by PICAC as a whole are second to none, and that this part of the program – the 6 weeks boot camp – is really valuable, one Apprentice said “before we set foot on site we have some fundamental knowledge about tools, equipment, products, and generally know what is what on site. It makes us much safer and much more productive when we do get on site. When the boss says get me this or that fitting or product, we know what they’re talking about!”

Roxy Douglas, pictured on page 15 in the centre of shot, says the training is “informative and very good quality. The trainers really know their stuff which gives you great confidence as a student”. Juan Mochales, 3rd from the left seated above says it is the “practical training that is so good at PICAC. Everything you need to learn about is right here on one site, it is a great environment to learn in”.

RAW Recruitment 1st year Apprentice Jackson McRae, pictured right, says he is just at the beginning of his journey but very excited about what is to come. Jasckon says “the great part is you get a really good basic foundation in the plumbing trade here at PICAC and so your career can pretty much go anywhere. I’m learning heaps, and love doing the real hands on stuff like welding.”
The Hon Matthew Groom, Minister for State Growth, Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage in the Tasmanian Government is flanked by a very proud PICAC CEO Shayne La Combre and Board Member Carmel Coate.
The Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC) was awarded the 2015 Australian Training Award for Small Training Provider of the Year at the 22nd annual Australian Training Awards Ceremony in Hobart on 19 November. The awards recognise exceptional achievements in delivering nationally recognised training. Winners were acknowledged during a major event held at the iconic Princes Wharf One, where national titles were presented across 16 award categories.

PICAC was nominated as a finalist after winning the Victorian Training Award for the same category in August. The award received is recognition for the high standard of training delivered at the Centre, which has been made possible with the support of partner organisations the Plumbing Trades Employees Union, Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association of Australia, National Fire Industry Association and Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors’ Association of Victoria.

Since its inception, the objective for PICAC has been to provide world class training to the critical, highly skilled trade of plumbing. Training at PICAC is available to plumbing industry participants throughout their career lifecycle. From its beginnings in water and energy efficiency training, PICAC has rapidly grown and evolved to become the preferred training provider amongst both plumbers and employers.

Unlike many traditional training providers, PICAC has invested in new technologies and consults closely with stakeholders to ensure all delivery meets the emerging requirements of the industry. The ability to partner with major firms, including manufacturers and distributors and to invest in premium equipment and training methodologies has PICAC’s graduates held in very high regard with prospective employers.

The unique industry partnerships that form PICAC, also enables the Centre to provide free or significantly subsidised courses for PTEU and Master Plumber members. However, training is open for all industry participants with a range of courses on offer at the Brunswick campus – and with more planned to be delivered at the soon-to-be-completed Geelong Campus in Breakwater.

It is encouraging to see an Industry focused Training Centre such as PICAC receive the recognition of excellence from the State and Federal Government, who have supported the growth and development of the Centre.

The Australian Training Awards are the peak national awards for the vocational education and training (VET) sector, recognising individuals, businesses and registered training organisations for their contribution to skilling Australia.

For more information on training at PICAC you can visit www.picac.vic.edu.au
When 20 year old Herbert Krzyzoszczak saw a “help wanted” sign in the front window of Allen’s Insulation in Spencer Street in 1960 he walked straight in - and straight into a 45 year long career as a lagger. It was a career that would bring him some great friendships and a steady income, but one that would leave him desperately ill with asbestosis and pleural plaques.

Herbert has been a Member of our great Union for 50 years and in December last year our Journal Editor Richard McEncroe caught up with Herbert and his wife Sandra at their St Albans home for a cup of tea and a chat. A chat about Herb’s life in the industry, about hard work and good friends, and about a bygone era where there was not so much as a face mask or a glove between the worker and the poison that is asbestos.

In quintessentially Australian fashion Herbert was known to his mates throughout his working life as either “Herbie Long” or “Herbie Wheelbarrow”, both options dispensing with the need to wrestle with his four zedded surname. Now in his mid-70’s, Herb sits in the armchair of the home he has shared with his devoted wife Sandra for most of his life. Every word is a struggle for Herbert, who is gravely ill. With oxygen pumps doing the job his lungs once did - before they became irreparably scarred from decades of daily exposure to deadly asbestos – talking for Herbert is a struggle, but Herb has many a story to tell and much wisdom to share, and with Sandra’s help we were able to capture some of those stories and that wisdom. Stories about the value of hard work and mateship, and the importance of being wise to the dangers of asbestos - right now.

Herbert’s parents came to Australia from Germany in 1950, bringing 10 year old Herbert with them. Young Herbert left school at the tender age of 14 and by the time he answered that “help wanted” ad already had four years’ work under his belt at the SEC.

‘Herbert worked his whole life as a lagger, starting his career in boiler houses with companies like Maze Products and Thomsons Boilers, and Bells...
Asbestos, mucking out old asbestos insulation and re-coating the linings of the boilers with asbestos based compounds, sometimes pasting it on by hand. He worked on the boilers on ships docked at Williamstown for years, and worked on some key navy vessels like the HMAS Sydney, the HMAS Parramatta and the HMAS Swan in 1969.

“They were great to work on but there was so much asbestos around’. There was not a warning sign let alone a glove or a face mask to be seen in those days, and as Herb tells it “it was in everything, and you’d have it in your hair, all over your skin, everywhere”.

Herbert says he went where the work was, and travelled around to work on boilers in shipyards and other commercial works. The picture below was taken of Herbert and two of his workmates – William Van Rooy and Gary Van Der Linden at the Hobart Zinc Works (circa 1961). Herbert explains “those fellas, both real gentlemen, are dead now from lung disease caused by asbestos. And all my old workmates are, I’m the only one from those days still alive, this asbestos killed them all”.

Herbert has been, as he puts it, “full circle with asbestos”. He explains that in the early part of his career, in the 1960s and 70s especially, he was installing asbestos, and by the end of his career he was stripping it out. Asbestos was still being installed in the mid 1980’s and it didn’t cease to be produced until 1987.

Herbert says that in those early years, there was always a “whisper around that this stuff is bad for you”, but there was no real information at that time about the risks of asbestos and no attempt to contain it. It wasn’t until the mid-80’s that the real risks were starting to be understood. Herbert worked right up until 2005, mostly stripping and removing asbestos from old boilers and buildings.

Herbert says the greatest thing that has happened to his industry is the increased awareness and training relating to asbestos management and safe removal. Herb thinks this is so important because, as he says “there is still so much out there, hidden away, in pipes and in boilers and in all sorts of places…we really have no idea where it is but I know for a fact that it is in the lagging of buildings in the city people are living and working in every day, and it only takes a tiny fibre to cause asbestosis”.

He points out the black muck all over the people and the site in the photo “that’s all full of asbestos…we’d mix it up and coat the inside of the boilers with it, like a kind of a slurry, it was all over you and all over the place.”

Congratulations Herbert on being a loyal Member for 50 years and I’m sure we speak for all Union Members when we say thanks for your hard work and wish you and Sandra all our strength for the battles still to come.
World Plumbing Day (WPD) is an international event held annually on 11th March since 2010. Every year since it was established by the World Plumbing Council - to promote the important role that plumbing plays in the health, safety and sustainability of our communities – the Victorian plumbing industry has come together at its hub, the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC) to celebrate our great industry, share information and showcase the latest and greatest in plumbing skills, technology and innovative product design.

Off the back of a 2015 in which it was awarded the Victorian and also the Australian Small Training Provider of the year, PICAC - with the support of its stakeholders, partners and sponsors - this year put on what was the best World Plumbing Day event in its brief history.

The PICAC Great Hall was packed with over 450 people for the Industry Forum which kicked off the day’s proceedings. PICAC CEO welcomed guests and spoke to the theme of this year’s World Plumbing Day, ‘Preparing for the future: Technology, Skills and Environment’, and the role skills and training play in that preparation. He also drew on WHO data to look at plumbing and sanitation on a world scale and point out how much work there is still to be done to provide access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation to hundreds of millions of people who don’t have what we in Australia so readily take for granted.

The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, The Right Honourable Robert Doyle, reflected on Melbourne’s history, and in particular its relationship with its main fresh water course, the Yarra River, to make the nexus between clean water and sanitation and public health, and in turn the link between plumbing, sustainable water management and sustainable prosperity. The Lord Mayor, who is also a Director on the PICAC Board, went on to connect high quality, skills based training into that loop, making the point that keeping the plumbers of Victoria up to date with the latest technologies and systems is vital if we are as a community going to be able to implement many of the key water saving and efficiency initiatives the future scarcity of water and a changing climate will demand.

Justin Madden, Deputy Chief Commissioner of the VBA followed the Lord Mayor and explained the new licencing arrangements the VBA has put in place and spoke to the vital role a robust regulatory framework needs to be in place, together with strong training and skills development, to keep the sector sustainable.

Our Secretary Earl Setches, who is also the PICAC Chair reflected on the success of World plumbing Day but also on the success of PICAC in being recognised as a Victorian and national leader in the provision of high quality skills based training.

The focus then shifted to some of the more people focussed elements of life in the trade with a presentation by Jeremy Forbes from HALT (Hope Assistance Local Tradies). Against a backdrop of recent national industry data that indicates that as many as one tradie every two days are taking their
own life, Jeremy spoke of the importance of looking out for each other on site and of knowing how and when to access professional assistance and counselling. A not-for-profit, HALT aims to remind tradies they are valued by their community and direct them to support services, both local and national, should they need them.

Following the forum, attendees gathered for an industry luncheon and were able to visit displays at the Industry Expo, where representatives from event sponsors provided information about their organisations, new products and technologies. Exhibitors included Platinum Sponsors – Energy Safe Victoria, Gold Sponsors – Incolink, IAPMO, Reece and the VBA, Silver Sponsors – B.K.B Building Solutions, Bostik and Cbus and a raft of industry sponsors including Rehau, Testo, Rheem, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and Standards Australia.

The Apprentice Skills Competition is also a regular feature of World Plumbing Day, and an opportunity for leading apprentices to display their skills and knowledge of plumbing and mechanical services in a practical demonstration.

This year the competition attracted candidates from as far north as Queensland, cementing the fact that it is truly becoming one of the premier apprentice skills competitions in the country.

Congratulations to all the apprentices who participated and showcased some outstanding skills. A special congratulations to Odin Daniels from the Services Trade College in Queensland who took out first place in the Sprinkler Fitting competition and Dale Bux who was awarded the Plumbing top prize. Dale was nominated by his employer, Trio Plumbing.

Planning for next year’s 2017 event has already begun, with events to be held across multiple PICAC campuses.

For information about the 2017 World Plumbing Day Event to be held at PICAC, please contact events@picac.vic.edu.au or call (03) 9356 8905.
The depth and reach of the diabolical drug ‘ice’ has been reported widely in the media in recent months. In Australia, law makers and law enforcers are only beginning to get their heads around how big a problem this drug has become. We don’t know all there is to know about how much ice is being used out there in the Australian community, but we do know how it stretches the length and breadth of the country.

According to the national data sets produced in the final Report of the National Ice Task Force in 2015, proportionally, Australia uses more methamphetamine than almost any other country, and the number of users continues to grow. More than 200,000 Australians reported using the crystalline form of methamphetamine (commonly known as ‘ice’) in 2013, compared with fewer than 100,000 in 2007. These figures are conservative and already dated. Today in 2016 there is evidence to indicate that there are well over 200,000 users with some estimates as high as 300,000. Sadly, this number is reported to be growing.

We know that unlike cannabis and heroin, ice is an extremely powerful stimulant. For some people, it can trigger psychological disturbances or violent and aggressive behaviour. Long term use may damage the brain and cause impaired attention, memory and motor skills. The distress ice causes for individuals, families, communities and frontline workers like Ambulance Officers and Emergency Health Care staff is disproportionate to that caused by other drugs.

And we know that ice use, like other drug and alcohol abuse is not contained or limited to one part of the community. It touches all Australian communities. It impacts the well-off and the battlers, the young and the not so young. It infects small regional towns as rapidly as it does the suburbs surrounding our cities. It is everywhere – and our industry is not immune.

Ice is manufactured from chemicals, not produced from plants, and can be mass produced in industrial scale labs offshore for export into Australia, so any seized product can be quickly replaced.

Methamphetamines, including ice, are the only illicit drug that is both imported and locally manufactured in significant quantities, increasing complexity of the required response from law enforcement agencies.

Ice is easily concealed and trafficked. For example it can be dissolved in oil and reconstituted as crystals.

Ice is also a dangerous drug for new users, offering the promise of euphoria, confidence and enhanced sexual pleasure at a relatively cheap price. At $50 per dose in some parts of Australia, it can be cheaper than a night out drinking alcohol.

The effects of ice can be achieved through smoking, not just through injecting, making its use appear safer and more socially acceptable.

Ice is more likely to cause dependence than other drugs, and has a very long withdrawal and recovery phase. Prolonged heavy use can impair cognitive functioning for months after giving up the drug. Relapse is understandably common.
We don’t have specific data about the extent to which ice is used within the Plumbing and Fire Protection industries, we do have some aggregated data about the Construction sector as a whole, and it is not a pretty story. The Construction sector, together with hospitality and one or two other sectors, is reported to have a use rate higher than other sectors or occupations.

The scale and complexity of the national ice scourge is not something our Union or our individual members can control. What we can control is how we respond to ice related issues within our own industry, our own workplaces and our own households. What we can and will do is work collaboratively with other parts of the construction sector to develop a coherent strategy for addressing ice use within the sector. Our Union will lead the way on this, because we want our Members to be free of this insidious drug, especially on the job site. The safety of all on site and the community is put at risk if any workers are turning up for work “on the gear”. It is just not a situation we can accept and if testing of members is what is required to keep job sites safe, then we support that too.

In the immediate term what we can all do is look out for each other and our families and our mates’ families. Our immediate priority must be to support those within our Union family who are most affected by ice use. We need to remind ourselves that people addicted to ice need help, support and encouragement. As a PTEU Member, you and your family are entitled to free drug and Alcohol counselling and support services through Incolink.

If ice is an issue for you or someone you care about, I encourage you to call Incolink Member Services on (03) 9668 3061 or 0419 568 605 to talk to a counsellor.

Darren Harland is a name that might be familiar to many readers. He’s had more than his fair share of scrapes with the law, some of which were covered extensively in the media. His name has been mentioned in despatches alongside several of Melbourne’s “colourful racing identities” and otherwise infamous figures.

Certainly anyone who meets him in person will remember him. Darren is a big man, built like the proverbial “brick shithouse” and with a big presence to match. Darren was a talented footballer too, playing over 100 games with the Port Melbourne reserves and winning the A Todd medal in 1996 for best in the competition. Others might recall his father “Buster” Harland who struck fear into the hearts of opposition players when playing VFA for Port Melbourne in the 1970’s and 80’s, an era in which he played in 4 premiership sides. Buster was regarded by students of the game as one of the hardest men in what was probably the toughest era of VFA footy.

But, like so much in life, appearances can be deceptive. To meet and talk with Darren is to meet a caring compassionate human being. It is to meet a guy who has been through the hell that is ice addiction, and come out the other end with clear eyes and a wide smile on his face ready to help others find what he has found – peace.

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Continues over page >>
Darren was a Plumber and Sprinkler Fitter, and had a good life for himself before ‘ice destroyed everything’. Darren worked as a plumber right through his footy playing days, but when the footy stopped he ‘lost his way’ and the drugs really took over his life. Pretty soon Darren was too busy doing drugs and all that goes with it to do any plumbing work and like so much in his life his work life slipped away too.

Sadly, Darren’s decline into ice addiction, like it does with so many people, brought with a it a series of other problems – violence, anger, financial desperation, domestic abuse – and a whole range of other things that he is not proud of and that washed misery over all those closest to him. As Darren puts it “ice made me so crazy I ended up sitting in the street with a gun in my mouth ready to blow my head off – how’s that for a rock bottom”.

Several years on from that day, and Darren is a new man. He has worked hard to repair what is repairable in his life. He is focussed on what really matters, like relationships and family, and is clean and sober and healthy and wanting to help others find the way out of ice addiction. He is living proof that with the right support, the right counselling, the right rehab services and most of all a good dose of old fashioned guts and determination, there is a recovery out there for everyone.

So committed is Darren to helping others find their way through addiction and find that peace, that inner calm that allows him “to live life on life’s terms”, he has, together with two good mates Carlo La Marchesina and Peter Metropolis founded a rehabilitation centre, the Riverside Clinic, primarily focussed on ice addiction recovery.

The Riverside Clinic understands addiction and its serious repercussions for both the individual suffering addiction, their families, friends, employers and the wider community. They believe its necessary for addiction treatment to be client centered, holistic and ongoing. Riverside Clinic provides treatment options for any individual with presenting issues of alcohol and other drug addictions, and accompanying conditions.

Darren and his colleagues have addressed the lull in treatment options for individuals who are engaged in gainful employment that wish to remain valuable employees whilst attending to their substance misuse issues. In response, they have developed a treatment model that effectively addresses an individuals substance misuse issues whilst also accommodating a return to active duties in the workplace.

To find out more about the Riverside Clinic please call Darren direct on 0427 350 999

The Riverside Clinic offers cutting edge, quality services, which includes comprehensive residential programs at the Riverside Clinic Sanctuary and outpatient programs within the community. They deliver a structured, individually tailored, treatment programs followed by continued care and consultation.
Without much certainty or conviction, a certain Australian Prime Minister has of late become very fond of telling us all that there “has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian”. With total certainty and conviction we can say that....

there has never been a more exciting time to be a Sprinkler Fitter!
As if the need to adapt to changing conditions was in itself a new discovery, the Federal Government is excitedly sharing its find, enthusiastically dousing the community in a slick of rhetoric about how “nimble” and “agile” and “flexible” we all need to be. As if wanting us to be a nation of philosophizing Slip Fielders we are told to be “on our toes”, focused and ready to seize every opportunity from the “next gen” “super high tech” “post investment transition phase” that might fly our way, whilst simultaneously filling the “innovation bank” in this the “century of ideas”. It can all sound very confusing and a bit like an episode of Utopia or The Office after a while.

Apparently the Government is attempting to tell everyone that the economy as a whole needs to get to a point where the Fire Protection Industry already is. That is, to a point where skills development through high quality training in world class facilities is the foundation of sustainable success. An Industry where training keeps up with or even gets ahead of Industry. An Industry where clear and strong alignment between the skills demanded by employers and the quality, availability and currency of skills delivered by the Training/Qualifications system, is the main game.

In conceiving and building the Fire Centre of Excellence a few years ago, and developing the most state of the art training delivery systems in the world, including e-learning packages, the Fire Protection Industry was demonstrating that it knew that proactive measures needed to be taken to ensure the skills tomorrow’s economy will need, will be there.

The Industry knew and knows what the community doesn’t always appreciate, that when we are talking about Fire Protection, we are talking about community safety. If Fire Protection work is not done correctly, people and property are at serious risk. As our economy grows, housing density increases, water efficiency becomes more important and extreme weather events more unpredictable and common, Fire Protection work is “front and center” in terms of the community’s response to these changes and challenges. As a community we simply have to get this stuff right.

For our economy, our safety, our sustainability – a safe and trusted Fire Protection Industry is vital.

The modern Fire Protection Industry is sophisticated, safe and trusted. It is one in which the training offered to Apprentices is as good if not better than anything the world has to offer in this space. The training facilities at the Fire Protection Centre of Excellence at PICAC are purpose built and equipped with practical working models of the most contemporary Fire Protection systems available.

Fire Protection Apprentices undertaking the Fire Industry Training (FIT) Certificate III course at PICAC – the only place students from Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory or South Australia can do Fire Protection Apprentice training – not only have access to the best facilities the Industry has ever had, they are being trained by qualified Sprinkler Fitters.

The Fire Protection Centre of Excellence is true to its name in every sense. It delivers excellent outputs by having excellent inputs. Unlike some sectors, including other parts of the construction sector, all the Trainers at PICAC are skilled professionals. All 6 FIT Trainers and the FIT Chief Executve Officer Lucas Blyth are trained in how to train but they are also qualified in the subject matter they are instructing in.
At PICAC there are more Apprentice students (about 200) employed across a broader range of specialty aspects of Fire Protection work and employers than ever before. Not only are Apprentices better equipped and more thoroughly trained than at any point in the long and proud history of the Trade, they enter an industry that is well regulated, with only qualified individuals licensed to work in it. It is well paid, with the new EBA setting out the best collection of rates and conditions Sprinkler Fitters have ever enjoyed. The Victorian economy is buoyant, with things like the boom in high-rise apartments and other public and private infrastructure developments filling a big pipeline of works going forward.

The Fire Protection Industry has built itself a solid foundation of “skills driving skills”, it is well organized with robust corporate governance and quality control structures in place. As an Industry it has built itself a solid platform on which it can be nimble and agile and otherwise callisthenic according to the demands of Industry in the future.

It really is a very exciting time to be a Sprinkler Fitter.

It wasn’t always though. As depicted so well by Billy Davis - 60 year Member, former Secretary, great leader and industry pioneer - in his letter to Andy Wallace (below), the road to this place of solidity, fair pay and conditions, recognition of skills and breadth of opportunity was hard fought and long.

In coming editions of this Journal we will set out and focus on some of the key battles and milestones along the journey of Sprinkler Fitting towards and beyond its recognition as a Trade. From the first Award struck between Sprinkler Fitters and an employer – with Wormald in 1926, the only employer of Sprinkler Fitters at the time – through the period 1929-75 where a Certified Agreement was in place, we will attempt to convey a sense of what it was like to be a Sprinkler Fitter in those days.

We will explore how it is we got to this point, how through the hard work and leadership of people like George Crawford, Bill Davis and Col Bignell who sat down and butted heads with three employer representatives dozens of times in the mid 70’s and made key breakthroughs. They stood staunch and struck a new set of conditions that could only be amended by agreement of all parties. These events were the genesis of the great conditions Members enjoy today, and are times worth reminding ourselves of when we consider the great opportunities and conditions Sprinkler Fitters enjoy today.

By talking to Members who trained at RMIT, thousands through the 80’s and 90’s including our Secretary Earl Setches, and the current crop of Trainers and Apprentices, we will highlight just how far the Industry has come, especially in terms of training and diversity of opportunity.
60 PLUS YEARS A MEMBER

Bill Davis, a working class kid from Port Melbourne left school at 14 and commenced work as a junior sprinkler fitter 3 days after his 15th birthday and joined the Union a week later. His wage was equivalent to $11 a week.

As no apprenticeship existed in the industry in those days, you had to rely on what you could pick up on site. Apprenticeship was not a big issue to employees - in fact some fitters feared apprenticeships would bring about the termination of many of the existing workforce.

Conditions enjoyed today were but a pipe dream back then. Testers were paid a meagre 2nd class fitters rate of pay. Two weeks annual leave was the industry standard 5 days sick leave per year and workers compensation was approximately 60 percent of your weekly wage.

Cherry pickers, scissor lifts and screwing machines were virtually unheard of. Walking the steel was a common but dangerous practice, or alternatively using 10 metre wooden back breaker ladders or 4 metre painters steps.

Many a member suffered very painful injuries to their backs, necks, legs whilst lifting pipe etc using such devices. These workers were very poorly treated by the insurance companies until the Building Unions in the 1960s mounted a campaign of action taking the form of rallies, bringing together thousands of union members to march on and occupy the premises of major insurance companies. Things changed quickly for the better after that!

Back to the fire sprinkler apprenticeship. It took some convincing a few members, but with a growing interest and a number of mass meetings, the members of the industry endorsed the concept to develop a national common core apprenticeship to apply in all States.

Over the decades there were periods of intense conflict when the Building Unions as a whole campaigned and won major gains in long service leave, CBus superannuation, redundancy payment scheme, with portable sick pay and shorter working hours coming later. The Plumbers Union played a major role in these disputes.

None of these gains came easily, the employers fought back and it took a lot of blood, sweat and plenty of swear words to win these improved conditions.

They’re all still there today and will remain so if members continue to apply the same mateship and trust in each other which were the main principles that laid the groundwork for winning the conditions and wages you enjoy today.

in George Crawford’s book, “Footprints”, he says about sprinkler fitter members, “generally a close knit group with a real working class culture and an impish sense of humour. They were the scallywags of the building industry.”

I'm proud to still be a ‘scallywag’

BILL DAVIS
(A letter from Bill Davis to Andy Wallace)
Every so often, within the framework of our industry, we are impacted – directly or indirectly - by a tragic sequence of events.

To write about the passing of a Member is an incredibly hard thing to do, being able to encapsulate qualities and memorable traits of that person in a way that does justice, weighs heavy. In December last year, Syfon Systems lost a deeply loved, respected and valued co-worker. Sadly, Anthony Dokos who’d been part of the Syfon family for over 7 years, lost his long battle with cancer, leaving a deep sense of grief, loss and injustice felt by all those who knew him. As we’ve learned over the past months, these are feelings and emotions which have been resounding throughout the industry.

Friends and Members who attended Anthony’s funeral heard a moving and beautifully befitting eulogy delivered by Syfon Systems Director, Adam Bellgrove. Adam addressed the hardship and adversity faced by the Dokos family over the years, with particular reference made to the recent and heartbreaking loss of Anthony’s wife, and mother to their three precious children, who only a few months earlier had herself passed away.

Together, Anthony and Sam had fought a coexisting and long term battle with cancer, both devastatingly aware of what the ultimate outcome would mean for their family, in particular their precious children. Anthony’s generosity, kindness, compassion and genuine regard for others never diminished regardless of his grave illness - family, friends and co-workers witnessed him courageously push forward, despite all the hardships he and his family faced.

At times like these, the blow felt by losing a work mate and fellow Member can remind us that we are in fact part of something bigger and we want our Members to know that not only do we stand by them through all stages of adversity but we will stand by their families too. Our recent Union Mass Meeting really illuminated the solidarity that thrives within our organisation.

In a proud demonstration of unbridled generosity, Members and attendees on the night really dug deep when it came to donations cans – all funds going toward the ongoing care of The Dokos Children.

We’d like to give a sincere thank you to all for pulling together and making such an enormous contribution. The gracious and good natured spirit of all those in attendance is true testimony and a brilliant reminder of the camaraderie and mateship that’s so palpable and alive within our organisation.

For information on how you can make further donations to The Dokos Family, please contact 9662 3388

Your donations will help the Dokos Children in this tough time.
VALE

Here marks the passing of several Members. Several had been Members for many years, but sadly some had their careers and their lives cut way too short. Thank you to the following Members for their service and dedication and we wish to extend all the best wishes to their families and friends.

**Arthur Eli Moore**
Sprinkler Fitter for over 40 years.
Born on the 12th of April 1927, passed away at the age of 87 on the 4th of March 2015.
Our deepest sympathies to son Col, wife Norma & family

**Barry Arthur Bailey**
Sprinkler Fitter.
Born on the 4th of March 1944, passed away at the age of 72 on the 27th of February 2016. Barry was a member since 1967

**Karl Horst Klausmeier**
Born 26th of August 1936, passed away at the age of 80 on the 8th of January 2016

**Benjamin Michael Clegg**
Passed away in a tragic motorbike accident in April of this year

**Joel Samuel Maxwell**
Born on the 10th of September 1984, passed away at the young age of 31 on the 7th of March 2016

**Peter (Pistol) Phelan**
Sprinkler Fitter.
Born on the 16th of June 1944, passed away at the age of 71 on the 29th of February 2016

Peter “Pistol” Phelan was a very well-known Sprinkler Fitter in Melbourne in the 1970’s and 80’s, and many of our Members would have a story or two to tell about him. According to his mates, Pistol got his nick-name because he always had to “shoot through”, but Pistol himself always reckoned it was because of his love for the straight shooting Collingwood star of the 70’s, the great Peter McKenna. R.I.P Pistol.

**Old mate**
By Kerry O’Neil
(Australian poet)

China plate
Old mate
I guess it’s time for the final salute.

But my heart sighs, old mate, and these kneeling knees feel lonely already at the thought of solo holes and empty pipes.

But a plumber is a water man a hero, a fixer.

And although I will miss your voice as much as your shadow, the alarm will still sing with the dawn and the call of work.

And in the space between waking and doing, there will be time, but not too much, to mourn your absence.

For everyday with busy hands my mind will know your laughter. Your jokes and constant banter, your presence by my side

China plate
Old mate
One day we will meet In the pipelines of the sky

Until then I will keep a wide grin, a joke at the ready, an eye out for your kin.

For now, these hands will work and plumb for the both of us

Till we meet again may your weary bones rest at peace, in the liquid limbs of the Angels.
Late last year our Union, through our national award winning Industry Training Centre PICAC, was proud to be a part of the international Community Plumbing Challenge. The Community Plumbing Challenge is an annual event facilitated and promoted jointly by the IAPMO Group and World Plumbing Council and sponsored by the Worldskills Foundation.

In 2015, the Community Plumbing Challenge was hosted by the Indian Plumbing Association and took place at a 400 student strong school in Nashik in India. The Challenge ran for five days in early November 2015 at Maha Nagar Palika School 125 and involved four international Teams (from Australia, Spain, India and USA) representing skilled trades across the Plumbing, Engineering, Construction and Design sectors.

The Community Plumbing Challenge has been established to work with communities to design, produce and install sustainable solutions to problems of water quality and supply and sanitation. It also provides education and training opportunities for community members and CPC teams and helps facilitate formal recognition of knowledge and skills gained.

The CPC helps raise awareness and to promote the role of plumbing skills in solving problems of water quality and supply and sanitation. Post challenge project outcomes are disseminated to stakeholders and the general public and used to inform and advocate for quality education and
training based on real-life problem solving by multi-disciplinary teams.

Sponsored by PICAC and RMIT, the Australian team consisted of two Plumbing Leads, Rob Mauracher and Aaron Bridger, Design Lead, Dale Fisher and Construction Lead, Kieran Gonzalez. The team was also accompanied by Program Manager, Greg Tink from PICAC and Team Leader, John Leahy from RMIT.

The Community Plumbing Challenge is very aptly named because the challenges involved were huge. The first challenge was in the design stage, where the key objective was to find solutions that are not only sustainable and use locally sourced materials, but also able to be replicated across many schools. In this part of India - about 3 hours east of Mumbai (population 20M) on India’s west coast – and throughout the country, many of the schools are built to the same design. So, in designing solutions for school 125 the international teams were effectively designing solutions to potentially dozens if not hundreds of schools.

School 125, like so many others in India, had some very significant plumbing problems that needed to be addressed. Toilets and urinals that didn’t flush and little or no hand washing facilities for starters. Poor water capture systems, and water mains that were “live” for only two hours per day, about an hour in the morning and about an hour in the afternoon. The quality of the materials the international teams were working with were not what we are used to dealing with at home, and there were also language and cultural differences which made communication between teams complex at times. And then there was the unrelenting heat and humidity to deal with.

However, despite these many and varied challenges, the project was an overwhelming success. Over just five days the school and the lives of its 400 students and dozens of staff was transformed by the hard work and know-how of some of the world’s best plumber and designers. Where it previously had only two taps for hand washing, it now has 25.

There is also now a greatly improved water tank storage capacity and water pressure at the school. Push taps to avoid wastage were added and troughs designed to slope so water flows and flushes the urinals and a range of other water capture and storage advances made.

Importantly, there was a digital recording of all the construction details and specification of parts, which will serve as a fantastic teaching guide when these improvements are rolled out across other indicative schools.

The Community Plumbing Challenge is a fantastic demonstration of how great things can be achieved when co-operation, planning, technology and skill are combined with passion and commitment. We are very proud that our great industry was able to make such a strong contribution to the Community Plumbing Challenge, a contribution that will continue with PICAC having been invited to again play a role in even bigger Community Plumbing Challenge, this time in July in South Africa.
The workplace injury claim of a union member seriously injured in a construction site accident has been settled by Maurice Blackburn Lawyers for $100,000.

Mr J* worked as a plumber on various commercial sites in Melbourne’s CBD, when at one site in May 2011, he had been chipping away concrete to make room for pipes.

He had not been provided adequate materials, scaffolding or step platforms and was unable to open a ladder properly so leaned it against the wall before climbing it.

The ladder slipped out from beneath Mr J and he fell backwards onto the ladder with his right foot still stuck in the ladder.

As a consequence, he suffered multiple injuries including fractures in his spine and fractures to both feet.

He had to learn how to walk again, suffered blood clots and needed ongoing rehabilitation and medical treatments.

Mr J, who had been a plumber for over 40 years, was a keen fisherman, camper and enjoyed boating, has been unable to work take part in such activities since his accident. His injuries have also impacted on his ability to work around the home and garden, resulting in secondary psychological injuries including anxiety and depression.

His lawyer at Maurice Blackburn Rachel Schutze said the devastating workplace incident should never have happened as his employer should have had adequate materials available.

“As a result, he was exposed to risks that could have and should have easily been avoided.”

Maurice Blackburn settled Mr J’s claim for $100,000 for his pain and suffering.

“The worker’s name has been suppressed for legal reasons

NOTES:
• Spent most of his life working as a plumber (over 40 years)
• Suffered serious injuries while working at a construction site
• Had not been provided adequate materials, scaffolding or step platforms when working up high
• Mr S* had a ladder but was not able to open it up properly due to the location of the work.
• Mr S lean’t the ladder against the wall and climbed up it.
• The ladder slipped out from beneath Mr S and fell backwards onto the ladder with his right foot still stuck in the ladder.
• Mr S suffered severe injuries including fractures in his spine and fractures to both feet
• Had to learn how to walk again, suffered blood clots, needed ongoing rehabilitation and medical treatments
• Could not work as a plumber again. He was very disappointed as he hoped to work at least until 65
• Mr S once enjoyed fly fishing camping and boating
• These activities have been restricted since the injuries were sustained
• Has also impacted on chores around the home and garden
• Resulted in a psychological reaction including depression and anxiety

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Redundancy contributions are not paid into Incolink for apprentices due to the special nature of the apprenticeship employment contract. However a levy is placed on all other contributing members of the fund. Time served by an apprentice in the commercial building/construction sector are notified monthly by your employer and is shown on your Incolink statement as “days worked”. Example being for a 4 week calendar month worked, 20 days are added to your account. The “days worked” are converted to a monetary amount after the Apprentice has completed the apprenticeship and is confirmed by your employer.

This will only occur if Incolink has been notified that the apprenticeship has been successfully completed and confirmed by your employer.

As the “days worked” are claimed at the same time you claim for the period that contributions were paid into your account by your employer, (ie. the period as a tradesman) you may have missed out on redundancy payments accrued through your apprenticeship, and therefore only paid the amount contributed by your employer whilst working after your completion date. This is a brief outline and each circumstance may be different. There are circumstances where “days worked” can be lost or not paid out.

All Members should have online access 24/7 through “Workerlink” and have activated their card. This gives you full access to all your account and statements details.

Also:

All members including Apprentices are automatically placed in the default fund named “Severance/Redundancy Account”. Apprentices and all other members can transfer over to the “Genuine Redundancy Account”. Brochures are available through Incolink to fully understand the two Funds.

This is a significant benefit and entitlement negotiated by your Union with your employer through your EBA. It’s important you understand it, or you may miss out on entitlements and the ability to minimise your tax payments.

To fully appreciate how it works, go online (www.incolink.org.au) or contact Incolink (9639 3000, or freecall 1800 337 789) for the brochure “Apprentices and Redundancy”.

Steve Rocco
OH&S Officer and Apprentice Liaison Officer
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