



**ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND
CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD**

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 / 2024

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Introduction

The Northern Territory Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Board (the Board) is a statutory authority established under the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Act 1978* (the Act). The Board exercises the powers conferred upon it by this Act relating to the licensing of electrical workers and electrical contractors to enhance electrical safety and compliance.

The main objective of the Board has been to ensure, through licensing, that work in the industry is only carried out by adequately trained workers and that they produce safe electrical installations.

The functions of the Board, as set out in section 17C of the Act are as follows:

- exercise the powers conferred on it by the Act;
- co-operate with institutions providing apprenticeship training for apprenticed electrical workers;
- co-operate with the Power and Water Corporation in relation to the inspection of electrical work and the investigation of complaints relating to electrical inspections;
- investigate and hear complaints relating to electrical work;
- consider matters referred to it by the Minister and to report to the Minister on those matters; and
- consider matters referred to it by the Power and Water Corporation and to report to the Power and Water Corporation on those matters.

Executive Summary

Determining the skills and knowledge required for licensing of electrical workers and electrical contractors and ensuring those licence holders have the ability to carry out safe electrical work, are two of the Board's main objectives. To this end the Board continues to participate in the development of training packages and address issues with apprentice training and maintenance of skills as they arise.

The dissemination of information, receiving and dealing with complaints from industry, the general public and NT WorkSafe Electrical Safety Unit also form a significant portion of the Board's activities.

The Board has continued to maintain communication with industry and the general public over the past year by its use of:

- Board meetings
- Addresses to trade training groups
- Provision of web-links to on-going national issues including assessment of overseas tradespersons, Standards Australia and interstate electrical licensing authorities.

The Board continues to liaise with federal and state government agencies, especially NT Worksafe, Workforce NT, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Trades Recognition Australia, Industry Skills Advisory Council, NT and other related functional departments like the Power and Water Authority.

The Board also interacts with organisations such as the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) and the various training organisations throughout the Territory. Through the previously mentioned channels the Board continues to raise public and industry awareness of its activities.

Review of Legislation

The Board has participated in a review of the governing legislation and reform of the regulation of its industry.

Consequently, the *Electrical Safety Act 2022* will commence on 1 July 2024 and the *Electrical Workers and Contractors Act 1978* will be repealed. This is the final annual report from the Electrical Workers and Contractors Licensing Board, which concludes carrying out its functions on 30 June 2024.

Composition of the Board

The Minister appoints Members and Deputy Members to the Board under the provisions of the Act. These members are drawn from various representative groups within the electrical industry and have continued to make their services available to the Northern Territory Government for the regulation of the electrical industry and the benefit of the electrical industry in general.

The current membership of the Board is as shown below:

Basis of Appointment	Member	Deputy Member
Electrical Engineer	Robert Priest (Chairperson)	Viqar Ali
Government Employee	Anthony Berrill	Bahadir Bayram
Electrical Contractor	Mathew Timms	Geoffrey Cowie
Electrical Workers	Sarah Brunton	Andrew Whitty
RTO Representative	Howard Pullen	Geoffrey Mills

Members

Mr Robert Priest (Chairperson)

With over 43 years of experience in the industry, the last 23 in the Northern Territory involved in electrical, instrumentation and process control, Mr Rob Priest established and managed Territory Instruments until 2017. Currently self-employed as an engineering consultant, Mr Priest is involved in industry consultancy around quality assurance and licensing among other things.

Mr Anthony Berrill

Over 50 years in the electrical industry, 43 of which is in the Northern Territory, involved in major infrastructure and commercial projects as a contractor and electrical project manager, mainly working on major capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure for the last 10 years.

Mr Mathew Timms

Over 26 years in the electrical contracting industry with 16 of those as a electrical contractor and 7 years within Power Water, he has a wide range of hands on experience within local, remote, defence and government works. He is dedicated to improving and expanding training within the industry. Mr Timms is representative of electrical contractors on the Board.

Ms Sarah Brunton

Nominated for appointment by the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) Sarah is a licenced electrical worker with over 24 years experience in the electrical industry. Sarah has worked on industrial sites across Australia during this time. Sarah currently works as National Technical Officer of The Electrical Trades Union Of Australia. Her core work activities involve representing the ETU nationally with regards to vocational education and training, and Australian Standards.

Mr Howard Pullen

Over 38 years experience in the electrical industry in the government, private and training sectors. Currently employed by Charles Darwin University and representing organisations providing training to electrical apprentices.

Deputy Members

Mr Viqar Ali

Having experience of more than 28 years in electrical industry in the energy, mining, mineral processing, petrochemical and dredging sectors while working for private and government organisations in Australia and overseas, Mr Viqar Ali is a Fellow and Chartered professional engineer of Engineers Australia and is currently working in Territory Generation to develop and deliver sustainable growth and major projects for the last 9 years.

Mr Bahadir (Bardy) Bayram

Nominated by the Power and Water Corporation where he is employed as a Project Manager - Electrical Parts and Consumables Contract (EPACC). Born and raised in the Territory, he has been involved in the electrical and refrigeration industries for over 27 years. Mr Bayram has experience in various aspects of the Electrical, Refrigeration and Automation industries.

Mr Geoffrey Cowie

Over 43 years as an Electrical Contractor in the Northern Territory principally in the field of Power Generation and Control Systems; thirteen years as an Electrical Contractor in WA; Deputy Member representing electrical contractors.

Mr Andrew Whitty

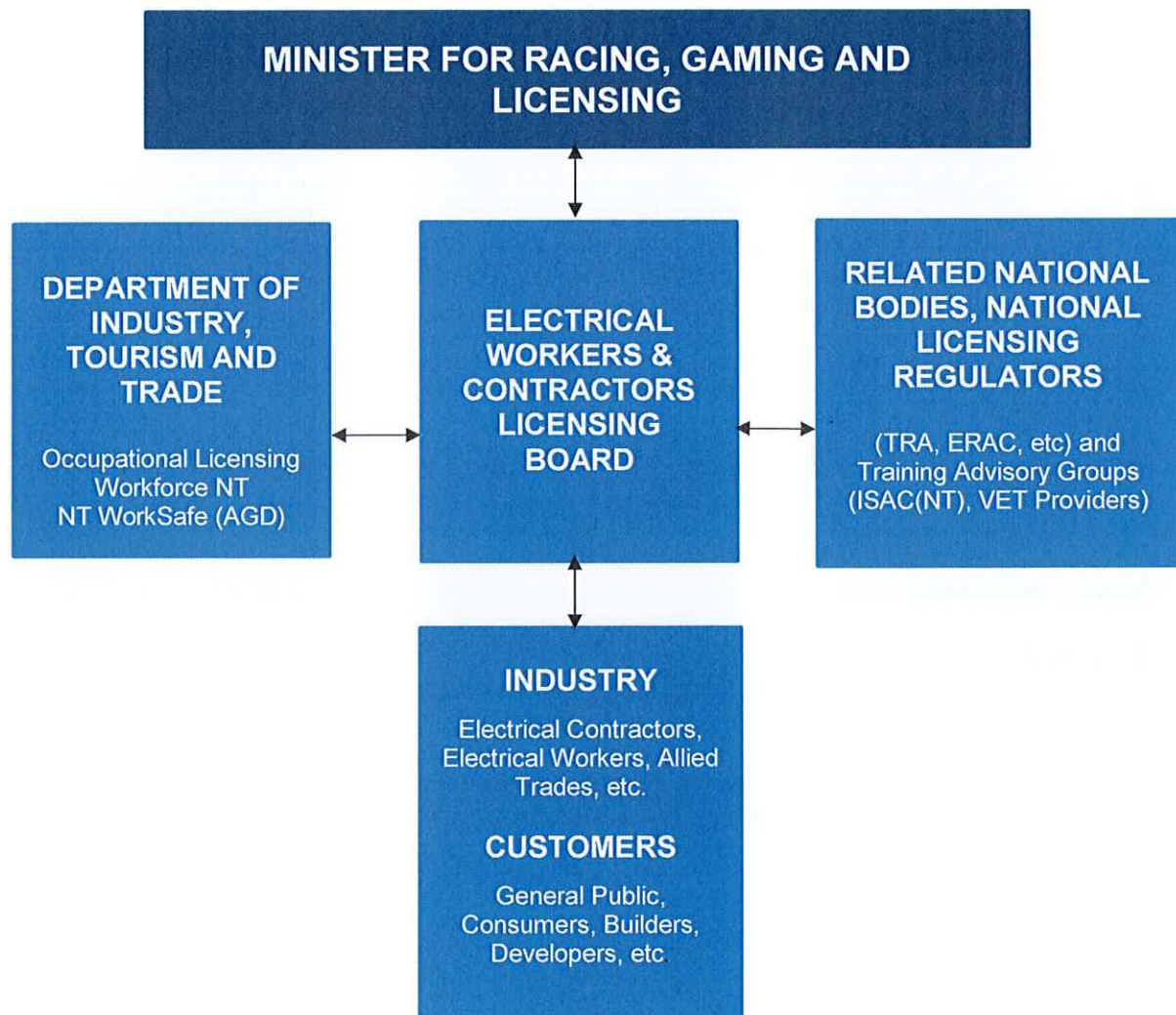
Over 22 years' experience across various industry sectors, with numerous roles in ensuring compliance and safety. Deputy Member representing electrical workers.

Mr Geoff Mills

Was nominated for appointment by Charles Darwin University. He is a registered electrician in the Northern Territory and is an employee of an institution providing apprenticeship training for apprentice electrical workers in the Northern Territory and is a Darwin resident.

The above positions cease on 30 June 2024 when the Act is repealed.

The diagram below shows the Board's context and the environment in which it operated until 30 June 2024.



Meetings

During the financial year 2023-2024, 8 meetings were conducted to consider electrical licence applications and policy issues, with the meetings held on:

- 21 July 2023
- 01 September 2023
- 27 October 2023
- 08 December 2023
- 09 February 2024
- 22 March 2024
- 10 May 2024
- 21 June 2024

The Board maintains an open door policy and invites any electrical worker, contractor or employer who wishes to meet with the Board to clarify or discuss any matter of concern or the Board's administration relating to the Act.

Communications to the Electrical Trades

The Board endeavours to maintain a flow of information to the electrical industry through:

- Meetings
- Mail outs
- Board's website: www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au

National Liaison

The Board maintains a working relationship with the other Australian and New Zealand licensing jurisdictions to ensure seamless process for mutual recognition of licences.

The Northern Territory is represented on Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council (ERAC), a national body which sets the standards for minimum qualifications and requirements for licensing with a view to achieving national uniformity by a representative of Occupational Licensing as well as the Electrical Safety Regulator, NT WorkSafe.

The Northern Territory is also represented on the ERAC Licensing Mangers Group. This group meets every 2 months by teleconference to discuss and compare operational matters encountered in the participating jurisdictions. The Executive Officer of the Board attends this group.

Website

The Board's website contains information for the electrical industry such as the Board's information bulletins, application forms, publications, frequently asked questions, Annual Reports, links to legislation and other information of benefit to both industry and consumers. It can be accessed at www.electricallicensing.nt.gov.au.

Participation in Training Development

The Board has a working relationship with the Industry Skills Advisory Council (ISAC) NT and is involved in reviewing national electrotechnology training packages for the electrical industry.

The maintenance of skills is viewed by all jurisdictions as most desirable for electrical workers to keep abreast of the latest trends and requirements in order to create and maintain safe and compliant electrical installations. In supporting this view, the Board has a skills maintenance requirement which requires electrical workers, at the time of renewal of their licence, to provide evidence that they have maintained their skills and knowledge.

With the periodical amendment of the Wiring Rules from time to time, the skills maintenance course ensures that people who attend are made aware of these changes when they happen.

Administrative Staff

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (the Department) provides administrative support to the Board through Occupational Licensing which includes support from the Board's Executive Officer and Licensing Officers.

Investigations and Disciplinary Action

Investigations of breaches conducted by the Electrical Safety Unit of NT WorkSafe and education of consumers are the main contributors to complaints forwarded for consideration by the Board.

During the financial year 2023-2024 the Board received two written complaints.



The Act enables the Board to take the following action where a breach of legislation has been established:

- cancel the licence;
- suspend the licence for such period as it thinks fit;
- vary the conditions of the licence including an endorsement relating to the trade classification or grade of the licence;
- fine the holder an amount not exceeding \$100.00;
- admonish the holder and endorse his licence to that effect; or
- any combination of the above.

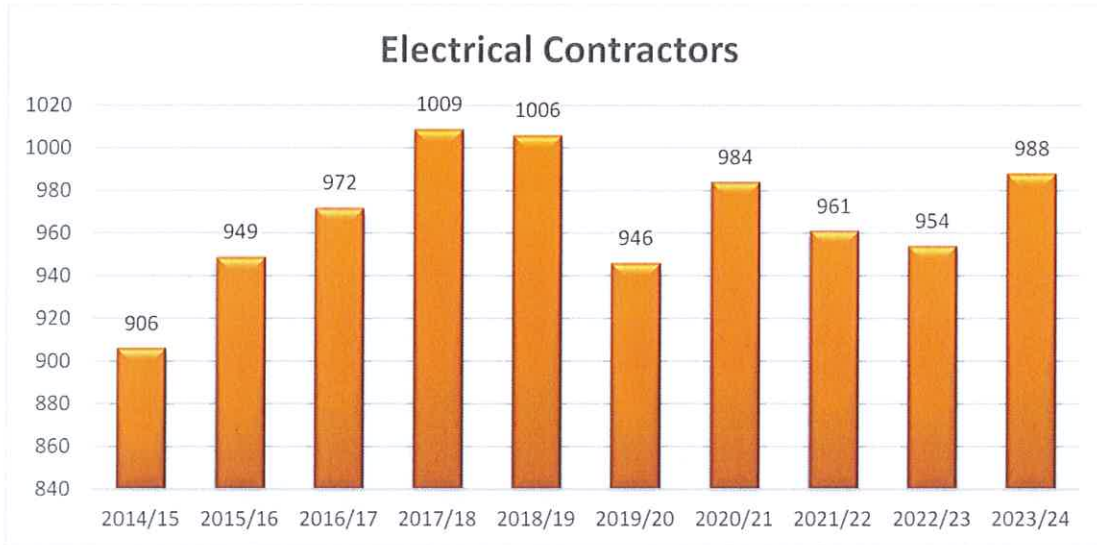
The Board prefers to have first-time offenders of less serious breaches participate in retraining to upgrade their knowledge and skills and stay in the workforce rather than suspend or cancel licences.

Where it is evident there are misconceptions or common failings across a section of the electrical industry (such as the requirement to register apprentices separately with the Board), efforts are made to educate employers and electrical workers rather than penalise them in the first instance.

Statistical Information

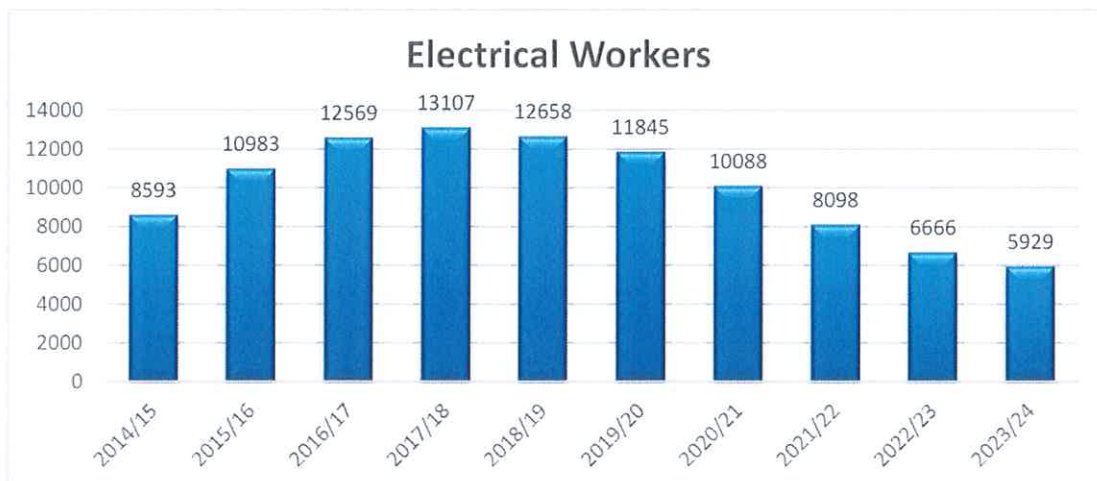
Electrical Contractor Licences

The total number of Electrical Contractor Licences issued as at 30 June 2024 was 988. The fluctuation in numbers is believed to be as a result of a more mobile workforce facilitated by the introduction of Automatic Mutual Recognition, impacts of COVID-19 on businesses, a national skills shortage and the stringent requirement of the electrical industry to comply with the Standards and Regulation.



Electrical Worker Licences

A Grade electrical worker licences are issued in the categories of electrical mechanic, electrical fitter, electrical linesman and electrical cable joiner. These licences are issued to persons who have completed training in any of the areas listed above or who hold licences from other states/territories or New Zealand and are eligible to be issued with the equivalent licence under mutual recognition. The total number of licences on issue as at 30 June 2024 was 5929.



Restricted Electrical Worker Licences

Thirteen categories of Restricted Electrical Licences are available for those workers who need to carry out a minor amount of electrical work to enable them to carry out their main trade. Examples are refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics, appliance repairers, plumbing and gas trades and areas of the mining industry.

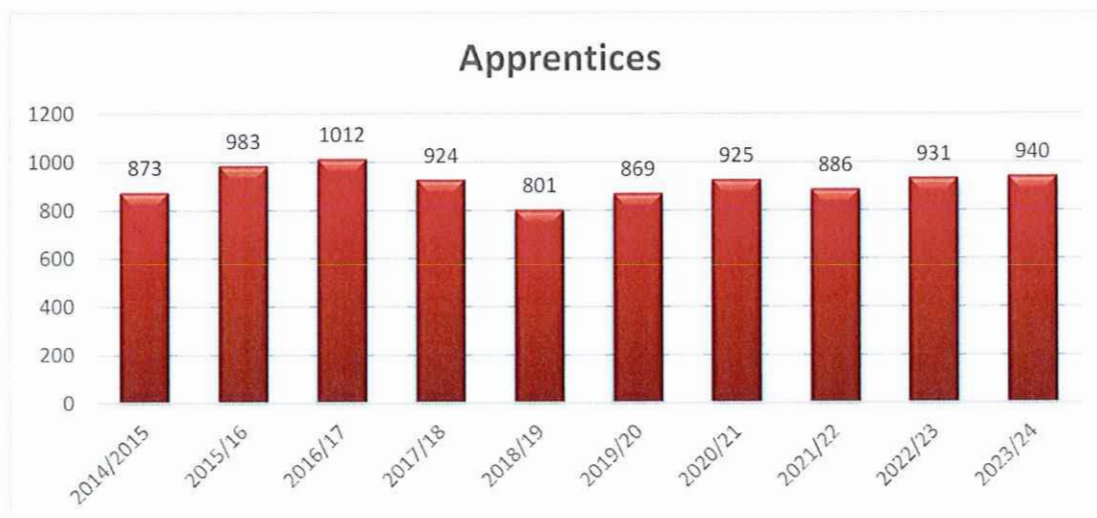
A comprehensive set of guidelines included with the application form has been developed to assist industry to determine if their operation can be enhanced by having their workers trained and licensed.

The total number of restricted licences on issue at 30 June 2024 was 933. The majority of restricted licences are held by workers in the refrigeration and air-conditioning trade.



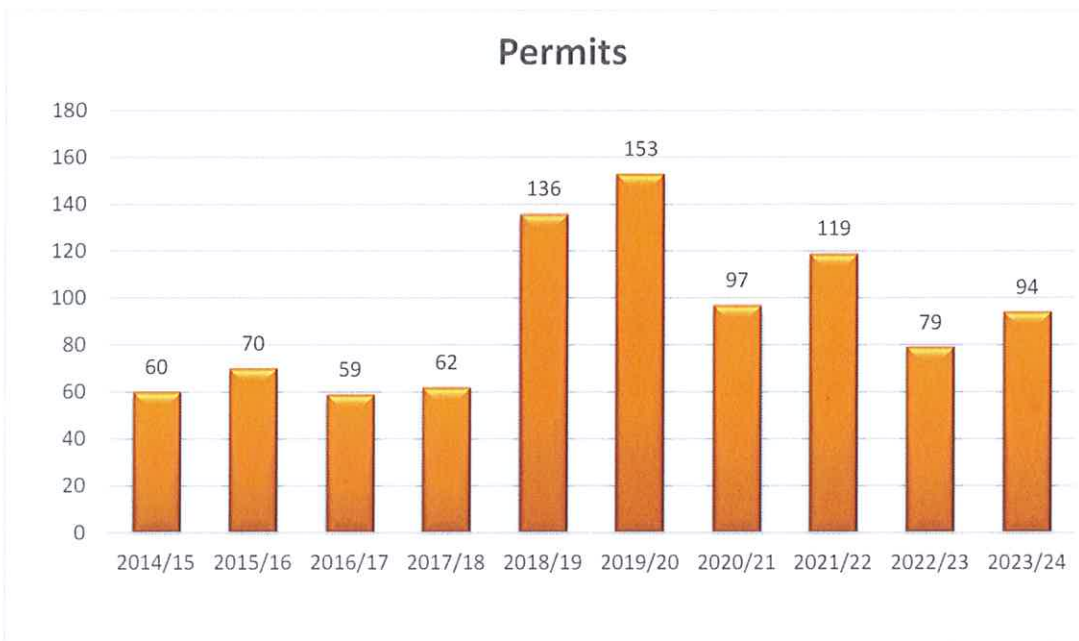
Apprentices

Apprentices to trades which require a person to hold an Electrical Worker Licence are required to be registered with the Board. In addition to mainstream electricians, these include apprentices in the major service industries of refrigeration and air-conditioning, electronics and appliance service trades. The total number of Electrical Apprentice registrations on issue as at 30 June 2024 was 940.



Temporary Permits

In conjunction with licences and apprentice registration cards, temporary permits are also issued. Temporary Permits are issued for a variety of reasons which include Australian context training for approved overseas applicants, electrical workers attempting to gain skills to upgrade a licence and the reintroduction to the electrical industry of former licence holders. Temporary permits are issued for a specific term and have conditions which limit the duties the applicant is able to conduct and further stipulate what is required to gain the licence. The total number of permits issued at 30 June 2024 was 94.



Total Licences current at 30 June 2024 - 8884



Automatic Mutual Recognition

The Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) scheme is a joint Australian and state and territory governments initiative. It allows holders of valid interstate occupational licences or registrations to perform the same works in the Northern Territory without applying for a Northern Territory Licence. The scheme includes electrical occupations and commenced in the Northern Territory (NT) from 1 July 2022. The Board supports the introduction of the scheme and the administrative arrangements made by the Department to streamline and approve applications received from valid licence holders. The total number of Automatic Mutual Recognition notifications issued at 30 June 2024 was 282.

Conclusion

The change in numbers of licences, registrations and permits on issue by the Board reflect a general migration of industry members in the Northern Territory. The numbers in this report are also impacted by COVID-19 effects on business and automatic mutual recognition.

The Board is integrated within the electrical industry, interacting with agencies such as the Master Electricians, NECA, Electrical Trades Union, mining industry, interstate electrical licensing authorities and the various training organisations throughout the Territory. Through the previously-mentioned channels, the Board continues to raise public and industry awareness of its activities. The Board also maintains ongoing participation in introducing procedures to assist uniformity and consistency of licensing.

With this report the Board concludes its functions within the Electrical Industry in the Northern Territory which spanned 46 years. Regulation of the electrical industry will continue under the Electrical Safety Regulator and an Electrical Safety Board appointed under the *Electrical Safety Act 2022*.

Financial Statement

The Department providing administrative support administers the Board's budget and finances. The Board's Financial Statement forms a part of the department's report.