



ELECTRICAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

DISCUSSION PAPER

PROPOSED CATEGORIES OF REGISTRATION

Issued by NJJ Sickels
Registrar
4 April 2007

Introduction

On 23 November 2006 the Electricity Act 1992 was amended through the Electricity Amendment Act 2006 (the Amendment Act).

The Amendment Act makes a number of changes to the electrical registration regime and the Electrical Workers Registration Board (the Board) will play a critical role in the successful implementation of the amended legislation.

The Board has been delegated the responsibility for the registration and licensing of electrical workers.

The legislation includes a number of checks and balances to ensure these responsibilities are properly discharged. For example, the Board must act in accordance with clear principles guiding registration and licensing. Other accountability mechanisms are outlined as follows:

Registration and licensing regime

The registration and licensing regime will be more flexible to allow for specialist registration categories and for competencies to be specified for the particular work authorised under each registration category.

Exemptions from the licensing regime

Most exemptions from the licensing regime for doing prescribed electrical work continue, but the electrical exemptions for registered persons not working for payment or reward, and for “qualified engineers” are not carried forward. There is however a more general provision for the Board to grant exemptions.

Accountability of the Board and Clarity of Roles

The legislation provides greater guidance to the Board on its role and on procedures to be followed, and establishes increased accountability of the Board to the Minister.

There is also greater clarity about the respective roles of the relevant Industry Training Organisations and the Board.

Specifically, the Act requires the Board to follow guiding principles set down in the Act, when determining registration and licensing matters. The Board is also required to consult with stakeholders on key matters such as registration classes, competence programmes, standards, and terms and conditions.

The Board will require the Minister’s approval for notices relating to registration classes, standards, terms and conditions.

Transition Arrangements

Importantly, the legislation provides that existing registrations and licences are carried forward.

The Amendment Act permits the Board to start work on defining new registration categories and standards, and the terms and conditions of registration and licensing. In doing so, the Board must consider retaining the existing worker registration classes, and it must consult with stakeholders.

Proposed registration categories

At its March 2007 meeting the Board discussed proposed registration categories under the amended legislation and in accordance with the guiding principles set down in the Amendment Act the Board wishes to commence consultation with stakeholders on registration categories for the future.

The following sets out the Board's initial proposals for registration categories and provides brief commentary on the reasons for the proposals.

- (a) Retain the category of electrician

Reason: While the name has changed over the years the electrician category of registration has been in place in New Zealand since the 1920s. The electrical work an electrician can carry out is well understood by the industry and the public.

- (b) Retain the category of electrical inspector

Reason: It would appear inappropriate for the category to be discontinued as the only other registration category to which electrical inspectors could be transferred to would be that of electrician. If that action was taken there would be the potential for considerable conflict in the industry as present electrical inspectors have had to either pass examinations for electrical inspector or have been granted the registration category through the transitional provisions of the Electricity Act 1992.

- (c) Amend the category of electrical service technician

Reason: Since 1992 there has been continued debate in the industry about the combining of the previous radio electronics serviceman, appliance serviceman and restricted certificate registration categories into that of electrical service technician. The main concern has been that some holders of the electrical service technician registration consider that their registration category does not reflect the type of work being carried out under the registration.

As such the following categories of electrical service technician registration limitations are initially proposed:

(i) Electrical Service Technician – Unlimited

This category would cover the existing unlimited electrical service technician registration.

(ii) Electrical Service Technician – Appliance Servicing

This category would cover servicing of appliances supplied by up to 400 volts and could be limited into “A” and “B” levels as at present.

(iii) Electrical Service Technician – Electronics Servicing

This category would cover servicing of electronics equipment including personal computers, televisions etc supplied by up to 230 volts.

(iv) Electrical Service Technician – System Servicing

This category would cover servicing of heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment not covered by the two above mentioned limited electrical service technician categories.

(d) Retain the category of line mechanic with existing limitations

Reason: There has been considerable debate in the industry about “de registering” line mechanics in the “non installation” sector of the industry however while that debate may continue the Board needs to make provision for line mechanics to continue to operate.

As such the following categories of line mechanic registration limitations are initially proposed:

Line mechanic – Distribution

Line mechanic – Transmission

Line mechanic – Traction .

(e) Introduce a category for Qualified Engineers with new criteria to that which is presently applicable

Reason: Qualified Engineers have, by virtue of their qualifications in electrical engineering, fundamentally been entitled to carry out all the work of an electrician.

As Qualified Engineers have varying levels of practical “hands on” work experience it would be appropriate for the Board to limit the Qualified Engineers’ scope of work under any new registration category to the type of

work the Engineer can show evidence of experience in.

For example an Engineer who has work experience in communication systems could be registered as a Qualified Engineer limited to the work of an Electrical Service Technician – Electronics Servicing. Conversely an Engineer with work experience in the work of an electrician would be registered as a Qualified Engineer limited to the work of an electrician.

With the Amendment Act introducing the design aspect into prescribed electrical work the Board needs to make provision for design Engineers and such Engineers would have available to them the registration category of Qualified Engineer – Design.

The qualifications for registration in any of the Qualified Engineer registration categories would be that any applicant must either have the status of “Qualified Engineer” under the Electricity Act 1992 or be a Technician Member, Professional Member of IPENZ (MIPENZ or FIPENZ) or CP Eng. In addition any applicant must have passed the Board’s electricians level electrical wiring regulations examination.

(f) Introduce categories for the present and future other groups (i.e. installation of security systems, restoration of supply, cable jointing and electrical work associated with plumbing and plumbing/gasfitting)

Reasons:

- The introduction of the electrician (limited to the installation of security systems) registration category lead to considerable apprehension in the industry as basically the introduction was seen as a “watering down” of the electrician registration category.

The Board indicated to the industry at the time of the electrician (limited to the installation of security systems) registration category introduction that the matter would be rectified with the introduction of new legislation.

- The previous restoration of supply and cable jointing restricted certificate registration endorsements were amended with the introduction of the Electricity Act 1992 to become limitations to the line mechanic registration category.

It is considered that the introduction of separate registration categories for restoration of supply and cable jointing will alleviate difficulties that have been experienced in the “supply” sector of the industry.

- Plumbers and plumber/gasfitters have been accommodated under the Electricity Act 1992 and regulations to that Act through certification, and it is proposed to introduce a specific registration category for such people.

Comments sought on this discussion paper

1 The Board would appreciate any comments on the proposals contained in this discussion paper by 18 May 2007. Comments should be sent to:

The Registrar
Electrical Workers Registration Board
PO Box 10156
WELLINGTON

Or Fax (04) 473 2395

Or by e-mail to: trish.tchernegovski@dbh.govt.nz

Please ensure that your submissions clearly identify your organisation (if any) and any other individuals or organisations represented in the submission.

The Board would prefer to receive your submission as a word document attachment to an e-mail, but fax or posted submissions are all welcomed. Also, we would appreciate receiving submissions in the following format:

Section No.	Issue/Proposed Change	Comment/Reason for comment
		I support/disagree with.... because....

Official Information Act 1982

2 Please note that any submissions received by the Board will constitute 'official information' under the Official Information Act 1982. That Act is designed to give the people of New Zealand access to information, but with exceptions to preserve the public interest and personal privacy.

3 The Board will prepare a summary of submissions received, together with the Board's responses. This summary is intended for circulation to parties who have made submissions.

4 In providing your submission, please advise the Board if you have any objections to the release of your submission, and, if you do object, the parts of your submission that you want withheld, and the grounds, under the Official Information Act, for withholding them. The Board will carefully consider your reasons when preparing and releasing any summary, and in considering any formal Official Information Act requests that might be received in the future.

Privacy Act 1993

5 Any personal information that you supply to the Board in the course of making your submission will be used by the Board only in conjunction with the

consideration of matters covered by this discussion paper.

6 Your name will be included in any summary unless you inform the Board that you do not wish your name to be included.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John M.', written in a cursive style.

Registrar
4 April 2007