

industry news

New leadership team at VBA

In March 2014, Prue Digby, CEO of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) announced the names of six new Directors. The new members of the VBA executive team are:

Stephen Gregory
Director of Corporate Services

Marlo Baragwanath
Director of the Office of the CEO

David Wolf
Director of Enquiries and Dispute Resolution

Jarrold Edwards
Director Technical and Regulation

Murray Smith
Director of Compliance and Performance

Adam Toma
Director of Licensing and Registration.

Gerard O'Farrel (Manager, Practitioner Services Plumbing) and **Dennis Hogan** (Executive Regulatory Advisor) are both continuing at the VBA.

To find out more about these appointments visit vba.vic.gov.au

The Indigenous Plumbing and Sanitation Foundation

Improving the health and sanitation of Indigenous Australians in remote communities has been a long-standing challenge.

According to the Indigenous Plumbing and Sanitation Foundation (IPSF) Chairman, Earl Setches, the reality for many self-administered remote Indigenous communities is that they face acute challenges in maintaining access to reliable clean water and effective sanitation.

"This is frequently due to a lack of available, skilled tradespeople, with the end result being that access to basic sanitation is often denied," said Earl.

Statistics show that Indigenous Australians have higher rates of chronic disease and are more likely to be disadvantaged by their distance from health care, education and employment opportunities.

"Plumbing is on the front-line in the defence against disease and this is where the IPSF has an important role to play," he added.

Determined to make a difference, in 2004 the Plumbing Trades Employees Union (PTEU) began working with business and the Indigenous community to find a solution to the low plumbing standards which often exist in the remote areas of Australia.

An Indigenous Apprenticeship Program began, which gave Indigenous youth the opportunity to gain plumbing trade qualifications and skills which could then be translated back into their local community.

"Over the last ten years almost 40 young Indigenous men and women have completed their apprenticeships, with many returning to their communities as fully qualified plumbers to enrich their regions with a skill base to improve water and sanitation infrastructure," said Earl.

Building upon the success of the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program, the IPSF plans to expand the training capacity to embrace more Indigenous apprentices from regional and remote areas, while also funding initiatives which improve sanitation standards within these communities.

"We are committed to building productive partnerships with the community, the business sector and Government to increase the number of young Indigenous youth obtaining training and employment, by creating more plumbing apprenticeships," said Earl.

The Foundation also plans to put in place an Indigenous mentoring program. A growing body of research demonstrates that mentoring can achieve powerful and lasting positive outcomes and is particularly effective because it fits well with Indigenous teaching and learning styles.

The main aim of the Foundation is to provide relief from poverty and sickness for people in Indigenous communities who are confronted with poor sanitation, putting them at risk of disease and sickness.

The IPSF was officially launched on Wednesday, 28 May 2014 at the Richmond Football Club. Check out the next issue for images from the event. To find out more visit ipsf.org.au

