



# Is there a need for a Waterproofing Qualification in Western Australia?

## Summary Report

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Construction Training Fund



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## 1. Executive Summary

During the final stages of the research project, *'Training Needs Analysis for the Commercial Construction Sector'*, it was established that a 'tier one' construction company reported that poor waterproofing practices are a significant contributor to expensive re-work and warranty claims.

The initial research recommended that the introduction of a Waterproofing qualification be referred to the Fund's 2017 Industry Stakeholder forum for consideration.

During the Forum, stakeholders confirmed that issues relating to waterproofing affected the industry and were of major concern. The Forum confirmed that further research into the introduction of a Waterproofing qualification in Western Australia should be undertaken.

The research involved discussions with:

- Industry stakeholders
- Department of Commerce
- Registered training Organisations
- Accredited users of waterproofing products
- Unions.

The main outcome of the research was that there is support for a skill set to be developed for waterproofing but little support for a formal apprenticeship or traineeship.

### 1.1 Project Aims

As this was an extension to a previous project, the report would be guided by findings made during the initial consultations but also examine the situation in other States.

The project aimed to:

- Identify training provisions in other States that may be transferable to WA.
- Identify any training that is currently available for Waterproofing in WA.
- Establish the level of industry support for a formal waterproofing qualification/trade to be established in WA.
- Make recommendations for training in WA.

## 2. Key findings

### 2.1 Training in Other States

There are a number of States within Australia that offer the Certificate III in Construction Waterproofing (CPC31411) under a contract of training. However, Queensland is the only State that has significant support for a formal qualification.

In Western Australia, Waterproofing is not established as a trade. The liability for the waterproofing component of the build comes under the Builder's insurance.

Waterproofing is generally a minor portion of the total construction cost; however, it is the most prolific cause of building complaints and remedial repairs'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> BUSS Waterproofing Perth

STATE	Contract Type	Commencements <sup>2</sup>	Duration
NSW	Traineeship	0	24 months
Queensland	Apprenticeship	55	36 months
South Australia	Traineeship	0	48 months
ACT	Apprenticeship	0	48 months
NT	Traineeship	5	48 months
Tasmania	Apprenticeship/Traineeship	0	48 months
Victoria and WA	-	0	n/a

As the industry is not regulated, builders can hire anyone to perform the waterproofing process in both the residential and commercial sectors. As cost plays a huge factor in the build process, in many instances builder's employ sub-contractors presenting the cheapest quote. However, as there is no formal apprenticeship or traineeship training requirement, builders have no way of confirming whether the sub-contractors have any expertise in waterproofing or not. In the long term, the cost to the builder may prove to be greater than the initial cost of waterproofing, with any rework having to be rectified under the builder's liability for warranty.

Between February 2015 and March 2017, the Department of Commerce in Western Australia received in the order of 75 complaints from both residential and commercial areas relating to Waterproofing issues.

## 2.2 Training in WA

Although Waterproofing is not classed as a trade in Western Australia, there are several companies and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that offer waterproofing courses to people already employed within the Industry.

- The Master Builders Association (MBA) offers a three-hour institutional course that provides participants with an understanding of the minimum water-proofing requirements of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the Australian Standards for residential buildings. Training is run through Bezant Consulting.

Participation rates for 2016 were very low and it is unlikely MBA will offer the courses in 2017/18. The Construction Training Fund provides supplementary skills funding for participants attending this course.

- The Housing Industry Association (HIA) offer four courses in waterproofing:
  - Waterproofing - External
  - Waterproofing – Wet area inspection and defects
  - Waterproofing – Wet areas
  - Wall and floor tiling system – standards compliance

Due to minimal interest in the courses it is unlikely that HIA will run any of the courses during 2017/18.

<sup>2</sup> The commencement figures are the most up to date figures from NCVET and are rounded estimates for 2015 (calendar year).

- There is no evidence of RTOs providing specific training other than small components of competencies within existing trade qualifications.
- There is no evidence of support for a formal trade or qualification other than a 'skill set' that could be delivered after completion of a trade qualification in an allied trade. For example, wall and floor tiling, bricklaying, plastering, wall and ceiling fixing.

### **2.3 Industry and supplier support**

- WA Project Waterproofing ([www.waprojectwaterproofing.com.au](http://www.waprojectwaterproofing.com.au)) is a waterproofing company offering waterproofing services for both commercial and residential buildings. They provide non accredited training courses where staff are shown how to waterproof. The work is then inspected by a qualified member of staff.

The Company has tried, unsuccessfully, to work with RTOs to have a formal training course established. The company guarantees all their work to BCA standards and only work with quality products, their industry reputation has meant that manufacturers of the products provide extended warranties for all of the companies work.

- Buss (<http://buss.com.au/>) is a waterproofing company that works on some residential but mainly commercial buildings. All the work that is completed by Buss employees is covered by a supplier warranty.<sup>3</sup>
- TERMIDRY (<https://www.termidry.com.au/>) is a waterproofing company that specialises in both residential and commercial wet areas for new construction. The Company offers a warranty which covers damage from water egress through the barrier as a direct result of faulty workmanship and applies to both internal and external systems.

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<sup>3</sup> Product Guarantee - BUSS

### **3. Conclusions**

From the research it appears that the industry is keen to have workers trained in waterproofing techniques. However, industry does not want the Certificate III in Waterproofing offered as a trade, but are supportive of having a skillset from the Waterproofing qualification made available.

RTOs could offer a dual outcome, the Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling (trade) plus a 'skill set' in waterproofing which may be promoted to both residential and commercial clients. The waterproofing units could also be offered as fee for service and delivered at completion of the Wall and Floor Tiling qualification.

The waterproofing skill set could also be marketed to existing tradespeople in the industry as leverage when applying for job roles indicating they have the capability to 'supervise' waterproofers on commercial and residential sites.

### **4. Key Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Construction Training Council:

- **Develop of an appropriate skill set for waterproofing using existing units of competency.**