

AGA—MOVING FORWARD.....

Welcome to our first edition for 2006, a year that is destined to be exciting and significant for AGA and its customers.



BOARD UPDATE: As AGA members and visitors to our website would already know, a postal vote of the AGA membership at the end of 2005 resulted in a new-look Board being elected for a three year term.

Whilst congratulating the four successful candidates - Andrew Creek (re-elected), Phil Hubbard, Colin Bickell and Peter Quinn—I'm sure everyone would want to acknowledge the leadership and support provided by the three departing Directors -Cliff Fong, Bill Nagle and Chris Devlin.

Following its January 2006 meeting, the new Board was pleased to announce the appointment of Colin and Andrew as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. Recently retired from his senior technical regulatory position, including a long-standing role as a regulatory AGA Board observer, Colin is very familiar with AGA operations and the important relationships AGA needs to maintain with key stakeholder groups.

Andrew is an active member within relevant industry forums and remains an influential spokesperson for AGA customers. Along with Phil Hubbard, who has a diverse and extensive industry background, Andrew represents the important AGA Certificate Holder group.

Peter Quinn would be well known to existing AGA customers as he has occupied the post of AGA Manager for Gas Certifications for many years. His 50 plus years of gas industry experience, most of which is laboratory related, ensures the AGA Board has access to important and relevant technical expertise.

In summary, AGA is very fortunate to continue to be able to draw on such a cross-section and

depth of skills and experience at Board level and the ultimate beneficiaries should be those that the AGA exists to serve—you, the customers.

NEW CERTIFICATION SERVICES UPDATE: AGA is pleased to announce that it has now achieved JAS-ANZ accreditation to expand its existing gas equipment certification business to cover electrical and plumbing products—and the promise of a "One-Stop Shop" for certification for customers is now a reality.

To facilitate information about, and promote, the new services, we have set a formal launch date of **1 July 2006**. A preview luncheon has been organised to promote AGA and the new services to prospective clients—details are listed on the back page of this publication and it is imperative that anyone wishing to attend emails the organiser, and receives formal confirmation of their registration. Places are strictly limited and interested parties are advised to register as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. AGA will be providing appropriate catering and refreshments. It is also intended that this launch will provide a useful networking opportunity for existing as well as prospective AGA customers.

Promotional material is also being developed and will be available from the AGA office and our website on 1 July. In addition, existing customers expected to have a specific interest in our new services will be contacted individually to make sure they are fully informed about AGA's exciting new certification options.

This issue of Certified Mail has a focus on the new certification services coming on stream, with a focus on some regulatory issues, as well as the supporting measures we are introducing to assist customers access these new services.

Please read on and we look forward to answering any questions you might have either at the preview luncheon or directly through our office.The editor

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AGA— the name to trust in product certification

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ELECTRICAL CERTIFICATION

NB: Parts of this article are taken from Energy Safe Victoria website www.esv.vic.gov.au.

Suppliers of electrical equipment in Australia are regulated under three different compliance regimes:

- Electrical Safety
- Electrical Efficiency
- Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)

Australia's State & Territory Governments regulate the safety and efficiency of electrical equipment. A federal Government Department, the Australian Communications Authority (ACA), regulates EMC-refer www.acma.gov.au for information.

In the case of Electrical Safety, AGA has developed the capability to certify certain electrical equipment and issue a certificate.



FACT: AGA's electrical product certification service is designed only for products related to the AS/NZS 60335/3350 series of Standards "HOUSEHOLD AND SIMILAR ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES".

AGA electrical certification demonstrates compliance to applicable safety standards and is designed to meet strict regulatory requirements for the supply of such products onto the market. This new service has been achieved through extensive consultation with Energy Safe Victoria (ESV). ESV is the electrical regulatory authority in Victoria that administers regulations covering electrical equipment safety and efficiency and similar government bodies exist in other States and Territories. We acknowledge the importance of working closely with all government regulatory authorities on matters of mutual interest and, of course, public safety.

AGA has made a commitment to better serve product suppliers/manufacturers as we move towards a one-stop-shop. This new service compliments our existing and well-established gas certification activities (and soon to be introduced WaterMark Certification – see page 3).

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY FRAMEWORK: In the interest of safety, the electrical regulatory authorities of each State and Territory of Australia administer individual, nationally uniform, reciprocal electricity safety legislation aimed primarily at preventing the supply of unsafe electrical equipment and enabling response in the event of non-compliant or hazardous equipment.

The safety of electrical equipment supplied or offered for supply in Australia is ensured by two complementary regimes i.e. essential safety - generally applicable and pre-market approval / certification -

mandatory approval for specific classes of equipment.

The foundation of Australian electrical equipment safety legislation is an essential safety regime whereby electrical equipment suppliers are responsible to ensure that all electrical equipment supplied or offered for supply in Australia meets minimum safety specifications.

The Australian/New Zealand Standard "AS/NZS 3820:1998 *Essential safety requirements for low voltage equipment*" provides a set of outcome-oriented criteria for the safety of electrical equipment.



FACT: The AS/NZS essential safety principles are based on the European Union Low Voltage Equipment Directive.

Briefly, the essential safety requirements specify that electrical equipment shall:

- Provide for essential characteristics (ratings, warnings, instructions etc) to be marked in English
- Identify its supplier (trade name, mark etc)
- Be manufactured so it can be safely assembled, installed and connected
- Be manufactured so that in use people and domestic animals are protected against:
 - o dangers from direct or indirect electrical contact
 - o dangerous temperatures arcs or radiation
 - o non-electrical danger
 - o hazards caused by external influences

AS/NZS 3820 is referenced in Australian State and Territory electrical equipment safety legislation/regulations. Therefore, equipment that fulfils the relevant provisions of AS/NZS 3820 satisfies the acceptable minimum safety provisions of legislation. In general, under the provisions of AS/NZS 3820, equipment that:

- satisfies the requirements of the applicable published AS/NZS safety standard is accepted as complying; or
- is (regulatory) approved, (independently) certified, or covered by a recognised safety/test report to an acceptable safety standard is deemed to comply.



FACT: Only Prescribed (aka "Declared") electrical items have to carry an authorised certification.

However, it is very important to note that even though some types of electri-



A NEW AGA SERVICE

cal equipment do not require mandatory approval/certification (i.e. known as "non-prescribed" or "non-declared" articles), electrical equipment suppliers are still responsible to ensure products are fit for purpose and meet minimum safety specifications as defined above. One method to help ensure suppliers meet their obligations is through the independent AGA electrical certification scheme.

APPROVAL / CERTIFICATION REGIME:

The essential safety regime in Victoria is enhanced by a pre-market approval regime applicable to only fifty two "prescribed" classes of electrical equipment. Other state regulatory authorities currently have fifty eight classes of equipment.



FACT: Definitions of "prescribed" classes of equipment and their applicable Standards are listed in AS/NZS 4417.2.

The list of prescribed electrical equipment has evolved through public and industry consultation over decades to include equipment that exhibits the greatest potential or actual safety risk through the following:

- inherent nature or critical function
- significant incidence of unsafe failure in use

It is an offence under legislation in all States and Territories of Australia to supply or offer to supply "prescribed" classes of electrical equipment unless the equipment is approved by an (regulatory) approval authority or certified under a recognised certification scheme (such as AGA).

In the case of AGA, certification services will also include non-prescribed electrical equipment that is designed to provide a method of independent certification against known industry Standards to help ensure (and give confidence to suppliers) that electrical equipment meet relevant safety Standards.

Although approval (regulatory) authorities and certification bodies possess discretionary provisions, the agreed basis of the approval regime is independent type testing of equipment by a recognised testing authority for compliance with applicable Australian safety standards. **For more details visit: www.gas.asn.au.**



WATERMARK CERTIFICATION

Acknowledgment: The following article includes content obtained from the Standards Australia website:

Following an extensive accreditation process to satisfy regulatory requirements, AGA is finally able to offer customers from the plumbing sector an alternative to the existing WaterMark Certification service providers. AGA customers from the gas sector would already be aware of our reputation within the certification community, our not-for-profit status, our demonstrated industry commitment and our historical focus on product safety outcomes, rather than profits. Whilst AGA has no shareholders, it does have a number of important stakeholders, not least of which comprise our fee-paying customers and plumbing regulatory authorities.

Now that AGA is JAS-ANZ accredited to issue Level 1 and Level 2 WaterMark Licences, we are now able to provide a "One Stop Shop" for the gas, electrical and plumbing sectors.



FACT: Did you know that customers currently licensed by an AGA competitor are able to retain their current WaterMark Licence number when transferring their certification to AGA?

In developing its new WaterMark program, AGA has been mindful of the need to consider industry concerns with respect to certification cost effectiveness and responsiveness. In establishing its plumbing (Watermark) certification requirements, AGA has questioned past industry practices that were not mandated by relevant external authorities and which did not, in AGA's view, add value to the certification outcome or the customer's business. The result is a certification approach that is still based upon the product manufacturer's formal quality management system/s and periodic auditing, albeit at a less frequent interval in most cases. AGA fees are also set at levels that reflect the true cost of providing the associated services – and AGA is committed to monitoring such fees and adjusting them upwards or downwards as the circumstances dictate. Whilst some might be sceptical about this statement (ie the downwards adjust-

ment), AGA's record of real price re-ductions in the gas sector over the past 10 years is ample evidence that this is no hollow (or non-core!) promise.

Although investing significant resources into the expansion of its certification services AGA, as a streamlined, flexible organisation, is ideally placed to closely monitor and respond to changing customer service needs.



FACT: Did you know that the WaterMark is a trademark owned by Standards Australia Ltd?

The Watermark is used to identify suitably certified product intended for use in our water supply, sewerage, plumbing and drainage industries. The plumbing industry in Australia supports the use of the WaterMark which, when used properly, is an excellent way of helping Australian consumers be confident about the quality of the plumbing products to which the WaterMark is applied. Given the role the WaterMark plays, it is not surprising that use of this trademark is strictly policed and its integrity protected.

Standards Australia does not grant licenses for the use of the WaterMark directly to manufacturers of the WaterMark. Instead, it enters into an agreement with authorised certifiers (eg AGA) and grants them the right to enter into licence agreements directly with approved manufacturers for the use of the WaterMark, ie in accordance with the terms of the Approved Certifier Agreement.

Manufacturers of plumbing and drainage products are responsible for determining their specific obligations under each State's and Territory's laws and regulations. Manufacturers who want to use the WaterMark to signify certified compliance with MP52 or the Plumbing Code, when their products have been so certified by AGA, may do so by entering into an Approved User Agreement.



FACT: The requirements for certification of particular plumbing products are related to the perceived 'risk' to the plumbing and drainage system.



You've got mail!

There are two levels of certification determined by the level of risk of the products.

WaterMark Level 1 has an audit program for higher risk products and is based on a certification program in accordance with the principles of ISO/IEC Guide 67.2004, System 5. This includes testing, assessment and surveillance of the quality system involved. Products being certified are assessed ongoing for conformity.

WaterMark Level 2 involves a type test program for lower risk products and is based on a certification program in accordance with the principles of ISO/IEC Guide 67.2004, System 1b. This does not require an ongoing audit program, however certification has a defined three year currency.



FACT: Plumbing products requiring WaterMark Certification are listed in AS 5200.000 Schedule 5 along with their relevant product Standard and Level. However, where a specific plumbing product is not listed in AS 5200.000, the process for certification is as outlined in the Plumbing Code of Australia and involves developing an Australian Technical Specification and determining the appropriate Level using MP78.

NB: Customers are encouraged to make use of the StandardsWatch facility that is available via the standards website: refer www.saiglobal.com/shop –this is a free service and is easy to set up.

Details of the AGA scheme for plumbing product certification (WaterMark)—as well as for electrical and gas items—can be found on the AGA website. You can download key documents including the relevant guidelines, forms and scheme rules that are required to lodge an application. Any questions about AGA certification processes and/or the pricing structure that applies to each category of product can be referred to the AGA office via our feedback facility on our website or by contacting us directly. As always, personal callers are also welcome and an AGA officer would be happy to help clarify any issues—although it is worth making an appointment if possible due to the off-site responsibilities placed on our technical staff.



Question time

Anything you'd like to know?

Q: Over recent years, AGA has introduced a new requirement for customers with gas product certifications to provide information about their Quality Assurance (QA) measures. Why?

AGA says: This requirement was introduced to satisfy AGA compliance with its formal Product Certification Body accreditation program (ie to ISO/IEC Guide 65—JAS-ANZ Procedure 15). However, AGA only insists on the minimum level of information to satisfy such accreditation requirements that relate to such customer quality management systems. This mandatory information concerns the processes related to the issue of complaints about certified gas product—hence the focus on how each customer captures any customer complaints and uses such information. The additional (albeit optional) QA information sought is used to help AGA assess the degree of control a customer has over its certified gas product and whether or not the customer might qualify for a less frequent Product Verification Audit (PVA). In general terms, if the customer cannot (or chooses not to) provide satisfactory evidence to AGA of a suitably mature and independently audited quality system, AGA merely applies an audit frequency that reflects the absence of such material (usually 12 months). It should be noted though that the existence, maturity and performance of a customer's QA system/s is but one factor AGA takes into account when deciding audit frequency. Obviously, past PVA results for both specific product and the Certificate Holder entity generally are important considerations too.

Food for thought: Aside from AGA's interest in such complaints processes, each customer should be able to see the benefit/wisdom in ensuring it has a mechanism to adequately collect and review complaint details. Such systems support, for example, a review process to investigate systemic product-related problems and are likely to minimise the incidence and impact of costly design, manufacturing, warehousing, transport and/or resource issues.

Who said there's no such thing as a free lunch?

PREVIEW LUNCH DETAILS FOR NEW SERVICES:

(Refer Page 1):

Please email event@gas.asn.au if you wish to attend the official preview luncheon. As places are strictly limited, it is important that you ensure you receive a return email message from AGA confirming your registration. Launch function queries, and any last minute requests, can be directed to Steve Chopping on 03 9580 4500. However, please note that AGA cannot guarantee any late requests to attend the luncheon. If registering more than one guest, please ensure you advise the first name and surname for each person.

- WHEN:** 12:00 pm—2:30 pm, Tuesday, 27 June 2006
- VENUE:** Colours Ballroom, The Dingley International Hotel, Boundary Road, Dingley
- NOTE:**
- Two course lunch and drinks provided by AGA
 - Special Guest Speaker
 - An opportunity to learn first-hand about your new certification options
 - Detailed hand-outs for new services available at conclusion of luncheon

NB: As the launch includes catering, and the numbers have to be pre-booked with the venue, it is essential that you register in advance. **Unfortunately, once we reach our limit on numbers, we will be unable to accept further registrations.**



Remember to let us know ASAP if you wish to attend.....

OUR DETAILS

AGA—we exist for your benefit

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We welcome personal callers too...

Free bookmark:
www.gas.asn.au