
From: Rocco Verrelli
Sent: Thursday, 16 August 2018 9:46 AM
To: Policy
Subject: Transparent Trading - Consultation Paper

In regards the proposed reforms the following is recommended:

1. Item 1.1 & 1.2 - Licenses renewals should be up to 5 years. However, subject to the provision that each licensee has the appropriate experience and qualification. The licensee must be held responsible and accountable for their work. They must carry indemnity insurance, so that a consumer is protected against any faulty work for 7 years. Too many times a bad licensee walks away without any reparation or restitution for their bad workmanship.
2. Item 1.3 - Owners builders permit threshold should be increased to \$50,000. Realistically, the price of material and especially labour is very high. Unless a person has the ability to do the work themselves and save on labour, you cannot build a sizeable deck and roof, carry out bathroom, minor internal alterations, or do a kitchen renovation for \$20,000. Just basic plans, engineers reports cost \$1000 plus for each service. Not to mention if approval is required from council or private certifier.
3. Item 1.6 – The removal of 13 licenses group is supported. However, similar to No.1 above, the practitioner must still be appropriately qualified or experience in the chosen field of work. But more important, must carry indemnity insurance so that a consumer is protected and can claim against faulty work for 7 years, irrespective of the value of the work carried out if the practitioner fails to rectify the faulty work.

My question to you is, does the Building Act provide consumer protection so that faulty work can be rectified without substantial additional cost to the consumer? If not, the system will not work. In addition, regulations must be changed so that commercial work is also certified for compliance. The same qualification requirements and consumer protection must apply.

4. Item 1.13 – I agree, mutual recognition of qualification must be recognised so that practitioner are able to practice across all states. It makes no sense having various licensing or accreditation requirement in every state. Practitioners must be able to practise and work in every state without restriction. If we in Australia have free trade agreement with other nations, why would we not have mutual recognition of qualification across all states of Australia? It does not make sense!
5. Item 1.15 – I agree there should be consist CPD requirement across all professions and occupations. The CPD arrangements must be consistent in regards to the No. of annual points required and the fees the association chargers. Application for renewal of accreditation should be every 5 years. The requirement for the same type of indemnity insurance must apply to all practitioners. In addition, as per No.4 above, there must be mutual recognition of qualification across all states so that so that practitioner are able to work in any state of Australia. Currently, NSW Accredited Certifiers cannot practice in other states and National Accredited Certifiers cannot practice in NSW. Why is this so when we have a unified National construction and plumbing code that applies to every state.

6. Item 2- In general I agree that transparency and open disclosure is paramount in all and every facet of consumer dealings. All products and providers of products and services must be honest and truthful. All products and services must be simplified and made easily comparable to similar other product and service. Fees and cost must be displayed online and structured to be comparable with other business.

In addition to the sectors already nominated in the consultation paper, the aged care/nursing home sector also needs to be regulated in regards to their enormous deposits they charge. Many aged care homes are now asking from \$200,000 to more than 1 million dollars, in addition to their weekly fees before they will accept a patient. Regardless of the amount of deposit paid and fees charged, there is no guarantee of better care. There should probably be an independent investigation or royal commission into the aged care system. Both in regards to fees charged and level of care, if this sector it is not properly regulated.

Another sector that requires control are the retail shops that sell a variety of same product, like Chemist Warehouse. They are a large retail chain and have no unit pricing on their products. It is impossible to compare the price of their product e.g. the many variety of vitamins, different brands, different quantities within the same brand.

Regards
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