
From: Michelle Iona
Sent: Monday, 27 August 2018 12:28 PM
To: Policy
Subject: Response to the Proposal to remove the Painters and Decorators Licence.

Dear Minister,

I am writing in response to your proposal 1.6 – Removing 13 Categories of home building licences.

Question 11. - Do you support the removal of the above 13 licence categories? If not, which do you believe need to be retained and why?

Response - No. I do not support the removal of the listed 13 licence categories.

My response will relate to retaining the Painters and Decorators Licence as this is our area of trade.

If the Painters and Decorators licence is removed this could lead to some serious repercussion in the future.

A professional licensed painter knows that surface preparation is one of the keys to a long-lasting quality painted finish. The licensed professional will use a number of techniques to safely and thoroughly remove old paint and prepare the surface where needed.

The key factor to this surface preparation is how to safely handle potential existing asbestos materials and lead paint. If the proposed removal of the Painters and Decorators licence prevails there will be no safeguarding for the community if unlicensed and untrained people incorrectly prepare surfaces containing asbestos and lead paint.

Asbestos is found in most buildings built before 1990, and in the past, inhalation of asbestos fibres during paint preparation has claimed lives. Inhaled fibres will possibly cause various lung diseases, including asbestosis. It is recommended that these highly toxic materials must be identified and treated by trained and licensed tradespeople.

Lead paint is **toxic** and is found in most buildings in NSW built before 1971. Some known effects of lead paint on our health can include high dangers to pregnant women, damage to brain development in babies and children as well as anaemia in adults. The most common exposures at the moment occur during home renovations on older homes when lead paint flakes and dust are ingested or inhaled. This is likely to become more common with the removal of the Painters and Decorators licence as unlicensed, untrained and unqualified people will be carrying out the painting works.

Removing the Painters and Decorators licence will lead to untrained, unqualified and unlicensed persons **painting home** interiors and exteriors containing lead paint or asbestos which will ultimately pose significant health risks to all stages of life - babies, children and adults will be exposed to lead paint dust and asbestos fibres during the preparation stage.

This will, therefore, cost the NSW economy millions of dollars relating to health costs associated with lead paint and asbestos exposure.

Also up for deliberation is the matter of Safe Work Practices – licensed professional painters have had specific training relating to the safety sector for the painting industry. They work to stringent rules that not only protect themselves and their employees from harm but the community as a whole.

In removing the licence for the Painters and Decorators, there will be no one regulating the safety standards which will again cost the NSW economy millions of dollars relating to health costs associated with accidents resulting from unsafe work practices.

Statistics have shown that the complaints regarding defects and pre-mature paint failure from Victoria (where there is no licensing) outnumber the complaints from NSW by four to one. These complaints are due to inadequate training and regulation from the industry which is a direct result of having no regulations for licensing standards. The Victorian government is now considering legislation to introduce new regulations to the building industry to overcome the debacle it has created.

It has been suggested, not to merely keep the Painters and Decorators licence as it is presently, but, in addition, tighten the existing regulations to include internal paintwork as well.

It is currently a condition that only licensed painters can carry out painting works worth over \$5000 on the exterior of NSW homes, and this should be expanded to include interior works. Recommendations to expand the existing licensing requirements for painting work should also include work under \$5000.

These are suggestions to which I fully support, to not only protect the health of NSW homeowners and the public from unqualified and untrained contractors and protects the public from health risks but to also protect the honest, hardworking, qualified licensed painter who has put in the years of training and work to be able to make a living in the trade of painting.

A licensed painter with the training and years of experience behind him will know all about such things as new types of paint and painting techniques. Times have changed, painting has transformed from the old image of a bucket of paint, a roller and a brush to a more technical occupation. A licensed, professional painter can advise on a number of options that an unlicensed so-called "painter". From the type of paint used, the type of finish you are after, oil and water based paints, special finishes, the most effective protective finish, environmentally friendly low or no VOC paints, highly durable epoxy paint for your floors, spray painting your fence, roof or other surface or the best stain or sealer for your deck.

Many of the licensed painters are honest and hardworking. They are compelled by the regulations set out in the licensing conditions to comply with the rules by paying the award wages to employees, superannuation, workers compensation and they are insured.

Taking away the Painters and Decorators licence will open the floodgates to all types of inferior workers wanting to make a quick dollar and have an adverse effect on small business. Many of these jobs are uninsured and cash jobs resulting in an unfair playing field for the honest licensed painter who is regulated and abides by the rules by declaring income, paying award wages to employees, paying superannuation, paying workers compensation and being insured.

As the rules have already been changed for work under \$5000 – the honest licensed painter cannot compete with the unlicensed or so-called handymen for these jobs. We are being priced out of the market, a market that we will be priced out of all together should the Painters and Decorators licence be removed. In addition to the licensed painters being affected, the client will not have the assurance that they are getting their homes painted by an experienced painter, their homes, which would be their number one asset and the one thing that should be the top priority.

Licensing of trades such as Painting and Decorating is important to protect the painting industry as a whole, as a profession and is there to protect consumers from any fraudulent work. It is there to protect Painting and Decorating as a skilled trade, one which many painters have spent years studying for and completing apprenticeships for.

Removing the licence for Painting and Decorating will devalue all of the hard work that these apprentices have accomplished as well as devalue the work being done by the truly professional, licensed painters. The correct and high standard of training that is received through these apprenticeships ensures that people can rely on a high standard of work.

Taking away the Painters and Decorators licence also takes away the opportunity and prospects for many young school leavers to make an honest living taking on an apprenticeship in the painting industry. Painting and Decorating is not a minor trade, it is a skilled trade that needs the backing of the licensing department to ensure quality workmanship is maintained.

Taking away the Painters and Decorators licence will eventually cause the demise of the painting industry. The art of painting **being** lost and the **critical** information not passed on to future generations.

Professional trades people, and Painters in particular for this matter, should have their skills acknowledged by being able to obtain a licence for their trade.

Having licensed painters helps consumers to be protected from paying for a job that is not up to standard or trade quality.

The proposed changes pose an unacceptable risk to the industry, and to the wider community.

Painting is something that everyone can potentially do, but not everyone should paint – leave it to the licensed professionals.

I would implore you to re-think your decision regarding removing the Painters and Decorators licence but instead, tighten the existing regulations.

Question 12. Are there any other licences categories that you believe should be removed?

Response – No, many of the same reasons as mentioned above will apply to the other trades affected by the proposal to remove certain licences – although I am not an expert at these trades to comment.

I request that my personal details are not published due to privacy reasons.

Kind regards