

their professional and technical expertise, and to serve as a point of interchange with related professions and for resolving problems affecting the profession.

AHSCA's aims and objectives include achieving uniform hydraulic and fire protection services design throughout Australia. It also aims to bring about greater cooperation and understanding between its members and all professional bodies involved with the building industry.

Membership benefits of the AHSCA NSW

AHSCA include a continuing professional development (CPD) program and accreditation register. The Association runs two CPD days a year and maintains a CPD register that is issued to all Councils within NSW each year.

Other benefits of membership include networking with other consultants, exchange of ideas relating to design principles and methodology, providing knowledge of upcoming regulation changes, and access to recommended fee scales and levels of professional service.

There are several levels of membership including Full Member (requiring six years' experience plus Diploma), Associate Member (requiring two years' experience plus enrolment in Diploma), and TAFE student.

The President of the AHSCA NSW, Brett Ryan, says a key challenge facing the industry is the need to attract and recruit people.

"Huge opportunities are opening up for hydraulic designers, including in relatively new areas such as stormwater retention and recycling," Brett says.

"However, there is a shortage of experienced and new people within the design engineering industry and the Association is reviewing a number of different avenues to attract people to the industry.

"There are also some difficulties in relation to education and training. TAFE NSW is still offering the Diploma Course in Plumbing Design to students located in the Sydney region. However, because the course is only offered in Sydney, we are concerned that the designers located in other regions cannot utilise these services.

"Yeronga TAFE in Queensland has introduced a distance learning online course that the NSW Association is currently reviewing. This appears to be a good solution to the learning difficulties being experienced by our members (in all States and Territories).

"Also, we are currently working with the Building Professional Board in NSW on an accreditation scheme that will be introduced in July 2005. This will require our members to join in order to certify design and installation work." ■

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