



**Fire Protection Industry
(ODS & SGG) Board**

Annual Report

1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024



Table of Contents

A message from Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board Executive Officer, Mr. Paul Hodgson	4
Introduction.....	5
Background.....	5
Purpose	6
Strategy.....	6
Permit activity data analysis.....	7
Breakdown of different licence types.....	7
EAHL holders by state	9
EAHL holders by industry sector	10
Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisations and Halon Special Permits.....	10
Applications received in comparison to previous three years.....	10
A forecast of permit activity based on the analysis to identify risks and potential treatments to ensure the ongoing effective delivery of the permit scheme.	11
Field Engagement Program	12
Discharge Review	19
Training	24
Industry Engagement.....	29
Mining	29
Aviation	31
Facility Management.....	29
Marine	34
Industry Wide Engagement and Communication Activities	35
Training and Promotional Materials	35
Conference Engagement Program.....	36
Proactive Training Engagement	37
GasBag.....	37
FPIB Website	38
CRM, Portal, and App Development	38
Conclusion	39

Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board

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A message from Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board Executive Officer, Mr. Paul Hodgson



The FPA Australia Board of Directors are most grateful that the Department has entrusted FPA Australia with the responsibility of administering the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme to help facilitate a compliant industry when it comes to the use of scheduled extinguishing substances. I wish to extend my gratitude to the Department and its staff for their tireless work and ongoing support of the Ozone program, especially as we have witnessed the program grow this year and in-turn enhanced our impact in our joint effort.

This period, covering 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, saw the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board (FPIB) undertake a large scope of work with new strategic projects not seen before.

The largest and most exciting piece of work for the Board throughout this period has been the launch of the nationwide Field Engagement Program, which has allowed the reach of the Board to grow dramatically throughout the industry. By extending its face-to-face presence on the ground, the engagement with the industry the Board has been able to achieve from this program is unmatched and has helped the Board move the industry significantly further towards complete compliance and best practice in the field.

Completing all of the Board's strategic projects to a high level is crucial to ensuring the Board continues to gradually progress toward the end-goal of reducing the emissions of all ozone depleting substances (ODS) and synthetic greenhouse gases (SGG). All these projects have kept the team busy, and I thank the FPIB team for their ongoing hard work and dedication to ensure we continue to meet key objectives and enhance the permit scheme year-on-year. The Industry Advisory Group (IAG) have also continued to play a vital role this year in giving their expertise on important pieces of work.

Another highlight and key project of the year is the development of a new Central Relationship Manager (CRM) to enhance the capabilities of the permit scheme. The benefits of this new system are already being felt and we look forward to its final developments in the upcoming financial year, as a permit holder portal and app will be completed.

The Board has also sustainably increased its engagement with industry through numerous digital campaigns, attending relevant conferences, and developing updated and engaging promotional and educational material. A personal highlight is the development of two animation clips; with one introducing the permit scheme and the other giving tips on how to prevent discharges. Both are a new and exciting ways to engage and educate our permit holders.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge those within the fire protection industry that do the right thing and abide by the legislation by obtaining a fire protection industry permit. By doing so, those individuals are supporting the objective of the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989 (the Act) which is to reduce emissions.

Besides the obvious financial cost, there is a lot of hard work involved behind the scenes for fire protection technicians and companies to become licensed. They must firstly undertake training with a registered training organisation, and then develop the necessary skills to competently undertake their professional work. Having licensed and aptly skilled technicians is critical in reducing the risk of ODS and SGG emissions.

Although there is still a lot of hard work to be done by the FPIB moving forward, we feel we have made valuable inroads over the past year to further promote the importance of The Act and the Regulations that underpin the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the department to deliver the ozone program over the coming years.

Paul Hodgson

Executive Officer, Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board



Introduction

The Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) provides services to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW) through the establishment of the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board (FPIB).

This involves the administration and implementation of the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme, which includes the granting of fire protection industry permits to individuals and businesses in accordance with Division 6A.4 of the regulations. The Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme covers the handling, storage, acquisition, and disposal of extinguishing agents that are listed in Schedule 1 to the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* (the Act).

Background

The FPIB administers the fire protection division of the regulations on behalf of the Australian Government.

Functions of the FPIB include:

- Identification, promotion, and support of best practice activities throughout the fire protection industry.
- Management of the permit and licensing system to ensure applicants meet minimum standards of competency prior to the granting of extinguishing agent handling licences (EAHLs) and extinguishing agent trading authorisations (EATAs). Functions also extend to halon special permits, and special circumstances exemptions.
- Implementation of effective communication and consultation with the fire protection industry to encourage and facilitate regulatory compliance.
- Development and distribution of ozone depleting substance and synthetic greenhouse gas (ODS and SGG) learning and assessment resources to support those working in the fire protection industry.
- Undertaking review and audit activities to ensure fire protection industry compliance with the Act.



Purpose

This report focuses specifically on the FPIB’s contracted work between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. It is an annual synopsis of outputs for the year incorporated with analysis of performance outcomes for activities completed throughout the year.

Strategy

The strategy for 2023-2024 Financial Year was developed through a collaboration between the Department and the FPIB. This year’s strategy differs slightly from previous years because the work to be conducted by the FPIB during the 2023-2025 contract period was already outlined during the contract negotiation process with the DCEEW. Despite this, the Board’s strategy, despite being bigger in scope, has remained largely similar to past years, involving consultations with key stakeholders to ensure the Board’s work and strategic projects have addressed the priorities of the diverse fire protection industry.

The strategic approach adopted throughout the 2023-2024 Financial Year offers the FPIB a clear vision of what we aim to accomplish by the end of the two-year contract period with the DCEEW, along with a roadmap for achieving these goals. The Board’s work has involved meeting short, medium, and long-term goals.

One significant shift in this year’s strategy is increasing the Board’s field presence through the Field Engagement Program, as the largest strategic project. Since its inception in 2019, this project has expanded nationally, aiming to complete a Permit Condition Check (PCC) with 95% of permit holders by July 2025.

Another focus is improving internal processes and capabilities to enhance engagement with permit holders. This led to the launch of several projects, including a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, a portal for permit holders, and a mobile app.

During the 2023-2024 financial year, the FPIB aimed to deepen engagement and intelligence gathering across identifiable priority sectors across mining, aviation, maritime and facilities management. Alongside this, the Board implemented a more holistic strategy to better understand each sector and adapt the permit scheme to meet industry needs. Emphasising sustainability was a key theme in all activities and communications, as the Board sought to educate permit holders on how human behavior impacts the natural environment.



Permit activity data analysis

Consolidation of the data required under the Monthly Permit Activity Report supported by an analysis that identifies changes and trends and a discussion of the possible contributing factors and drivers.

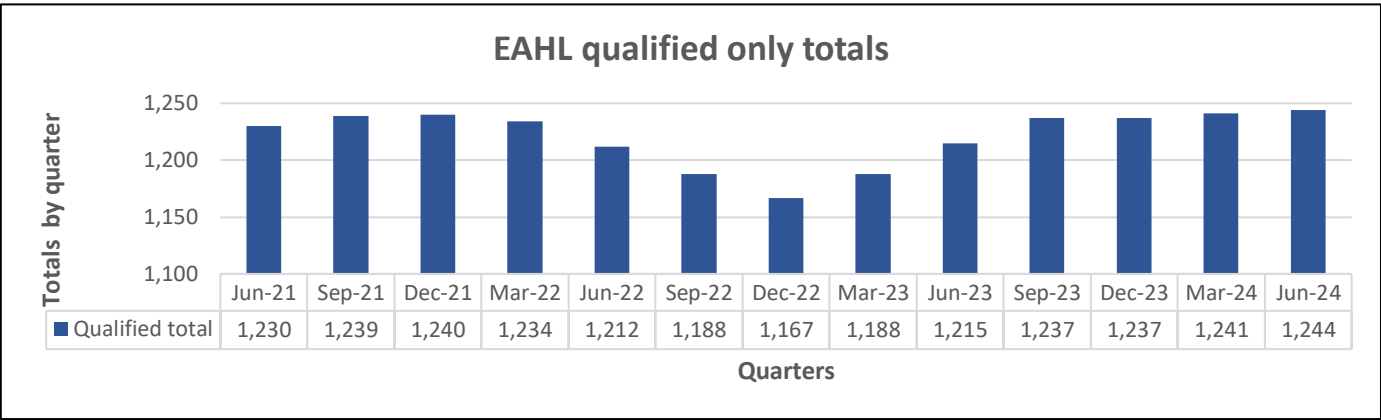
The Board would like to preface this section of the report by saying the FPIB’s permit data is difficult to fully and comprehensively analyse and identify true changes and trends primarily because of two reasons:

Firstly, new individuals and companies are continuously entering the permit scheme, and secondly, established individuals and companies sometimes exit it once their permit has expired, meaning permit numbers can bounce up and down. Because of this we do not have the benefit of a large database to work with and extrapolate.

At the close of the 2023-2024 financial year, the FPIB had a total of **1,628 permit holders**. This included Extinguishing Agent Handling Licences (EAHL), Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisations (EATA), Halon Special Permits (HSP), and Special Circumstance Exemption (SCE). A permit scheme of this size means that any trends are generally less pronounced than what would be evident in larger permit schemes, with a broader database.

Breakdown of different licence types

EAHL – qualified persons

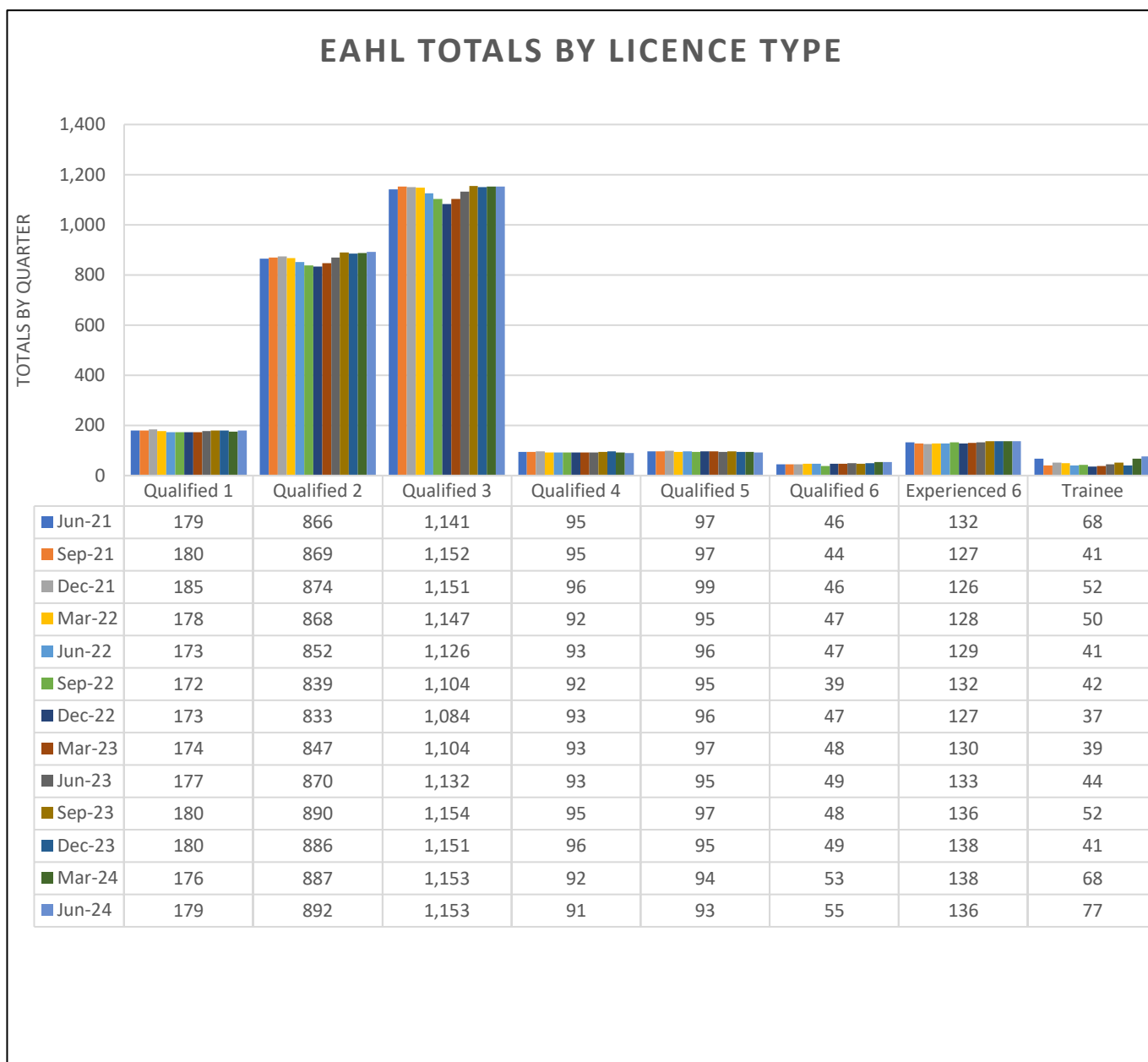


As seen in the above graph, the number of individuals holding a EAHL – qualified persons, slightly increased throughout the course of the 2023-24 year.

The Board believes the consistency of numbers increasing is attributed to the Field Engagement team completing their Permit Condition Checks (PCCs).



EAHL totals by licence type



As seen in the graphs above, EAHL – qualified persons 2 and 3 remain the most popular licence types, while the other remaining licences make up a smaller portion of the overall number of permits in our database.

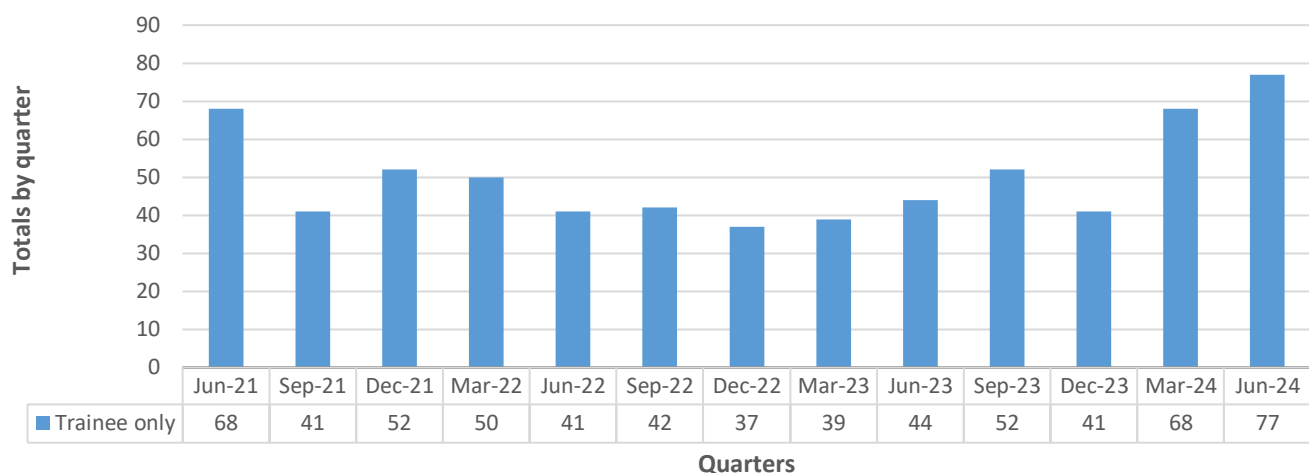
EAHL – qualified persons 2 and 3 will always be the most commonly acquired licence type in our permit scheme, as they entitle a technician to undertake the most common skills and sought-after services, such as fixed system installation and decommissioning (2) and fixed system testing and maintenance (3).

As can be seen across the other licence categories, permit numbers remained virtually the same with very little fluctuation besides trainee licences, which we will be elaborated on further in the report. The lack of change to these permit numbers also likely indicates that there is not as much appetite from fire protection employers to have their staff trained in units of competency relevant to the licence categories outside of EAHL – qualified persons 2 and 3.

As an example, a company holding an EATA may not need to get a member of its staff licensed under category 4: recovery, reclamation, fill and recycling because they buy direct from a licensed supplier that does that process and has the cylinder(s) sent straight to the end-user.



Trainee Licences

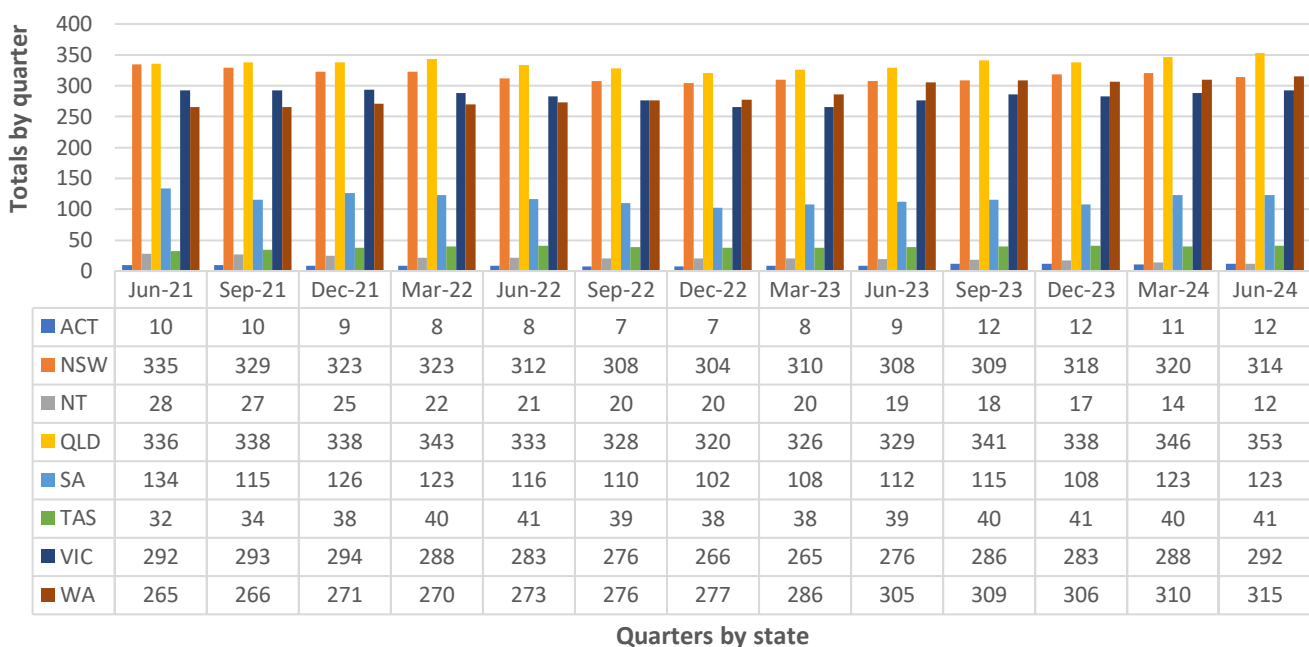


A trend that has emerged throughout this past financial year and one the Board were able to clearly identify, was a substantial increase in the number of individuals holding a trainee licence, compared to that of previous financial years.

An increase of 33 trainee licence holders between the 2023-2024 financial years can be identified, an increase that is likely a result of the Field Engagement team completing their PCCs and educating technicians, as well as an increase in the Board's overall engagement with the industry. The proposed strategic activities to increase trainee numbers has been successful, as noted by the above numbers.

Whilst this growth has been pleasing to see for the Board, it is important to acknowledge that the number of trainee licence holders in the FPIB database will continue to fluctuate year on year as trainees transition to an EAHL – qualified person's licence.

EAHL holders by state

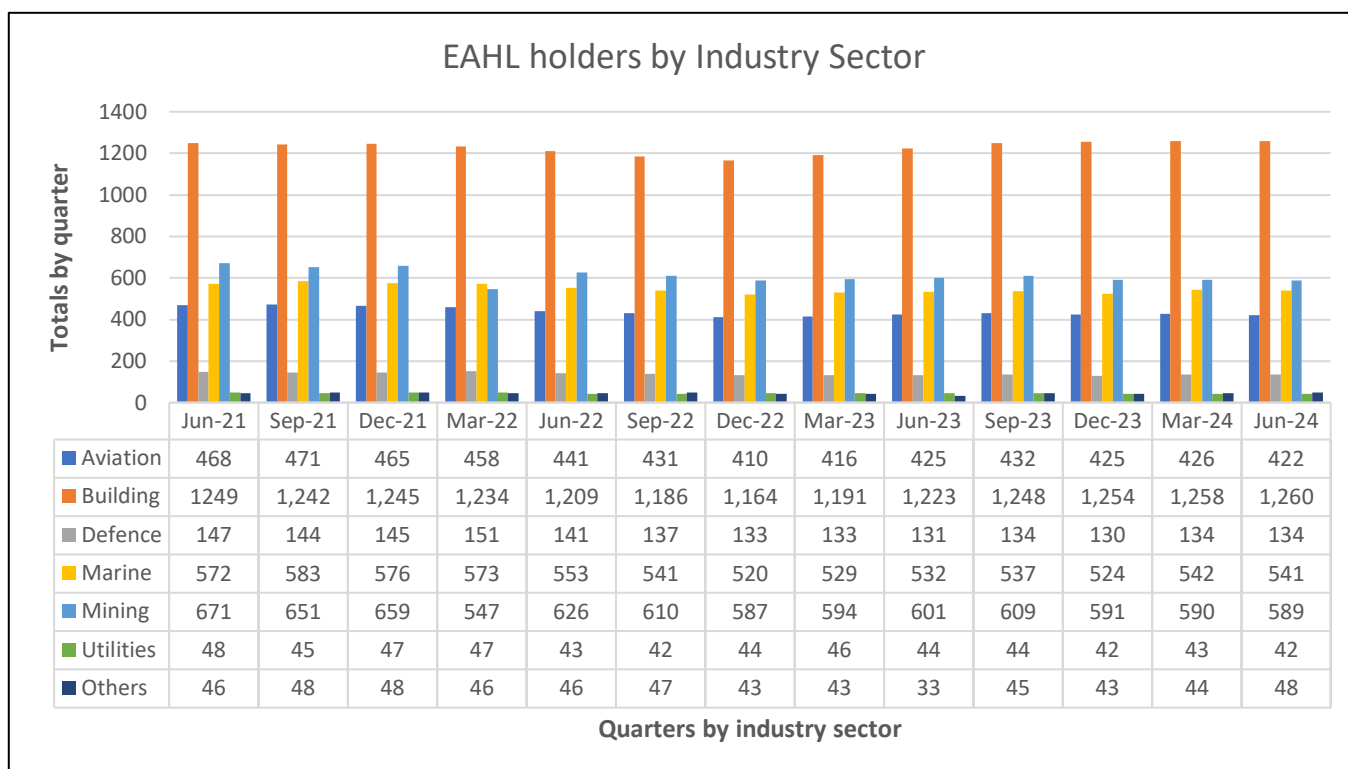


As seen in the graph above, the number of EAHL holders in the smaller states and territories remained fairly stable throughout the 2023-2024 financial year.

The increase in EAHL holders was most notable in Queensland. The Board is very pleased to see this, due to the interaction in relation to dual licensing requirements between the Board and Queensland Building QBCC, as well as the Board's increased presence through the Field Engagement Program.



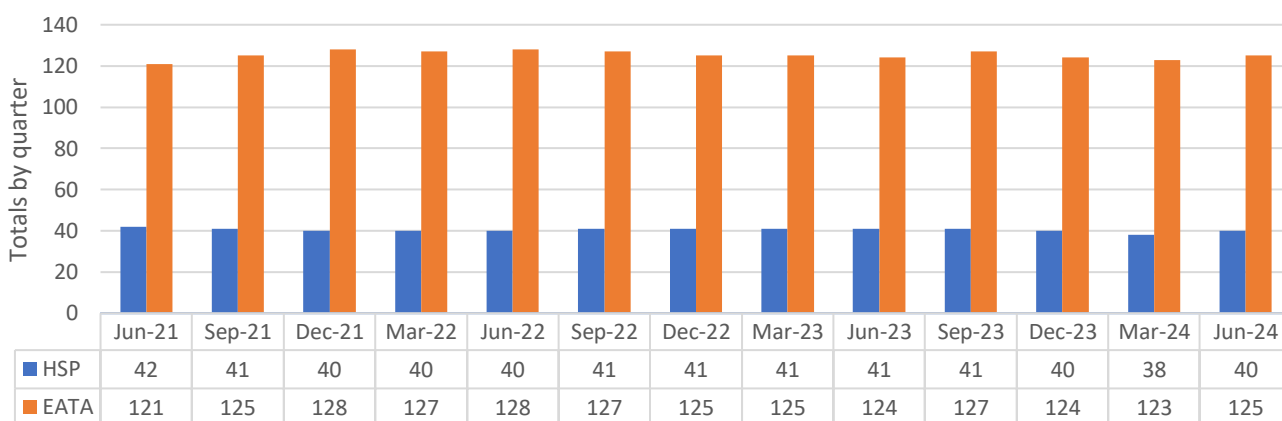
EAHL holders by industry sector



Looking across the different fire protection industry sectors, the number of EAHL holders remained fairly consistent with no data here that points to any trend of note.

Of consideration however, is that these numbers are not entirely accurate because technicians can be listed as working across multiple sectors by their employer, when they may in fact only work in one or two.

Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisations and Halon Special Permits



As seen in the above graph, the number of companies holding an EATA and HSP has remained very steady over the course of the year. The Board do not expect the number of HSPs to increase significantly moving forward as halon is rarely required outside of aviation platforms. This figure may in fact drop substantially when a suitable alternative to halon is discovered and widely adopted in the future but for now, it is expected for these figures to remain steady with only subtle variations.

In the coming years the board will monitor with interest if the number of companies holding an EATA dips once HFC quotas are further reduced as part of the phase-down. With less agent such as HFC-227ea available for import, some companies may decide not to renew their authorisation once it has expired as they no longer see the value in trading agent.



Applications received in comparison to previous three years

Renewals

Financial year	Total renewal applications received	EAHL	EATA	HSP	SCE
2021-2022	488	432	40	16	0
2022-2023	416	379	33	3	1
2023-2024	286	249	21	16	0

New and Expired New

Financial year	Total new applications received	EAHL	EATA	HSP	SCE
2021-2022	146	131	13	1	1
2022-2023	178	168	9	1	0
2023-2024	219	205	10	1	0

The Board believes the increase in new and expired new applications could be attributed to the Field Engagement team completing their permit condition checks.

Expired/Deactivated

Financial year	Total expired/ deactivated applications received	EAHL	EATA	HSP	SCE
2021-2022	187	165	8	4	0
2022-2023	171	158	13	0	0
2023-2024	154	140	10	4	0

The Board has seen a decrease in expired/ deactivated permits, which can likely be attributed to the Field Engagement team completing their permit checks.

Some permit holders may go through a period of not needing a licence for their work, but often they are no longer in the industry, retired or deceased.



A forecast of permit activity based on the analysis to identify risks and potential treatments to ensure the ongoing effective delivery of the permit scheme.

In forecasting permit activity moving forward, the FPIB has no reason to believe that any risks will emerge that could impact the ongoing effective delivery of the permit scheme.

EAHL, EATA and HSP renewals due 2024-2025

2024	EAHL	EATA	HSP	SCE
July	28	9	7	0
August	48	10	2	0
September	30	6	3	0
October	40	8	3	1
November	45	3	1	0
December	52	1	3	0
	243	37	17	1
2025	EAHL	EATA	HSP	SCE
January	42	2	0	0
February	63	4	0	0
March	76	5	1	0
April	38	2	0	0
May	60	5	0	0
June	71	3	1	0
	350	21	2	0
Totals	593	58	19	1

Forecasting ahead to the 2024-25 financial year, the FPIB's licensing team are set to have a very busy year processing permit renewals, with 593 EAHLs due to be renewed between July 2024 and June 2025. Overall, there are 671 licence renewals to be completed in the 2024-2025 financial year.

While 671 renewals is a large number, the FPIB's licensing team have proven they are more than capable of managing this workload.



Field Engagement Program

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board (the Board) successfully launched the Field Engagement Program in the later stages of the second quarter of 2023-2024.

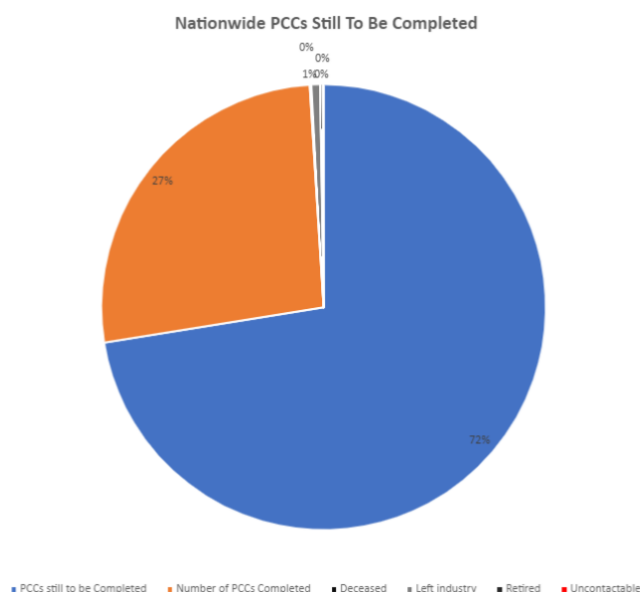
For the first time in the Board's history, there is now a dedicated field team who are responsible for meeting face-to-face current permit holders across the Board's three permit categories of Extinguishing Agent Handling Licence (EAHL), Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisation (EATA), Halon Special Permit (HSP) and conducting Permit Condition Checks (PCCs). Combined, this is more than 1,500 individual permits.

In the late second quarter of the year, the Board began building its new team, with the appointment of a Team Leader of the national field engagement program. Following this, two Field Officers were hired, based in New South Wales and Queensland. Lastly, the team is supported by the Field Engagement Support Officer. The main mission of this small team is to capture and complete PCCs with almost the entire database by the end of the 2023 - 2025 contract and it has been highly pleased with its progress so far.

Completed Permit Condition Checks

At the conclusion of the 2023 - 2024 financial year, the Field Engagement team has achieved over 400 individual permit condition checks, completed over four and a half months of operation.

As seen in the Graph 1 below, the team has completed permit condition checks of 26% (435) of all permit holders currently on the Boards database to the end of the 2023-2024 period.

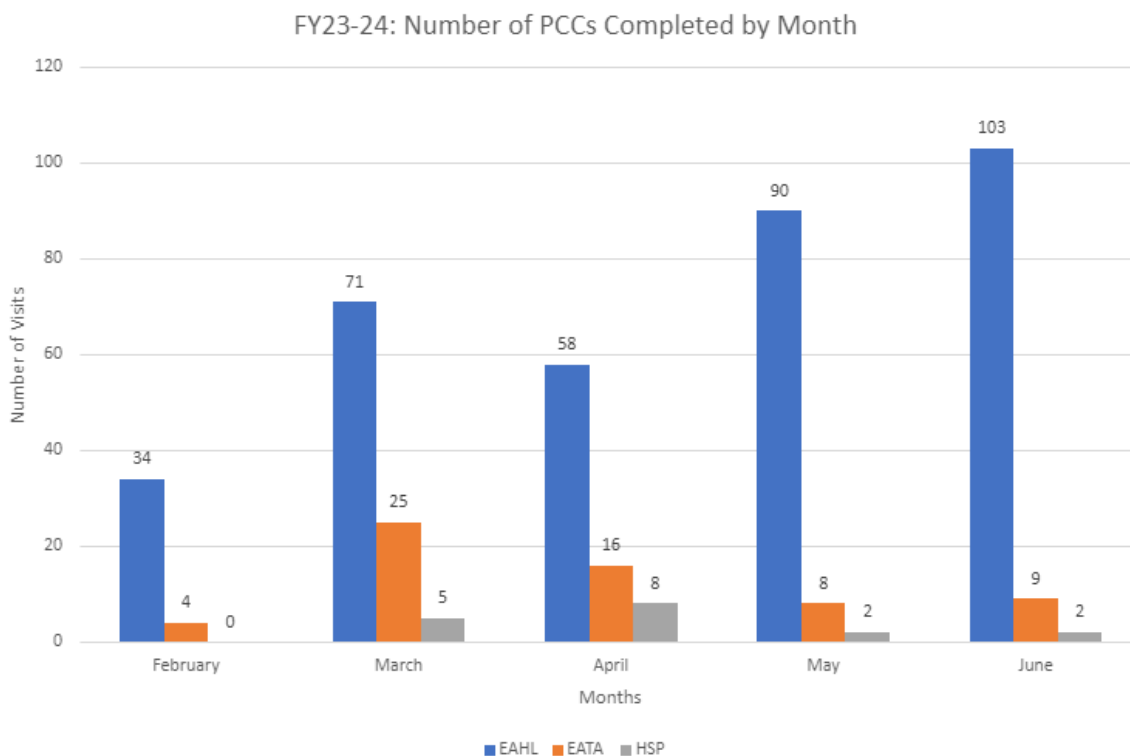


Graph 1

These numbers are a significant achievement considering the program has only just launched, the size of the team, the nature of our permit holders' locations, and the work they conduct, that their locations are dispersed across the country and that they not concentrated in one spot. For example, some permit holders arrive at their office in the morning unsure of where they will be conducting work that day.



Graph 2 below is a breakdown of the total monthly permit numbers the Board completed for the 2023-2024 year to date:



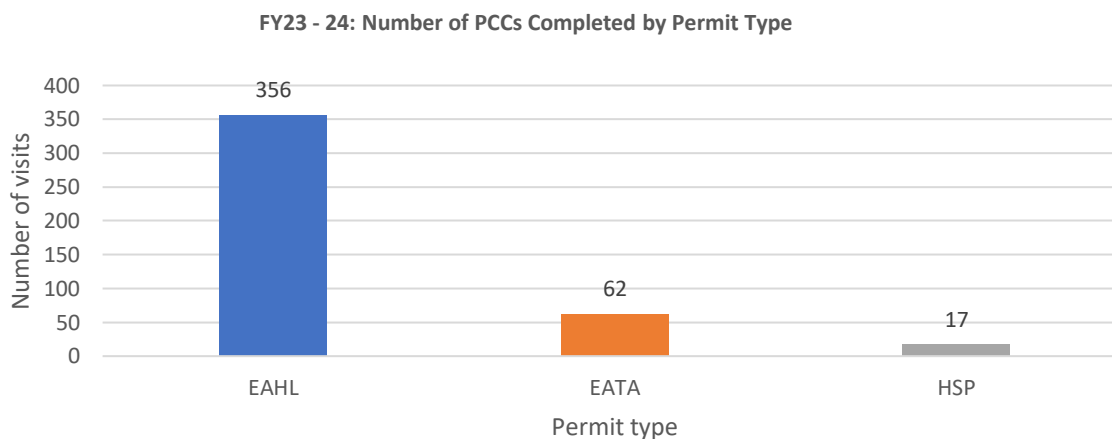
Graph 2

The Field Engagement Team's utmost goal is to complete an average of 100 PCCs per month. This was achieved in March, May, and June.

There will be months where the team may achieve as high as 120+, but other periods, such as holiday season (December, January, February) where these numbers will likely not be achieved, due to large amounts of the industry using this time to go on leave.

When analysing the monthly average so far, the average is currently sitting at 85 PCCs per month. However, removing February (when the team was not fully operational), and analysing data from March-June, the average rises to 95 PCCs per month. If the team can keep the average sitting in this position, the Board will place itself in a great position to achieve its objectives. The Board notes that three Field Officers completing 1500+ visits is an extremely difficult achievement but remains determined to meet this goal.

The 435 completed PCCs that have been across all three permit types (EAHL, EATA, HSP), and can be seen in Graph 3 below:



Graph 3



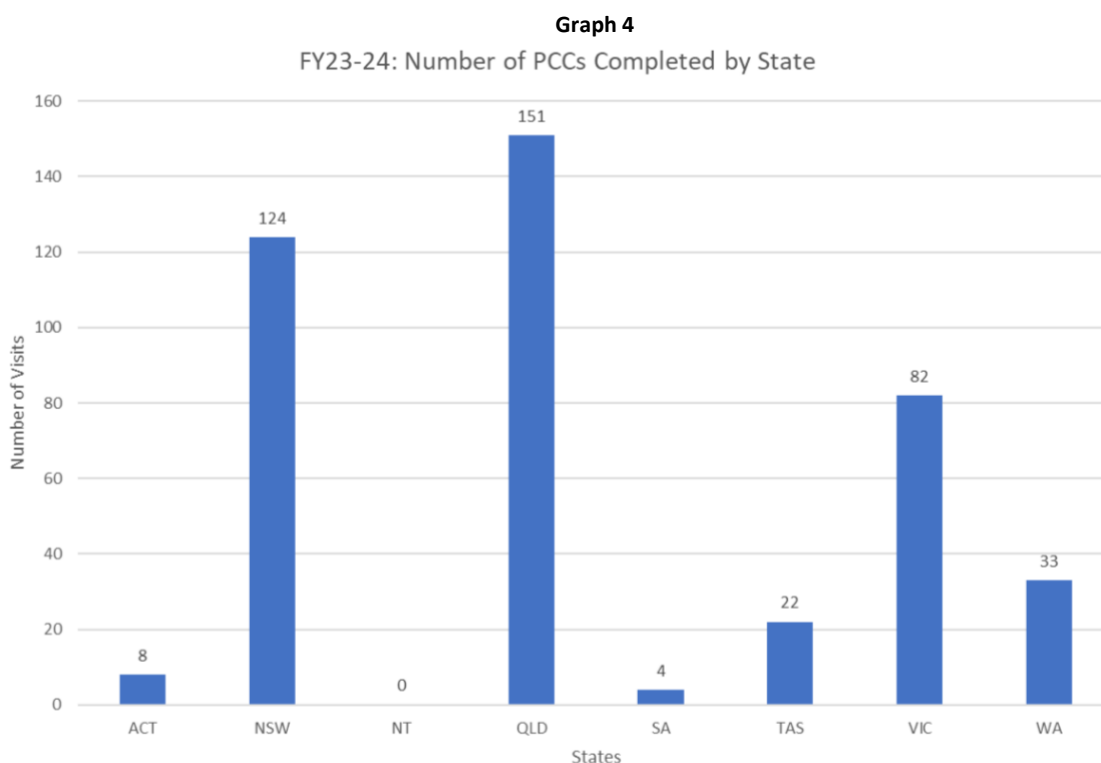
The “EAHL” permit type is the Board’s most common licence type by a significant margin, therefore it is no surprise that the large majority of completed PCCs have been in that category. A large number of companies that hold an EATA and/or HSP will also have EAHL holding employees, so the team is able to complete multiple permit types during the one visit.

The Board’s field team has also found that if a company has many EAHL holders (5+) then it is hard to capture all of these individuals in one visit, and often requires a second visit. This is due to an employee being sick or called to respond to a remote site at the last moment.

This demonstrates the importance of strong pre-planning, and the ability to create a working relationship with the appropriate person at a company, to then assist in ensuring that all the appropriate staff are on site at the same time.

As this program is new, the Board doesn’t always have an established relationship with the primary company contact, and this pre-planning can take up a lot of resources and time. As the program continues, there are examples of this becoming an easier task as we build stronger relationships. For example, the Board continues to see that the industry is talking to one another, therefore after the completed permit checks with a number of permit holders, others are expecting a call from the Board and are already starting to plan for a visit.

Lastly, the Board’s permit condition checks have been completed across large amounts of the country already. Checks have been conducted in all States and Territories except for the remote Northern Territory, which only has a small number of permit holders (17 total), and a visit is currently being planned for August/September where the team expects to complete almost all of them.



As shown above, the majority of permit checks have been completed in our two biggest permit holder databases of NSW and QLD. The Board’s Field Officers in those regions have been able to penetrate companies who hold large amounts of permit holders working at one site and have been able to successfully arrange group visits. The Board has facilitated this by advising the company to let the Board visit and set up in an office “toolbox day”, and then the Field Officers conduct a one-on-one meeting with the permit holder.

This has been very effective, with one visit to a company in Queensland having 17 permits completed in one day.

So far, most of these States and Territories have been equally receptive to the Board’s program, however, the nature of work and remoteness in Western Australia has proven more difficult to connect with this state. The Board acknowledges that it has previously struggled to connect with permit holders in WA, and this is primarily due to its remoteness and the nature of employment there. For example, a large percentage of the permit holders in this state (51%) work in the mining sector. These permit holders will typically complete a two week on, two weeks off roster.

When they’re working, they fly to a remote mine site, where the Board’s team cannot get easy access. Naturally, when permit



holders are home, there is little interest in completing a permit condition check. To confound this, our east coast-based Field Officers are only doing fly-in visits and may also be visiting when the permit holder is out on site, and therefore can't meet permit holders at home. Logistically this has proven difficult, but the Board is confident we can keep building working relationships which will assist our activities there.

In mentioning the above difficulties, there have been some highly constructive meetings with WA permit holders, and one example of this was a visit to the Paull & Warner Resources group (PWR) outside Perth in April. PWR representatives hosted the Board around headquarters, demonstrating to the Board how many resources they were putting into training in WA, and their great work replacing ODS/SSG agent with cleaner alternatives.

They have a real passion for training their staff and reducing emissions.

This visit led to the Board awarding PWR with the 'Outstanding Ozone Practice' award, which they happily received in person at the Fire Australia conference in front of a crowd of 600 industry stakeholders.

Following this event, PWR's award was also broadcast across social media channels, and the award has been mentioned in industry newsletters and magazines, creating great visibility for both the Board and of the great work PWR is conducting.

Industry reception

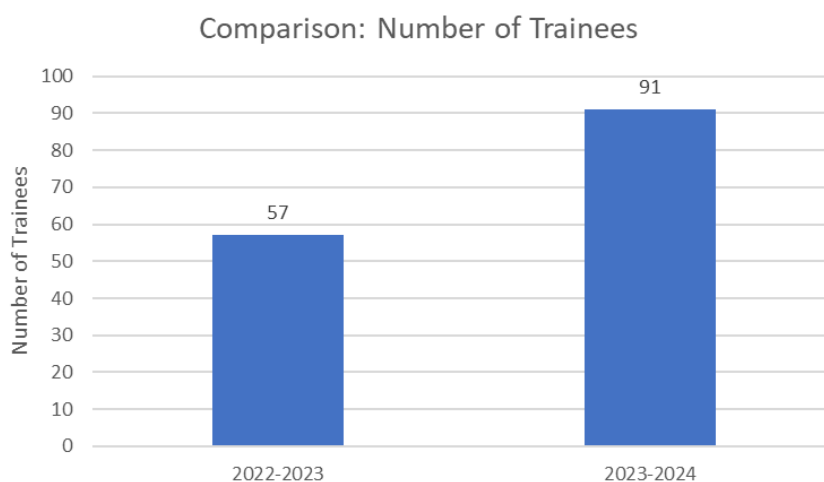
For the overwhelming majority, the field team has been extremely well received in the field by our permit holders. The Board have been thrilled by the enthusiasm of the majority of permit holders meeting us in the field.

There is a lot of passion in the industry, and the feedback the team has received has all been positive, as the FPIB have successfully built a field presence and shown that we do care about our industry. The team appreciates this from our permit holders, and its keen to reward them by reducing non-compliance, avoidable emissions, and by listening to them when they raise their concerns in any areas of their work. Above all else, the Board are educators and we have had large amounts of outcomes arising from the permit condition checks conducted.

Occasionally there has been some hesitation when the team speaks to permit holders regarding organising visits and the board is acutely aware that for some businesses this can seem as burdensome on productivity. However, once it has been explained and the permit holder has been reassured that the Board will work with them to ensure the least amount of disruption, show understanding and that the Board are here to help, they will tend to drop their suspicions and work with the Board.

Effect on permit numbers

The Board has managed to capture a significant amount of new permit holders into the permit scheme, with one area of very strong growth being the "Trainee EAHL" licence. We currently have 91 permit holders holding a "Trainee" EAHL, rising from 57 in the 2022-2023 Financial Year (Graph 5).



Graph 5

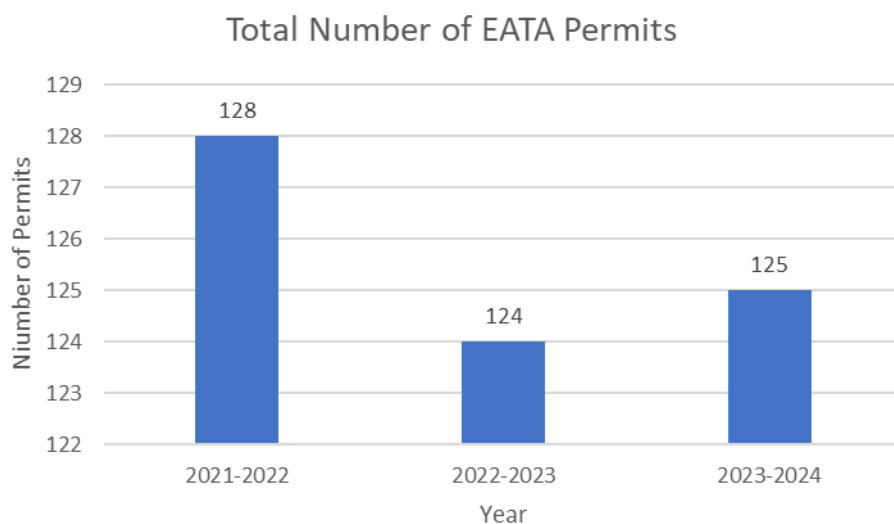
Pleasingly, the power of the face-to-face engagement has encouraged permit holders to raise issues and topics that they may previously have not bothered about or not been aware of. Many permit holders have been unaware about the trainee licence type, and how if they have a Qualified individual at the company who can provide supervision, then the trainee licence can be obtained



whilst the individual enrolls in training. From the discussions had with these permit holders, the field team believe a large amount of these trainees will go on to complete training and obtain EAHLs, due to the large amount of education they have been providing.

Other permit types haven't seen as much growth compared to the trainee licence, and this can be attributed to it being a longer process to complete training for an EAHL, compared to Trainee licence which is almost instant.

In the Below in Graph 6, EATA numbers continue to be consistent with previous years.



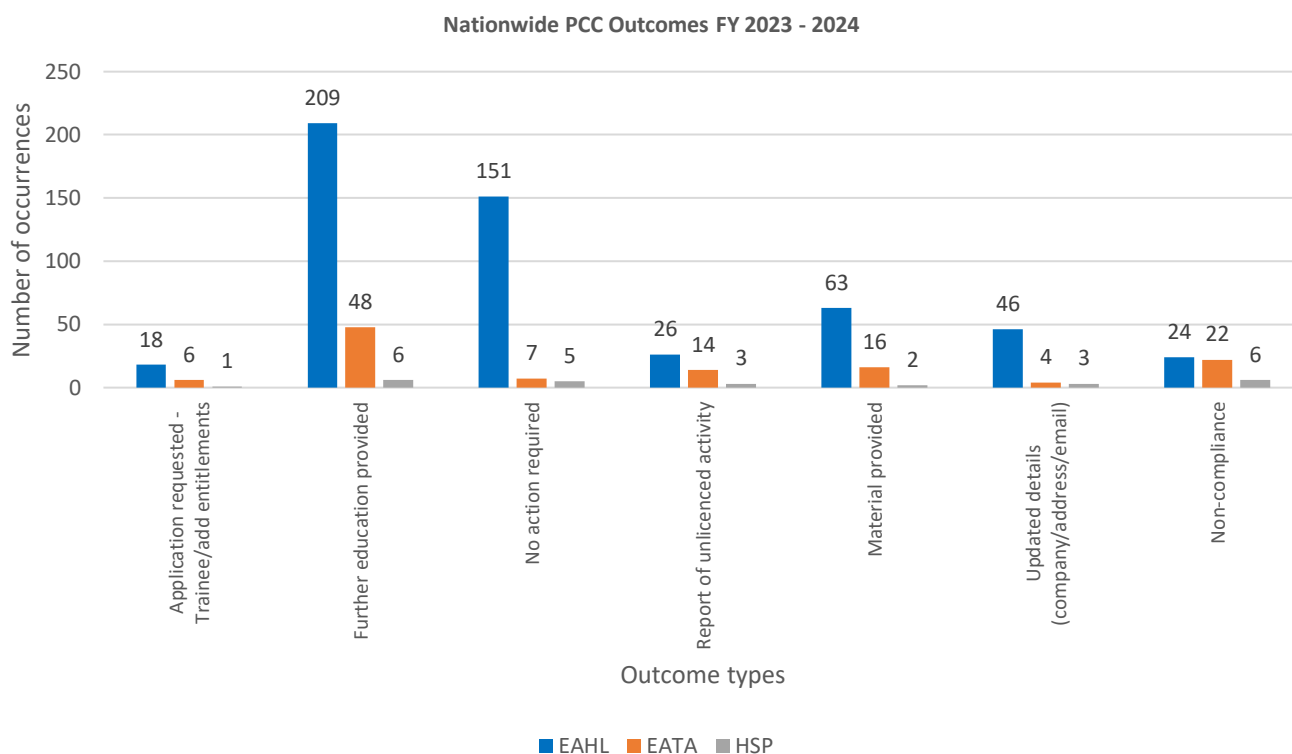
Graph 6



Outcomes from the Permit Condition Checks

Face-to-face engagement is invaluable and yields much stronger results than when engaging with someone over phone or email. Permit holders are much more open when engaging in person and this has enabled the field team to obtain instant and constructive results.

As seen in the Graph 7 below, there are quite often multiple outcomes emerging from a permit condition check. The program throughout the 2023 – 2024 Financial Year found 517 individual outcomes, in 435 completed permit condition checks, with almost 1.2 outcomes per PCC.



Graph 7

For example, the Board is finding its Field Officers are regularly having to provide discharge reporting education, safe disposal education, whilst also updating details, and receiving information of unlicensed activity from a single engagement.

163 permit checks conducted throughout this period resulted in no outcomes, which means roughly one quarter of all permit holders are aware of their conditions, and best practice responsibilities. To say the Field Officers have been providing extensive education would be an understatement.

The more common repeat outcomes can be seen below:

- Discharge reporting responsibilities
- Usage reports not being submitted
- Non-compliance (ranging in severity)
- Training and permit type queries
- Unlicensed activity tip-offs

From the above list, “discharge reporting education” is quite common, with the Board regularly providing education relating to discharge reporting on more than 11% of occasions.

The Board’s Field Officers are discovering that permit holders do not know where to find the discharge report form, and then quite often they query whose responsibility it is to report (indicating that no one wants to admit to the responsibility).



Non-compliance investigations – industry tip-offs

The Field Program has also been widely beneficial for non-compliance investigations and industry led tip-offs. The program has yielded some interesting and sometimes concerning information surrounding individuals or companies operating without the appropriate fire protection permit.

At the conclusion of each permit condition check, the Board's Field Officers will ask the permit holder if they know of any unlicensed activity in the industry. This has seen some people inform the Board instantly, whilst some are more hesitant to do so. The field team understands that permit holders can be concerned of their name being leaked to industry, however, the Board assures everyone in the industry that tip-offs can be completely anonymous and incredibly important in ensuring compliance and best practice is upheld.

From the moment the Field Program launched, the Board began receiving multiple tip-offs and to the end of the 2023-2024 FY. Investigations timeframes can range from one day, to 60 days and the Board places a high value on ensuring that any cases are deeply investigated and only refer cases to the Compliance Branch at DCCEEW for further action if it is believed to not be possible to be resolved first.

As the program continues to visit more permit holders, it will remain to be seen just how much non-compliance is discovered throughout the industry. When the program launched, the tip-offs were provided to the Field Officers quite quickly, but this has since slowed down.

The Board's approach to non-compliance is to always engage with the suspected company or individual first and provide education and guidance on how to correct the issue. Recommending for further action is always a last resort. The Board fully believes that most of incidents of non-compliance can be resolved by working together, and it remains committed to using strong communication and providing clear and direct advice to resolve any issues.

Future plans

Due to its overwhelming success, the Board intends to continue running the Field Engagement program as it is currently being operated. The team is highly pleased with the results achieved so far, and believe the Board is achieving the maximum results from its output.

The Board have large visits planned within WA and SA in Q1 2024-2025, where we expect to complete 45 permit checks in a week or more, and it looks forward to the results of the trip.

September will also see the Board venture into the Northern Territory for the first time while the weather is ideal, with another visit to South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT due for completion in the second of half of 2024.

The Board is excited to see what it can achieve over the coming year and are extremely passionate about continuing to educate our permit holders, whilst reducing avoidable emissions.



Discharge Review

The Board focuses on discharge reporting across all sectors and is continuously reminding industry to ensure they are reporting any discharge incidents – either accidentally or with the purpose of extinguishing a fire and following best practice.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, there were a total of 46 discharge incidents reported to the FPIB.

- Mining – 5
- Aviation – 20
- Building and Facility – 11
- Marine – 2
- Warehousing – 2

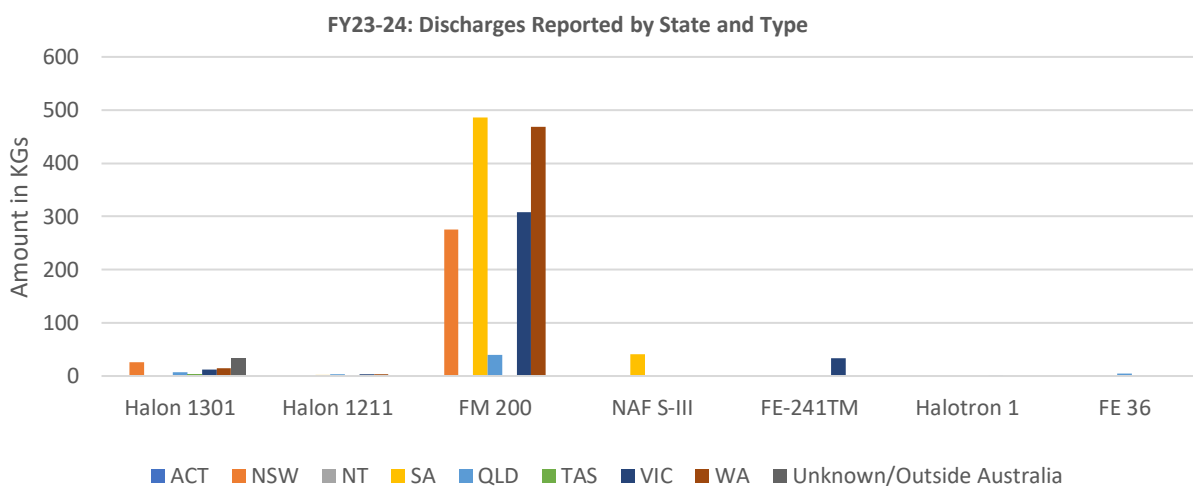
Whilst the Board is happy with this reported number of discharges, we know that actual number of discharges that would have occurred in the industry is likely to be much higher. The FPIB continue to encourage permit holders to report and are pleased to report that 12 of the above discharges reported, were reported as a direct engagement during a PCC.

In regard to the most reported amounts and type of scheduled agents discharged over the past year, the most discharged agent was FM 200, at 1578.8kg. The Board is not surprised by this, as FM 200 continues to be one of the leading replacements for Halon. The most FM 200 was reported to be discharged in Western Australia and South Australia, which is also unsurprising, as most of these discharges came from the mining sector in these states.

The most common reported reason for a discharge, was again, human error with 17 incidents reporting this. In a close second were actual fires with 11, and electrical and/or mechanical failures at ten. Human error will always be an issue, but it is an issue that can be reduced with the right practices in place and increased education. Working with those who have reported this reason is always of utmost priority for the Board.

Of note for the Board is a slight drop in overall discharge reporting, with 55 discharge incidents reported to the FPIB in the previous financial year. Whilst the Board will always be pleased to see less discharges occurring, it is hard to determine if this due to less discharging or less reporting.

The below graphs detail the recorded discharges across each sector and their causes.



As shown above FM200 is the most reported scheduled agent involved in a discharge that is coming from South Australia and Western Australia. This is mostly due to a high-level of mining activity in both states.



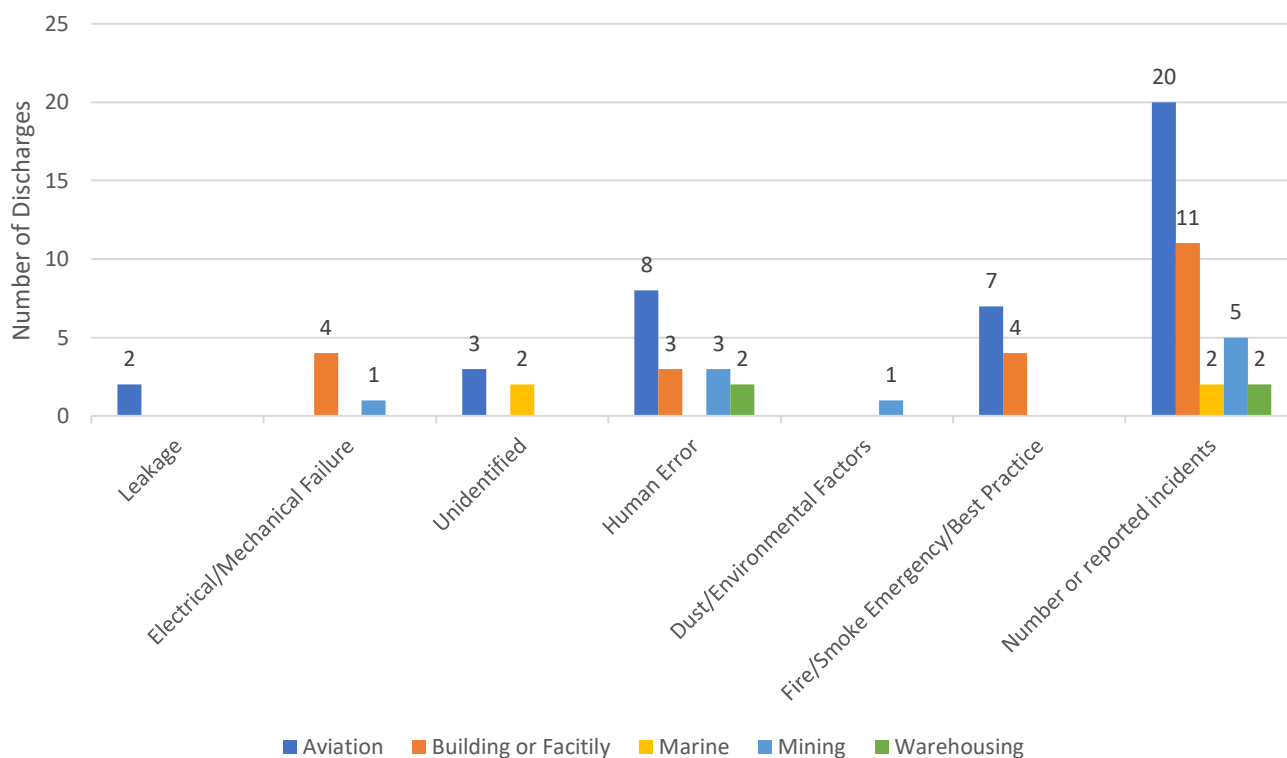
Discharges reported by each industry and the type of scheduled agent (kgs).

	Halon 1301	Halon 1211	FM 200	HFC-236	NAF S-III	FE-25TM	FE-241TM	Halotron 1	FE 36
Aviation	86.87	9.148						0.23	
Building or Facility			1110						
Marine							33.8		
Mining			441.3		41				
Warehousing		2.9	27.5						
Totals	94.37	12.048	1,578.8	0	41	0	33.8	0.23	5.2

As shown in the above graph and table, FM 200 sits as the highest reported scheduled gas involved in a discharge. These reports have come from the facility management, mining, and warehousing industry. Halon 1301 is then the next highest reported agent, which usually occurs due to a fire threat aboard a plane where safety is paramount.

Reasons for discharges and which industry.

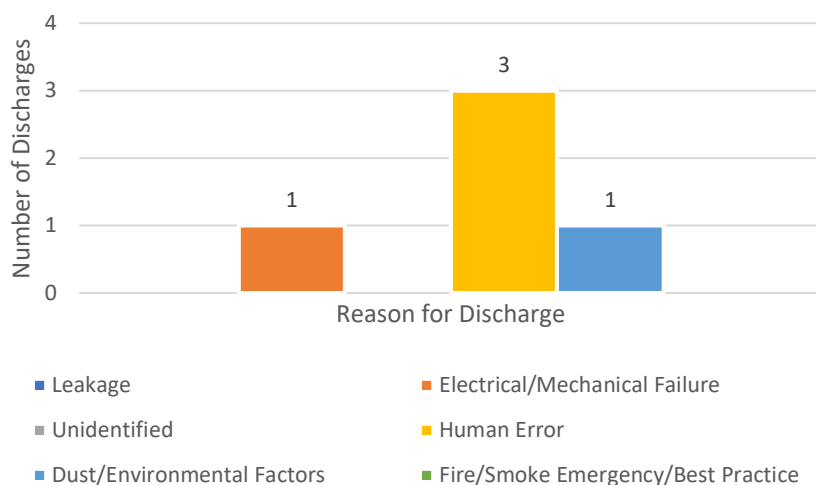
FY23-24: Discharges by Sector and Discharge Reason



As shown above, human error sits as the highest reported reason for a discharge, followed by an actual fire event or best practice. The Board will always take human error very seriously as it is evident that the discharge could have been avoided with right education and practices in place.

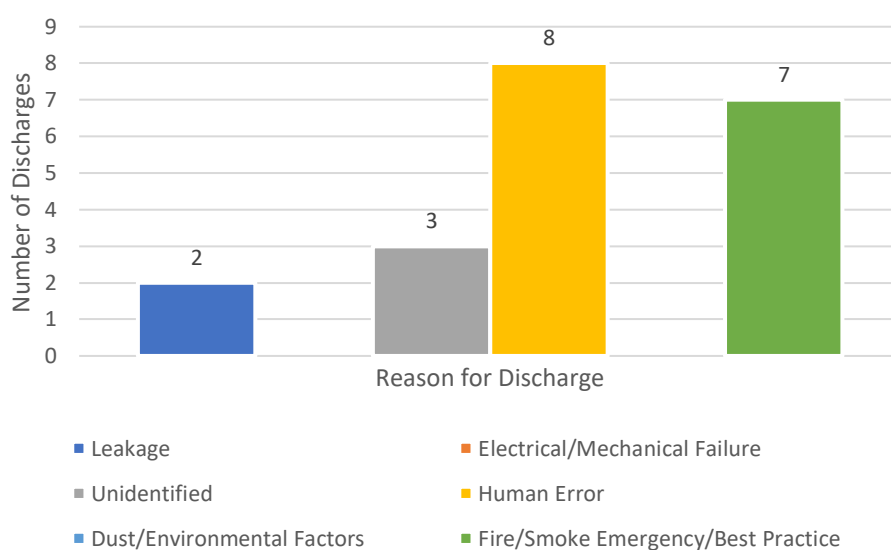


Mining



In the last year there have been five reported discharge incidents in the mining sector. Of these, human error were the main listed reasons, followed by electrical/mechanical failure, and leakage. Last year there were 16 reported discharge incidents, whilst more discharges are likely occurring then being reported, the Board is still confident that our education to those who reported last year aided in decreasing this year's numbers.

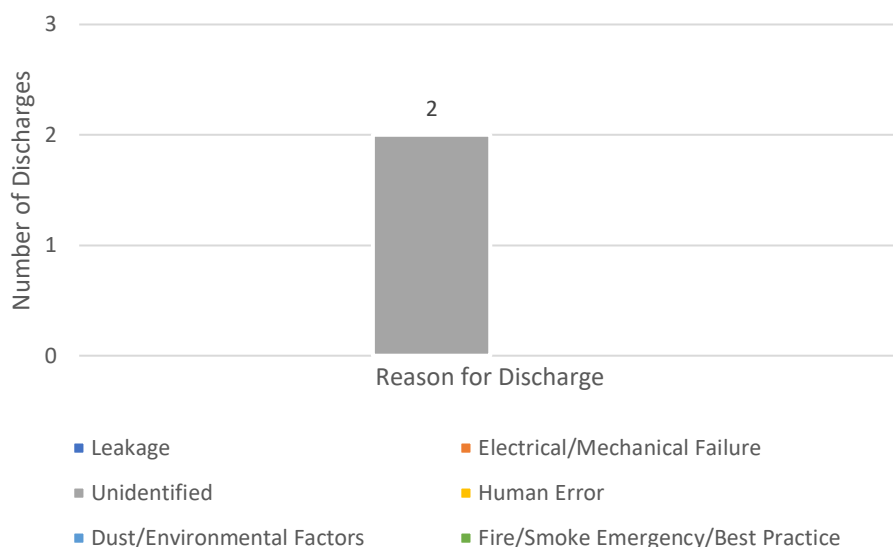
Aviation



During the 2023-2024 financial year there were a total of 20 reported discharges within the aviation industry. The most common cause of these discharge incidents was again human error, very closely followed by fire/smoke emergency/best practice. Aviation accounts for majority of 'best practice' incidents and are therefore a lawful discharge, as aircrafts are unique and certain factors cannot always be controlled. As safety aboard an aircraft is paramount, fire safety measures will always be put in place as soon as needed.



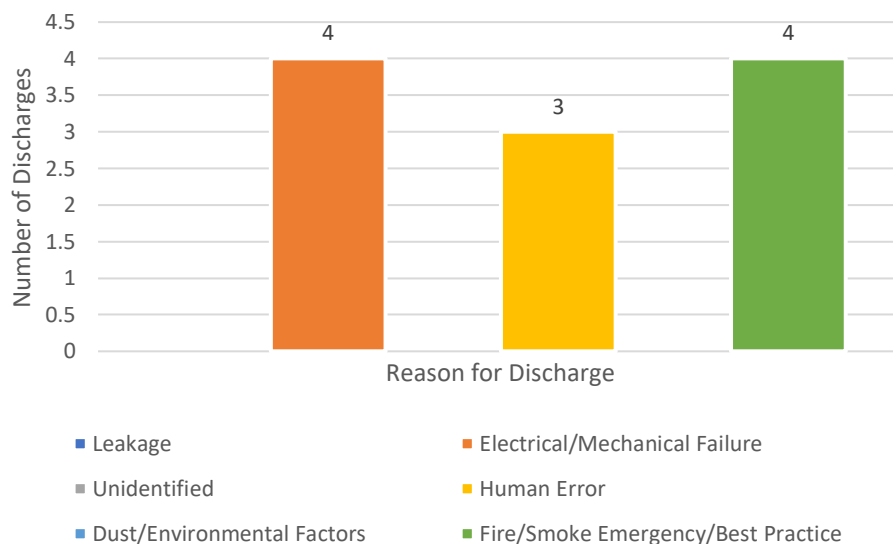
Marine



As shown above there were only two discharges reported to the Board from within the marine industry during the financial year. The two reported reasons were 'unidentified' as they generally discovered the discharge after the event occurred. This usually happens when a member of the public is unaware of the scheduled agent on their boat and therefore incidents such as leakage can occur.

Moving forward, the Board proposes to look more closely at how it can best engage and educate the marine industry. A number of boat users and workers within this industry are not permit holders and are unaware of the damage scheduled gases can do to the environment and are also in need of better knowledge and awareness of how to adopt better maintenance practices.

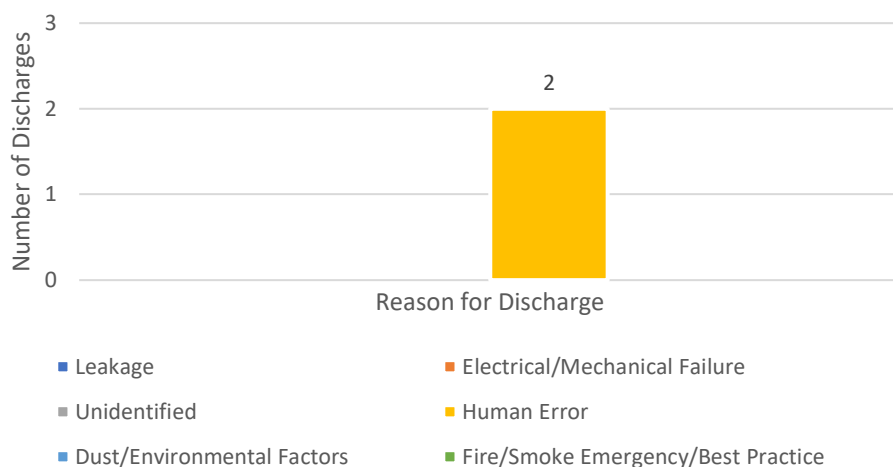
Facility Management



The facility management industry reported a total of 11 discharge incidents, which is a large jump from the previous year when only four reports came from this sector. The Board believes this increase in reporting could be due to the increased engagement with the Facilities Management Association of Australia. This also includes an article in their newsletter about the importance of reporting discharges, as well as the Board's increased presence out in the field through the Field Engagement Program.



Warehousing



'Warehousing' is a new industry category that reported discharge incidents to the Board during the financial year. As shown above there were only two discharges reported to the Board and the two reported reasons were 'human error'. The Board was pleased to have captured a new industry within discharge reporting and were eager to work with them to help reduce their 'human error'.

Takeaways

In summary, the Board is pleased with the increase in reporting coming out of the facility management sector in the last year and believes that our presence at industry specific conferences, and reaching out to these sectors directly has had some impact on these discharge reports being submitted.

Of the reports made to the Board, there has been higher levels of human error. The Board continues to take this seriously and will continue to work together with permit holders to decrease their incidences of human error related discharges through education and engagement.

The Board's Field Officers have proven highly valuable in contributing to permit holder's understandings of how to report a discharge and why it is important to do so. Through site visits, Field Officers have been able to provide advice that it is essentially a service providers responsibility, i.e., the EAHL holder, with the Board's Field Officers, demonstrating to the permit holder the process of finding the form on the website, and how to fill it out. The team have seen instant results with this, with a total of nine reports coming directly from companies that had never submitted a discharge report prior to the program's launch, but have now since having a permit condition check completed. This supports the Board's view that the industry does not supply as many reports as incidents occurring, but that for the most part, they are willing to comply.

The Board continues to look on with interest to see if there will be an initial increase in discharge incident reports submitted over the next financial year. This will be key, in being able to truly identify whether the program is having an effect in this area. The Board suspects it will and believes this could particularly be the case from the mining and marine sector, where we have seen an ongoing impact with education and engagement.

The Board understands that suppliers were previously not placing pressure on their clients to submit reports when presenting for refilling, but from a previous engagement we had, we received a commitment that this will be corrected. We have also had multiple permit holders inform the Board that they didn't believe it was necessary to report a discharge of a scheduled agent if it had occurred because of an actual fire event.

This request to suppliers has already yielded three discharge incidents from the mining sector that the Board believe would likely not have been reported previously.



Training

Throughout the 2023-2024 financial year the FPIB engaged face to face with multiple RTOs involved in delivery of training units of competency relevant to the FPIB permit scheme.

Overall, the Board is extremely pleased with the training provided in the industry. All RTOs that were visited proved their dedication to a high-level of training that prepares their students to work with scheduled gases in the field. Looking ahead, the Board see it as a vital activity to continue to engage with the training sector to ensure education provided is matching industry needs and aligning with the permit scheme's core goal of reducing emissions.

In the Q4 of the past Financial Year, The Fire Protection Industry Board conducted a comprehensive survey targeting permit holders to assess the quality of registered training programs within the industry. This initiative underscores the Board's commitment to enhancing training standards and ensuring that practitioners are well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. The Board would like to acknowledge all recent trainees and members of the industry who participated and shared their insights on their training experiences. The feedback gathered from permit holders was invaluable; in not only highlighting areas for improvement but also reinforcing the many high standards and exemplary training opportunities currently on offer by leading Registered Training Organisations across the country. By valuing and incorporating these contributions, the Board aims to foster a robust training framework that supports the overall safety and efficacy of fire protection measures within the industry and is always open to hearing more from our industry on how training can be improved.



Industry Engagement

Throughout the 20223-2024 financial year, the Board concentrated heavily on working in the industry engagement space as a key course of action in better understanding current industry practice and continue educating industry on compliance and the permit scheme.

As with previous years, four key areas of industry were identified as being critical to engage with:

- Mining
- Facilities Management, Building, and Construction
- Aviation
- Maritime



Mining

The Fire Protection Industry Board has been dedicated to engaging with the mining industry to ensure best practice and compliance within this sector throughout the 2023 – 2024 financial year.

Over the past year, the Board has engaged with various stakeholders in the mining sector to facilitate increased understanding of the fire protection division of the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Regulations 1995* (the *Regulations*) and the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* (the *Act*) and the importance of compliance with this legislation. Beyond compliance, key areas of focus for the Board have been facilitating awareness in best practice when handling scheduled gases, and how to avoid accidental discharges on mining sites.

In the early months of the financial year, the Board commenced working on a strategic project to collaborate with the mining industry to determine the extent of the use of FM200 within the industry. This involved identifying a list of mining companies, developing a communications package, and contacting the environmental teams of the targeted companies to gather necessary information. The Board successfully identified 14 individual mining companies for this project.

Despite reaching out to these companies, the Board unfortunately did not receive any responses to their initial communications and follow-up emails. It sought to overcome this challenge by engaging members of the Industry Advisory Group (IAG) to extend their reach but has thus far been unsuccessful in making connections to core businesses. The Board puts this challenge down to the large size and organisational structures of most mining organisations, which makes it more challenging to connect with individual employees. These companies have also tended to be quite sensitive regarding the hand-over of intelligence and data, making it harder for the Board to gain information and a clearer understanding of industry behavior. Despite this, the Board remains resilient and has explored alternative approaches to establish direct contacts within the industry.

The Board has overcome these challenges through the attendance of sector-related conferences. Attending mining-related conferences has played a vital role in connecting with industry at a face-to-face level, to nurture professional relationships and industry connections, and better foster awareness of best practices in the use of scheduled gases within the industry and the importance of this to reduce emissions. The conferences the Board attended within the 2023 and 2024 financial year included the AUSSIM: International Mine Health and Safety Conference (Western Australia), and The Queensland Mining and Engineering Expo (Queensland). Beyond these, the Board has scheduled attendances in the upcoming financial year of 2024-2025 with attendance at the WA Mining Conference (Western Australia) and AUSSIM: Underground Operations conference (South Australia). These conferences have proven considerably useful and insightful for the Board and provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange knowledge and insights on the latest changes to the *Regulations*. By participating in these conferences, the Board can stay informed about new developments, technologies, and strategies undertaken at an industry level and further understandings of how to comply with the *Regulations*, whilst furthering its brand awareness. This exchange of information ultimately helps in enhancing best practice, promotes better environmental practices, and further protects the ozone and environment.

Further to this work, the Board has also carried out important communication campaigns that engage with this sector through both physical collateral that has been distributed at the attended conferences, as well as digital content shared across the Board's social media channels Facebook, LinkedIn, and e-newsletter GasBag. Each of these campaigns received positive levels of engagement and organic reach. Pleasingly, the Board also composed an article on fire safety, best practice and Ozone responsibility on mining sites that was published in magazine *Mining Australia*. Being published in an industry magazine like this is a fantastic result for engagement in an industry that can be difficult to connect with directly.

Moving forward into the 2024 – 2025 Financial Year, the Board looks forward to delivering on strategic projects that engage with the mining sector. This will include additional campaigns highlighting the importance of reporting discharges made within the industry, intelligence gathering and reporting of the sector, and a larger project which seeks to gain information of FM-200 in the industry. The work of the Field Engagement team will also continue to play a highly important role in the success of data gathering from this sector and will help the Board form a greater understanding of where the industry is at in its use of scheduled extinguishing agents and overall understanding of compliance. Whilst there continues to be an ongoing risk that major mining companies are resistant to sharing data or are not responsive to the Board's requests for direct face to face contact, the Board is prepared to continue to pursue other opportunities, through its 2024 - 2025 conference plans and extended communication activities.



Aviation

Throughout the 2023 - 2024 financial year, the Board primarily engaged with the aviation sector through face-to-face interactions conducted by our field engagement team and then digitally through our own communication channels.

In December, an article was published discussing the use of scheduled gases in the aviation industry. This article emphasised best practices and how to remain compliant with regulatory permits.

In the first and second quarters of 2024, the Board undertook several crucial visits to various operators and suppliers within the aviation sector, focusing on ensuring compliance with regulations regarding Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) and Synthetic Greenhouse Gases (SGG) management. These visits included major aviation and commercial carrier entities, with each meeting contributing to the enhancement of safety protocols and regulatory adherence within the industry.

One visit to a significant jet base was exceptionally fruitful. Following discussions, the entity revised its internal policies and procedures, leading to an updated Risk Management Plan that incorporated measures for surrendered agents. The engagement highlighted a previously overlooked condition of the permit, demonstrating the effectiveness of the visit in fostering compliance awareness. Overall, the management of halon and risk mitigation displayed by this entity was impressive, with all stock safely stored and accurately reported.

Another operator within the group similarly benefited from the Board's visit. Notably, they promptly established new facilities for surrendered agents and appointed a new employee to oversee permit management. This employee received a thorough introduction to the relevant permit conditions and showed enthusiasm for learning about internal processes. Following the visit, the operator promptly reported a discharge incident, indicating increased awareness and responsiveness to regulatory obligations.

The Board's first face-to-face visit with a major distribution and manufacturing center identified areas for improvement in halon management. Although safety protocols regarding stock management were satisfactory, gaps were found in quarterly usage reporting and the precise location of their current Risk Management Plan. The reason for the shortcomings in meeting some permit conditions appeared to stem from the recent departure of a long-term employee responsible for managing the permit. This gap led to some deficiencies in knowledge and awareness of the permit and its requirements. The Board provided feedback and set a timeline for corrective actions, which we believe will be met without further issues, and reflects the cooperation of the entity in addressing identified deficiencies.

Another site-visit conducted by the Board's field engagement team showcased exemplary processes and stock management practices. With a significant number of holders of relevant licenses among the staff, this entity demonstrated a commitment to compliance. Staff were aware of the conditions of their licenses, and the visit facilitated extra hands-on education on discharge reporting protocols. There was one instance of non-compliance identified that is now being addressed, with one of the staff members discovering they were operating outside their license entitlements. Upon consulting with the Field Officer, they identified the need to undertake additional qualification activities. Shortly after this visit, the employee contacted a Registered Training Organisation and enrolled in the required units to complete. This engagement reinforced for the Board the importance of face-to-face communication and education within the industry.

The Board's interactions with operators and aviation suppliers in the first quarter of 2024 underscored the significance of personal engagement in ensuring regulatory compliance and promoting industry-wide safety standards. These visits not only identified areas for improvement but also facilitated mutual understanding and collaboration. As the aviation industry navigates evolving regulations and operational challenges, maintaining close relationships and proactive engagement remains essential for upholding safety and environmental stewardship. The Board thanks each of these companies for its willingness to engage with the Board and proactiveness in ensuring their compliance.



Beyond these efforts, in April 2024 the Board launched a campaign emphasising the importance of engagement with the permit scheme tailored for the aviation sector. This campaign was disseminated through various social media platforms and demonstrated relatively high levels of engagement. Then, in June 2024, the Board outlined the scope for the Aviation 'Intelligence Gathering' project. This initiative aims to enhance the Board's understanding of the current landscape of the aviation industry, covering compliance, education, best practices, challenges faced, attitudes toward cleaner alternatives, and any other relevant data gathered.

Looking ahead, the primary project for the 2024-2025 financial year in the aviation sector is a significant project on intelligence gathering. This strategic initiative will deepen the Board's understanding of the industry, including data analysis concerning compliance levels, the current use of scheduled gases, industry education, appetite for cleaner alternatives, and emerging trends. This knowledge will help the Board better collaborate with the sector in achieving our goal of reducing emissions.



Facility Management

The Fire Protection Industry Board continues to be dedicated to supporting the Facilities Management and building sector in upholding best practice in the use of scheduled gases and ensuring compliance with the *Regulations*.

The Facility Management Association (FMA) continues to be an important stakeholder when engaging with the facility management sector of the permit scheme and the Board has been pleased to continue fostering its fruitful relationship with the organisation throughout the past financial year. In December 2023 the Board were thrilled to have an article published in their member newsletter, 'Snippets', with the central theme of the article encouraging facility managers to report any discharge of a scheduled agent to the Board.

Beyond this, the Board had another opportunity to engage with FMA and their audience by attending the Facility Management Association's FM Expo in late February 2024. It was an excellent afternoon where the Board had the opportunity to engage with a range of individuals in the facility management sector. It provided the perfect opportunity to meet with our industry colleagues and further conversations on effective fire protection in the building industry and awareness of the fire protection industry permit scheme requirements.

Looking ahead the Board will again engage with FMA in the new 2024 – 2025 financial year with a communique that focuses on encouraging best practice when out in the field in order to reduce accidental discharges, whilst also planning to exhibit at the Ideaction.24 conference.



Marine

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board has taken significant steps to engage with the maritime sector throughout the past financial year to promote best practice and compliance. Our collaboration with the maritime sector is driven by a shared commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.

In early January of 2024, the Board initiated an email campaign targeting 175 marine surveyors identified on the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) website. The purpose of this communication was to elucidate the role of the Fire Protection Industry Board in upholding compliance standards related to fire suppression systems' installation and maintenance within the maritime industry and the prevention of scheduled gas discharges. While the response rate was modest, our primary goal of raising awareness about the FPIB's role in ensuring compliance has been fulfilled.

Beyond this effort, the Board has continued to pursue other opportunities through communication campaigns that have sought to facilitate awareness around the fire protection permit scheme and the importance of compliance in the maritime industry. This has included digital campaigns, across Meta, LinkedIn, and the GasBag as well as media and industry specific publications. Each article was written by the FPIB Communications team with a focus on maritime specific fire safety and best practice, and its significance in protecting the Ozone layer. Pleasingly for the Board, this work has led to the publication of articles in two important stakeholder magazines, including the Australian Institute of Marine Surveyor's (AIMS) industry newsletter *ShipShape* and *Shipping Australia*. These accomplishments demonstrate the Board's dedication to reaching a wide range of audiences and showcasing our expertise in the use of scheduled agents, ozone protection and best practice in compliance across diverse industries. Both articles targeting the maritime sector have already been published in either print or online and continue to be a valuable way of reaching workers and permit holders within this industry.

In addition to the digital and media campaigns run by the Board, one of the key ways in which we have engaged the maritime sector is through the Board's National Field Engagement Team Leader, who has attended targeted workshops and training sessions. This work has been significant in the Board's efforts to increase awareness about the permit scheme, and why more broadly, best practice when using scheduled gases is important for the environment and Ozone Layer. This has primarily taken place through engagement with AIMS and a number of coordinated sessions that have been designed to educate stakeholders in the maritime industry about their obligations under the fire protection permit scheme, and best practices for compliance. By fostering an open dialogue and sharing knowledge, we have been able to empower workers within the maritime sector to take proactive steps when handling scheduled gases, to ensure personal environmental responsibility.

The Board continues to look forward to working with the maritime industry in the upcoming financial year. A key area of opportunity is the recent expansion of the Board's Field Engagement team, who look forward to delivering more intelligence and data on the use of scheduled gases and compliance in the industry through further site-visits and permit condition checks. An ongoing risk for the Board, however, is that similarly to the mining industry, the industry is remote. This has previously, made it somewhat challenging to connect with permit holders and business in this industry. Despite these challenges, the Board is prepared to continue to pursue other opportunities for engagement. This includes utilising its networks within AIMS, whilst also seeing potential to connect through government agencies such as the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. The Board believes connecting with this agency could be greatly beneficial in connecting more with individual stakeholders in the industry and furthering its understandings of how the industry is working with scheduled gases, and rates of compliance. Moving forward, the Board expects to continue working on this strategic project, with the delivery of an additional communications campaign based on accidental discharges in the industry to be delivered by May 2025, alongside a report on the intelligence and data gathered within this sector a month later.



Industry Wide Engagement and Communication Activities

Training and Promotional Materials

Training and promotional materials play an important role in the Board being able to effectively engage and educate the fire protection industry. During January 2024 the Board developed a promotional material plan and then a separate training material plan. Both plans reviewed current materials, identifying any gaps, and planned future materials to be developed. In total throughout the 2023-2024 financial year, the Board created many new training and promotional materials, all of which have been distributed throughout various means, either as handouts at conferences or digitally through targeted campaigns.

A highlight of these new materials included a series of animated educational clips developed by the Board at the beginning of 2024 and premiered at Fire Australia 2024. In total three clips were developed, including:

A [Welcome to the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme \(Short Version\)](#) a longer version of the [Welcome to the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme video](#) and a [Preventing accidental discharge of scheduled extinguishing substances video](#).

These clips have been disseminated across the FPIB social media channels and website, and have been extremely well received by the industry. The 'Welcome to the Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme' video has now been included in the 'Welcome pack' that is sent to permit holders when they first obtain a licence. Then the 'Preventing accidental discharge of scheduled extinguishing substances' is sent to those who report a discharge when appropriate. All videos are excellent additions to the Board's collection of training and promotional material and will continue to be utilised in the upcoming financial year.

Conference Engagement Program

The Conference Engagement program has been crucial for the Fire Protection Industry Board throughout the 2023 – 2024 financial year as a keyway of facilitating meaningful interactions between stakeholders, fostering awareness with a face-to-face 'on the ground' presence, and driving positive outcomes for the industry.

The Board began its work in this area during January 2024, completing an inventory of all educational and promotional materials to be used for conferences and events. This inventory ensured all areas were covered for the conferences to be attended, which commenced in February.

The FPIB started the program by attending the Facilities Management Association Exhibition on Thursday 22 February 2024 in Melbourne. Attending this event turned out to be very successful for the Board as a way of further engaging with stakeholders working within the facilities management industry and shared a range of promotional materials that highlight best practice when using scheduled gases. The Board looks forward to furthering this work and engaging with the Facilities Management Association again in the new financial year by attending the FM Ideaction.24 conference to be hosted in the second half of 2024.

In April, the Board continued its work engaging with the mining industry in Western Australia by attending the AUSSIM: International Mine Health and Safety Conference. Engaging in a face-to-face capacity with representatives from companies based in Perth and wider Western Australia was particularly valuable given the challenges the Board has faced in engaging with this sector and state in previous years. Engagement in this state has been difficult in the past, and compliance in Western Australia has needed improvement, therefore increasing the Board's presence has been highly important. Significantly, through its presence at the International Mine Health and Safety Conference, the Board was also able to highlight its work on the Field Engagement Program, expanding its awareness amongst key industry stakeholders within this sector.

At this conference Board representatives spoke in depth to about 200 festival attendees across the conference's two days and distributed a high number of promotional collateral, which included mining specific related fact sheets, flyers and general FPIB fold outs. With attendees working across a range of roles and organisations, these flyers were collected by a diverse range of professionals including technicians, environmental managers, mid-to-senior level managers, and managers directly involved with hands-on equipment. Importantly, the Board was also able to convey key information in a face-to-face capacity to convey important information regarding discharge reporting, Ozone health, and broader compliance with the permit scheme.

In May 2024, the Fire Protection Industry Board reached a significant milestone by participating in the Fire Australia 2024 conference on the Gold Coast. The team, consisting of four members, including the Executive Officer, two Field Engagement representatives, and one Licensing Coordinator, was present throughout the two-day event. The Board showcased a 3x3 booth at



the exhibition, where we collaborated with a graphic designer to create a visually compelling display featuring a variety of FPIB merchandise and informational materials for visitors. During the conference, the Board launched two animation campaigns focusing on the permit scheme and best practices for preventing discharges. These videos, along with a piece highlighting the success of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the Ozone layer, received significant engagement from attendees. The representatives engaged in conversations about the permit scheme requirements and highlighted the importance of protecting the environment, particularly regarding the Ozone layer. A notable success was the onsite EAHL Permit Condition Checks conducted at the conference, emphasising best practices in handling extinguishing and Ozone depleting substances. In addition to this, the FPIB Executive also delivered a presentation highlighting the global leadership role of the permit scheme in safeguarding the Ozone layer and promoting environmental stewardship within the industry.

Engaging with industry professionals at conferences has been instrumental in expanding awareness and building partnerships within the field. The direct interactions with industry workers using scheduled gases and key leaders has enhanced the Board's presence, and commitment to compliance and best practices. Notably, the Board's brand awareness has been boosted through merchandise distribution, and its attendance at these conferences has attracted new subscribers to GasBag, whilst furthering understanding of industry compliance. Overall, the conference engagement program has been a success, reinforcing the Board's dedication to industry engagement and continuous improvement.

Proactive Training Engagement

The Board throughout the 2023-2024 financial year ensured to continually engage with the fire protection training industry to promote fit for purpose training. In March 2024 the FPIB sent out a six-question survey to 1,846 individuals in the industry, with the purpose of determining how permit holders felt about the training they received and if it was fit for purpose. The survey reflected to the Board a largely positive outcome that those who are handling scheduled substances are feeling confident in their knowledge upon entering their industries with limited gaps in knowledge.

The overall findings suggests that the quality of training is high, but that people continue to learn in different ways. Balancing the different ways people learn with the specific requirements of the training is a challenge that needs consideration. More hands-on, frequent, and updated content delivery were all suggestions put forward, and the results from these surveys have been shared with all relevant RTOs.

During the financial year the Board engaged with all 19 RTOs within the fire protection training industry. This engagement was mainly through face-to-face visits conducted by the FPIB's Field Engagement Officers, with updates provided to RTOs where necessary on the permit scheme, as well as further education. Overall, these engagements further proved to the Board how dedicated each RTO is to providing excellent training.

In the upcoming financial year of 2024-2025 the Board will continue to engage both our permit holders and the relevant RTOs to ensure training is fit for purpose and aligns with permit scheme. This will be enhanced by engaging with Skills Australia to conduct any necessary consultation.

GasBag

The GasBag newsletter has been a vital component of the FPIB communication strategy throughout the 2023 – 2024 Financial Year, delivering essential information and updates to stakeholders (primarily permit holders) in the industry. One of the remarkable successes of the GasBag newsletter has been its ability to consistently maintain high open and click-through rates as demonstrated through the graphs below. By consistently maintaining high open rates, the GasBag newsletter has ensured that permit holders are continuously accessing important information around the permit scheme, and this increased exposure has been instrumental in improving awareness about critical issues related to compliance, and best practices concerning the handling of scheduled gases. Whilst the Board continues to be pleased with the levels of engagement it has reached through social media campaigns, the GasBag and other email campaigns has proven again to be the most effective way of communicating digitally with our permit holders and other relevant stakeholders.

Moving forward, the Board will be publishing the GasBag twice quarterly, rather than once a quarter. The board continue to believe that there are substantial benefits to increased and sustained engagement with our industry and that this form of communication is vital in facilitating increased knowledge, education and knowledge of best practice and compliance.



FPIB Website

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board's website www.fpiib.com.au plays a vital role in communicating with permit holders. The 2023 – 2024 financial year witnessed the Board's website be continually updated and refined.

A major update was creating the '[Field Engagement Program](#)' page which has served as a great overall resource that introduces the program, introduces the team, allows permit holders to request a visit, and provides extensive educational resources.

Every new GasBag continues to be published on the website, serving as an archive of all previous editions, that is readily available for readers.

CRM, Portal, and App Development

In late 2023 the Board embarked on the development of a new Client Relationship Manager. The process was started by developing a thorough scope of capabilities needed of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. It was determined that the FPIB would need a comprehensive database system that tracks permit activity in detail, a portal and app for permit holders that allowed for more engagement and interactivity, and a system that has the ability to integrate with the Field Engagement Program in order to elevate it. The FPIB considers the new CRM to be an integral tool for where all permit holders and stakeholders can engage with the permit scheme in one integrated platform.

From this scope the Board then reached out to multiple companies who may be able to assist in the development of the project. Newpath was determined to be the most suitable candidate to deliver on the project by both the Board and the Department and the software that was decided on was Dynamics 365. In January 2024 the Board, the Department, and Newpath had a two-day workshop to build out the requirements of the project. From this the project was broken down into four phases:

- Phase 1: Foundational CRM
- Phase 2: Portal
- Phase 3: Auditing App
- Phase 4: Customer App

Since the workshop in January the Board has been working with Newpath on predominantly phase 1. There have been weekly knowledge transfers, progress and status meetings, weekly user acceptance training, and providing intelligence upon request.

Phase 1 is well underway and looking ahead for the 2024-2025 financial year all phases will be completed through a waterfall approach. The Board is very pleased with the progression of this activity and is eager to adopt the new way of working that will come with this system. There are of course risks that come with this project including data loss and a lack of 'buy-in' or resistance from permit holders when changing systems. As the project will witness a new portal developed to eventually go live for use amongst permit holders, the Board is readying for major changes to how permit holders interact with the FPIB website in future. The Board acknowledges that the development of the portal marks a significant shift in how its stakeholders have engaged with the website and permit scheme previously. However to help mitigate this risk of resistance to change, the Board is developing an extensive communication strategy to bring permit holders on board with this new system. This strategy will involve education around how to use the portal, as well as highlighting the benefits to doing so. The Board is also extremely confident that the high quality of work that has been into the project will create a highly user-friendly and accessible experience for permit holders, that is sure to be highly benefit for all parties. The Board sees the benefits of the portal significantly outweighing the risks and strongly believes that the portal will allow for numerous new activities to be conducted through the website, as well as previous activities to be enhanced through interactivity and simplified processes.



Conclusion

In the context of the large scope of work that was undertaken by the FPIB throughout this financial year, the Board truly feels it is evident the strides it has taken towards achieving our ultimate goal of reducing emissions of scheduled extinguishing substances. The nationwide implementation of the Field Engagement Program has been a major highlight of the financial year and one that the Board has seen many successes from.

Through a combination of communicating with industry stakeholders, collaborating with the department, and being guided by the Industry Advisory Group's expertise where necessary, the Board have made valuable inroads in understanding industry trends and issues. This means there is now a greater scope to plan future engagement and education activities in areas they are most required.

The Board can look back at all the work that was undertaken this year and be proud of our efforts as a collective. From the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water's increased investment in the permit scheme, the Board have been able to reach new levels of engagement with industry, ensure compliance, and gain further insights into the industry it is working alongside.

All that the FPIB has achieved this year would not have been possible without the continued support of both the Department, the Industry Advisory Group and its permit holders. The relationship between the FPIB and the Department continues to grow stronger each year and the Board looks forward to working together to ensure the ongoing effective delivery of the Fire Protection Permit Scheme.

Finally, the Board looks forward to the year ahead and extends its sincere gratitude to all who have met and worked alongside and engaged with the Board in good conscious throughout the past Financial Year. By understanding our obligations in using scheduled gases and by doing our utmost to uphold best practice and compliance, the industry is well placed to continue reducing emissions, protect our Ozone and safeguard the environment.



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