



Title: Strengthening Industry Capability through Mandatory CPD and Licensing Reform  
Submitted by AWCI Australia Ltd – CEO Simon Tengende

### **Executive Summary**

The wall and ceiling industry is at a critical juncture. Persistent knowledge gaps, recurring defects, and the rapid pace of technological innovation are exposing the limitations of current regulatory frameworks. These challenges are compounded by a regulatory environment that allows non-compliant contractors to continue operating, undermining quality, safety, and public confidence in the trade.

AWCI Australia calls for urgent reform—anchored in a mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) regime, a relicensing framework for contractors, and enforcement mechanisms that uphold the integrity of the industry. We submit this white paper in response to the Queensland Productivity Commission's (QPC) inquiry into productivity in the construction sector, urging that licensing, skills development, and regulatory compliance be recognised as fundamental levers for improving both industry outcomes and economic efficiency.

### **1. Industry Challenges: Knowledge Gaps and Compliance Failures**

The wall and ceiling sector has been historically under-regulated compared to other licensed trades, resulting in:

- Widespread inconsistencies in workmanship
- Non-compliance with NCC requirements and manufacturer installation guides
- Contractors continuing to trade despite legal or regulatory breaches.
- A lack of formal pathways for upskilling in new systems and technologies

These deficiencies contribute to project delays, insurance disputes, increased costs, and reduced productivity across the broader construction sector.

### **2. The Need for a CPD-Driven Licensing and Relicensing System**

The current licensing regime fails to ensure that qualified tradespeople stay current with evolving standards, regulations, and methods. We propose a two-tier reform:

#### **a) Industry led Mandatory CPD for all Licensed Contractors**

- CPD should be required as a condition of licensing.
- This means re-licensing as a condition of licensing.
- Training modules must include:
  - NCC updates
  - Fire-rated and acoustic system installation
  - Safety and compliance training
  - Emerging digital construction tools
  - Product-specific certifications
  - Industry engagement

#### **b) Government Relicensing Regime with Embedded Accountability**

- Contractors should undergo **formal relicensing every 3–5 years**
- Renewal contingent upon:

- Indexed CPD completion.
- Up-to-date insurance and business compliance
- No unresolved disciplinary actions or outstanding defects
- Compliance with WHS and contractual obligations

### 3. The AWCI Australia Five Pillars of Occupational Licensing

AWCI Australia's proposed national licensing framework is built on five foundational pillars:

1. **Clear Legislative Framework**  
Fit-for-purpose laws and regulations that align with how our industry works.
2. **Industry Standards and Quality Assurance**  
Technical benchmarks and workmanship expectations that lift the bar and create trust.
3. **Tailored Education and Professional Training**  
Training that's practical, accredited, and keeps pace with real-world conditions.
4. **Robust Compliance and Enforcement**  
Fair, transparent rules—and the means to enforce them consistently.
5. **Proactive Stakeholder Engagement and Industry Input**  
Licensing that is informed by those who do the work, every day.

### 4. Legal and Regulatory Gaps: The Need for Enforcement Reform

We draw attention to the ongoing issue of contractors who have been fined, sanctioned, or found guilty of serious breaches, yet are still allowed to operate under existing licenses. This undermines the system and penalises those who do the right thing.

A licensing regime without enforcement and consequence erodes productivity, disincentivises investment in training, and damages public trust.

### 5. Opportunity for Reform Through the QPC Inquiry

We commend the QPC for acknowledging the impact of licensing, procurement, and workforce regulation on construction sector productivity.

AWCI Australia urges the QPC to include in its recommendations:

- Mandatory CPD as a condition for all construction-related licenses
- Relicensing provisions to promote accountability and learning.
- Support for industry led CPD & training delivery, especially in specialist trades like plastering.
- Enforcement reforms that allow regulators to suspend or revoke licenses where there is a proven risk to safety or non-compliance with legal obligations.

### 6. Next Steps & Industry Engagement

AWCI Australia will be actively participating in the QPC's regional consultation session Gold Coast:

- **Gold Coast – 10 June**

We will present this position in person and offer further insights into the implementation of a trade-licensing framework tailored to the wall and ceiling sector.

To build a productive, professional, and future-ready construction industry, we must close knowledge gaps, enforce training, and hold contractors accountable through licensing reform. The opportunity before us is significant—and the cost of inaction is too great. AWCI Australia stands ready to collaborate with government, industry regulators, and stakeholders to design and deliver a regulatory model that works—for business, for government, and for the community.

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