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The Hon Matthew Mason-Cox MLC
Minister for Fair Trading
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

13th January, 2015

Dear Minister,

The Master Painters Australia Limited is the 'Peak Industry Body' for the Painting and decorating Industry within Australia. It is a not for profit association created to represent the surface coating industry. Master Painters Australia Limited (MPAL) comprises a Federal Board of Directors from States and Territories within Australia.

The impending and far reaching changes to the Home Building Act 1989, which is due to take effect on the 15th of January, 2015 are of great concern to the MPAL
In particular we refer to the following:

- Internal paintwork no longer requiring a licence, unless done as part of other home building work.
- The threshold when a licence is required for building and general trade work will be raised from \$1,000 worth of work to over \$5,000 (including labour and materials).

The MPAL are extremely disappointed that we were not consulted about these proposed licensing changes.

The proposed licensing changes will mean that unskilled people will be able conduct a business of painting and decorating for contracts up to \$5,000.

This will lead to damage being done to the reputation of our industry and provide less protection to consumers, as well as opening the door for unqualified and incompetent people coming into the industry.

We oppose these changes in the interests of the industry and consumers on a number of grounds including but not limited to:

1. The lack of knowledge and awareness by unlicensed painters of the Industry Codes of Practice;
2. The lack of knowledge and awareness by unlicensed painters of the provisions of the National Construction Code (formerly the BCA) and the applicable Australian Standards relating to Painting and Decorating;
3. The real danger of unlicensed painters failing to comply with mandatory statutory provisions Work Health and Safety, Insurance, Workers Compensation and Superannuation;
4. The real danger of unlicensed painters failing to comply with mandatory statutory provisions of the Home Building Act 1989 regarding the form, content and terms and conditions of contracts;
5. Exactly the opposite to the message relayed in the U tube by Fair Trading NSW

Two particular dangers would include instances involving the **management of lead paint and exposure to asbestos particles** which would inevitably result from unlicensed, unqualified and inexperienced contractors undertaking these projects and the **potential risk to public health**.

On a daily basis all state offices of Master Painters are receiving calls from consumers complaining of workmanship of Painters. In the majority of complaints, the Painters are not licensed or hold any formal qualification within the Painting & Decorating field.

Master Painters Australia Limited, have advocated for uniform licensing laws across Australia for many years.

We support a higher standard in training for the surface coating industry.

Any lowering of the standards will cause distress to the consuming public and will result in increased complaints to the Office of Consumer Affairs and the Master Painters Association of NSW.

At present customers have great difficulty getting redress for shoddy work particularly smaller jobs that are not practical to take a contractor to court.

There is little room for redress at the moment and this will make the situation worse.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the NSW Opposition Shadow Minister for Fair Trading. The MPAL would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully



Noal Mullins
Chairman MPAL