

Submission
No 156

**INQUIRY INTO REGULATION OF BUILDING
STANDARDS, BUILDING QUALITY AND BUILDING
DISPUTES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 7 August 2019

Partially
Confidential

Submission to NSW Upper House Inquiry into the Building Industry 2019

Director,

NSW Upper House Committee Investigation into Building Industry.

RE : Water and Sewer Authorities - supervision of Plumbing and Drainage works in NSW homes and residential developments.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Health and Building Surveyor with over 45 years' experience in Local Government, now retired. I wish to draw to the attention of the Committee the current situation in respect to the above.

I worked for 5 Local Councils, one of which was also the Water and Sewer Authority, being outside the boundaries of the metropolitan Water Boards.

All plumbing and drainage work was inspected by Council and defects rectified before approval was given to cover up.

For many years now Hunter Water, and I suspect all Water Authorities, have not been inspecting plumbers work, relying on Self Certification by the plumber.

As a result defective work is being hidden, until defects show up later at the owners cost, if it is outside the 2 or 7 year warranty period.

An example is my own home which has a laundry floor gully that emits poisonous sewer gas unless I regularly fill the trap incorporated below with water.

To explain further, all bathrooms, ensuite and WC's and laundries need a floor waste to allow for possible overflows from fittings to drain away and not flood the building.

This is achieved by two methods, in the case of dwellings, by a floor waste to the exterior if possible, or by a floor gully with a trap incorporated below which holds water at the bottom that is charged by a fitting such as a tub or basin or a bath or shower. This water seal stops sewer gases from entering the building.

The problem that occurs very frequently, is that plumbers fail to install pipework to charge the gully with a suitable fitting, which is the case at my home, resulting in dangerous conditions for occupants.

This is in contravention of the National Construction Code and the National Plumbing Code.

In my situation the work this under a concrete floor slab, and are the majority of new homes making it is very difficult and expensive to rectify.

Deaths are possible due to this common defect, which home owners would not be aware of.

I submit that all plumbing and drainage work needs to be inspected and certified by a qualified third party, such certificate to form part of the Occupation Certificate.

I have enclosed an email from Hunter Water to support the above submission.