

We must not make the same mistakes of the past

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We must not make the same mistakes of the past:

In past issues I have urged the timely take up of new standards and codes as they are developed and have deplored the now three-year cycle for improvements forced on the public by government. Three years may not be too long for the big end of town where projects could be well over three years from conception to completion but for project housing where individual operatives could have hundreds of individual projects under construction the alternative of using performance solutions is probably impracticable and costly. As of now in September 2018 recognition of a need to amend or add new materials or systems to a plumbing standard it will be the PCA2025 before it becomes mainstream regulation. Over six years in today's pace of technological advancement is a long time.

History tells us that around the turn of the century many areas of plumbing previously associated with complex buildings and controlled by specialist engineers moved to mainstream plumbing. Forced circulation heated water is a prime example and although limited texts were available for guidance they were never replicated in the plumbing standards or regulations until the mention of pending inclusion in 2003 that did not happen albeit partially until 2015 with real inclusion in 2018 yet to be referenced by regulation in 2019. This 16-year time lag has seen technology moving ahead and oversight reducing together with new ways of contracting that appear to remove any design oversight further reinforcing the need for registration of plumbing design.

Other than plumbing, design and installation of important structural elements of a building are certified to the original design at various stages and at completion but although plumbing is equally as important to the functioning of the building any certification of the plumbing installation is after completion and only to regulations not the original design purchased by the consumer.

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