

## The future is Green Plumbing

Australia's MPMSAA Focuses on Sustainability



By Plumbing – Heating – Cooling Contractors of California (PHCC)'s Steve Lehtonen who just returned from Australia and reported in the California PHCC electronic magazine

**A**ustralia is approximately the same size as our contiguous 48 states, yet has only about 10 per cent of our population. Still, in many ways, Australian plumbing organisations are way ahead of the United States and California, particularly with regard to water conservation and concern for the environment.

Our PHCC counterpart in Australia – the Master Plumbers' and Mechanical Services Association – has taken the lead on industry conservation efforts with an ambitious program known as GreenPlumbers. A five-part program consisting of training and accreditation in environmental and technical issues, GreenPlumbers identifies trained plumbers by recognising completion in the following courses:

- Climate Care
- Caring For Our Water
- Solar Hot Water
- Water Efficient Technology, and
- Inspections Report Service

Since implementation of the GreenPlumbers program in 2001, the MPMSAA has accredited more than 4500 plumbers, representing more than 1500 businesses in all regions of Australia. The program

has become so popular that the MPMSAA has installed a hotline to field telephone calls to licensed GreenPlumbers.

MPMSAA Executive Director Ray Herbert recognised the opportunities for the plumbing industry when the Australian government began to call for industries to respond to the challenge created by climate change.

Herbert sees a continuing partnership between government and industry to enable more streamlined responses to environmental challenges. Perhaps the inability to form effective government/industry partnerships is precisely what has kept California industries from being more proactive in environmental training, because the California approach has been more heavily-handedly regulatory in nature.

### A trans-pacific alliance

IN the hope that the California plumbing industry and possibly the US plumbing industry can take a more significant "hands-on" role with industry partners and government in environmental issues, CAPHCC Executive Vice President and MPMSAA Executive

Director Ray Herbert have agreed to propose a Trans-Pacific GreenPlumbers Alliance to their respective boards of directors.

The proposed Trans-Pacific Alliance would enable California and the US to participate in the trademarked GreenPlumbers program, develop additional content and technical specifications, and market/license the concept to the plumbing industry and regulatory bodies in this country.

"It is estimated that 70% of the water and energy savings initiatives implemented by governments for domestic homes relate directly to environmental plumbing," says Herbert, "so it is only natural for our associations to assert themselves in the environmental area as vigorously as they can." Lehtonen added that "the MPMSAA has done a tremendous service to the US plumbing industry by laying claim to these issues in such an innovative way. I can see the GreenPlumbers concept becoming very well known across the globe."

The next step for the alliance will be a formal presentation of the concept and particulars to the boards of the respective associations, most probably in October.