



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

██████████
LOVE DEATH FAITH TATTOO
KING ST, NEWTOWN, NSW

To whom it may concern,

My name is ██████████ I am a professional and licensed Tattoo artist from NSW, I work at LDF tattoo in Newtown and have been tattooing full time for 4 years. I am a sole trader; I pay my taxes and have never been convicted of a crime.

I applied for my NSW license as soon as it became available, I submitted my form and payment and it was almost 9 months before I received a letter telling me to arrange my fingerprint appointment and then another lengthy wait to collect my license.

I have recently applied for my QLD license (as I have a number of clients interstate and generally make a trip there at least twice a year) Previous to applying I contacted the licensing department and was told about the "Mutual recognition application" which meant that if you hold a license in NSW, that you may work in QLD whilst waiting for you application to be approved. This form does not work the other way around I was told.

It was an almost identical process and fee. Unlike NSW, I received a letter within a fortnight, instructing me that I had 28 days to go to QLD and complete the fingerprinting and background check process. (Although my fingerprints had already been taken in NSW and were unlikely to differ if I went interstate)

It seems like a great waste of government resources (even the officer who took my prints was surprised that I was completing them again) and also at great personal expense (Flights, hotels, car hire- on top of the fee) just to do an almost identical process.

I do agree that our industry should be licensed, like any trade, but the standard should not be whether you have a criminal past or someone in the licensing department deems you worthy or unworthy.

I believe the business-licensing department does not have enough knowledge of our industry to make the decisions that can dictate the way we operate and that they need to be working in conjunction with the



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

ATG to create a guideline for the licensing process that is streamlined,
relevant and anti-discriminatory.

[REDACTED]
LOVE DEATH FAITH TATTOO
KING ST, NEWTOWN.



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
Sydney, NSW

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I've been a tattooer in NSW for 15 years and have been through the current licensing process. I found the whole ordeal to not only be cumbersome but inconvenient, I understand it was the first time that something like this was undertaken but it really seemed that no one at the government departments had any idea of what they were doing or what the whole licensing plan was.

Aside from this I know a lot of other tattooers that hoped the licensing may have a positive effect on who enters the industry in terms of new license holders but this was just not the case, it seems as long as you passed some ridiculous "association" test and volunteered your finger prints you could obtain a license WITHOUT any actual practical tattooing skill. This is just not acceptable, the industry already had enough artists that have little to no concern with their artistic abilities and the door has been swung wide open for more to work and open their own studios just because they hold a license.

Now to mention the other difficulties that come along with the individual state licenses, I have done numerous guest spots and conventions all over Australia during my 15 years and now that has been made much more difficult due to the state specific license. Not only does it make it hard for myself but it also makes it extremely difficult to attract guest artists to our studio as the license process has effectively put up a wall around our state.

Travelling, even in our own country, is the life blood of our industry in terms of keeping in touch with other artists and learning new techniques, to not have some form of interstate license is a joke.

I'm not even touching on the treatment of tattooers as criminals until proven innocent and the absolute trashing of our civil liberties through the whole process, I hope that the government will take on advice from the tattooers guild as these individuals are true professionals with knowledge of our industry with ideas on how to make it better for us all.



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

06.07.2015

[REDACTED]
Newcastle, NSW

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a Tattooist in Newcastle, NSW and am currently in the process of opening my own private studio. I have been tattooing since early 2010 and have been licensed under the NSW Tattoo Parlous Act since August 2013. I am a tax paying, law abiding citizen with no criminal associations and I always strive to contribute positively to the community; I am a Tattooist for no other reason than that I am passionate about the art-form.

Recently, I have experienced the great frustration of applying for a Tattoo Operators licence. Many people experience a number of hurdles to setting up their business such as finding a suitable premises, council approvals, insurance, fit-out, and the ever increasing costs associated with setting up and running a business. A Tattoo Studio Operator is expected to go beyond the standard process at great cost and inconvenience because of the outdated stigma associated with the Tattoo Industry, I do not see how this is justifiable. I also take great exception to having to prove my innocence to earn the right to operate my business because I chose a form of art that despite it's popularity is unconventional.

I followed the usual process of finding and securing a premises and applying for council approval and the necessary licences and registrations, I allowed a period of two months for these to be processed. I have not yet received my licence and it has been approximately one and a half months so far. After speaking to other Tattooists who have applied for their Operators Licence this year, I became aware that there is no logic or structure for the approval process. One Tattooist had to wait almost five months for his licence to be approved. That means five months of being unable to operate their business and earn a living, therefore putting their business at a great risk of failing. For myself, I am not in a financial position to wait this long to begin operating my business while I am paying the business costs. It is a basic human right that an individual be able to earn a living and in this country we are allowed to run our own business, so it seems incredibly unfair that I would be unable to operate my legitimate



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

business without first proving that I am not a criminal.

Despite already having a Tattooist Licence, having met the requirements and been fingerprinted within the last 2 years, I have had to go through the entire process again, and will have to do so once my licence expires. Not only is this a waste of my own time and money but it is a massive waste of tax payer money and police resources. Over the past few weeks I have made many phone calls and sent many emails chasing up my licence and have discovered that there is no communication between Fair Trading and NSW Police, and many people I have spoken to have not been able to give me any useful information regarding licensing, which is obviously a concern. Recently, I spoke to a lady from the NSW Office of Small Business who told me that these laws are in place because a Government report done over five years ago showed that the majority of Tattooists or Operators were themselves or were associated with criminals. So I am currently being inconvenienced and my business potentially harmed by a biased and outdated Government Report that assumes that I could be a criminal because others in my field might be. Are reports done on all industries to assess the percentage of criminals or associates among their ranks? The business of Tattooing has many parallels with Beauticians, Hairdressers, Graphic Designers and Illustrators; would it be considered acceptable to assume that they are criminals and subject them to the same invasion of civil rights as Tattooists? The Tattoo Parlours Act does not apply to Cosmetic Tattooists even though the process is essentially the same.

Many Tattooist and Operators in NSW and QLD have experienced a harsh blow to their business with the loss of interstate and international guest artists as a result of a licence that is irrelevant and unnecessary for this industry. Australia is home to some of the worlds best Tattooists and it is because of a tradition of traveling and guesting; but the experience, knowledge, skills and friendships that were once formed by visiting other studios is in jeopardy. In regards to criminal associations, I am aware of many studios run by people who are members of a declared organisation or who have a criminal record which have had their licence approved, so this entire exercise has been a great waste of everyone's time. And has also lead to an increase in "backyard" tattooists claiming they are legitimate because they are licensed by the Government. To recap, legitimate business owners are being put at risk of losing their business, one of the industries main forms of information sharing has been made extremely difficult, "backyarders" are being licensed putting unsuspecting members of the



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

community at risk and the purpose for which the licence was designed has failed.

The time has come for the Government to listen to people within the Tattoo Industry and make the appropriate changes to the Tattoo Parlours Act so that we can all move towards a more positive future for Tattooists and their customers. I would wholeheartedly support an Act that helps us ensure a high standard of hygiene and safe practices by Tattooists who have proper training and experience and weed out those with unsafe practices and a lack of training, and respects our civil liberties.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Townsville, Qld.

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I have been Tattooing for just over 59 years. In the beginning I actually welcomed the concept of a Tattoo License scheme but I have now changed my mind because in its present form it has very little to do with tattooing at all. As far as I am concerned, it is just a money grab by the state government.

Unlike most other Licenses that I know of, which have strict requirements of knowledge and abilities, but for tattooing there are no such requirement needed to show one's ability or skills in the art of tattooing.

Also in Queensland there is the requirement that you have to have passed your Infection Control Certificate to operate as a tattoo artist, this is not even a requirement of the tattoo license.

The one noticeable difference now is that persons who have been operating at home with little ability and skills are now getting a tattoo license and opening new studios with no regard to the health and wellbeing of the general public, this is like the local Council Environmental Health Officers issuing a license to operate a tattoo studio and having the general public thinking, "they must be good, they have a license".

Also now tattoo artists who have in the past worked as a guest artist in other studios and other states allowing for the sharing of ideas and skills, thereby raising the standards of tattoo art have now found that this has become unviable, this is also the case for overseas artists.

I found that the whole process of having to have my finger and palm prints taken was demeaning and time consuming both for me and the police, surely those police tied up doing this would be better out there catching criminals. Overall this has, in my opinion, been a piece of poorly constructed legislation and the people who have to administer it, seem to have limited knowledge of what is all about.

I do not look forward to the time when I have to re-apply for my licence in 2017, if this legislation has not changed before then.
Hopefully common sense will prevail.

[REDACTED] Tattoo Artist.
The Needles Kiss Tattoo Studio



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
NSW

(Operators License Number [REDACTED])

17.8.15

I applied for my Tattoo Operators License around 6 months prior to the license cut off date (October 2013). To say it was a difficult process would be an understatement.

The first problem I encountered was the fact that each & every time I had a question regarding the process or the paperwork requirements, I had to make a call to the Department of Fair Trading. Every time I contacted them about a specific problem (there were numerous instances of this), I was shuffled from one person to another, with no one seeming to be able to answer even some of the most basic questions in regard to my application. Numerous times I was told different answers to the same question. My apprentice, during his application process was shuffled between 7 different operators & didn't get an adequate answer after that! Due to ongoing frustration with this, I even went to my local office of the Department of Fair Trading in person. After asking them a question about my application, the person disappeared for about 5 minutes & returned with a print out from their website as an answer. I had already had access to their website so this was completely ridiculous to me. The people who were implementing the license process couldn't answer my problems regarding the license application at all. How was I supposed to fill in the application correctly without having these issues addressed?

Another issue was in regard to the close associate forms. Apparently I had to submit the details of my landlords (since I rent my shop) so they could have police checks done on them. I rent through a real estate agent. At no point had/ have I met the owners of the building at all. So, now I have to ask for their personal details & their permission for a police check to be done on them, just because I rent their shop & I need a license to continue my business. I am faced with this again next year when the whole process must be repeated, since there is no simple renewal process at all.

During the time I have had my operators license, the police have visited my shop on 3 occasions to check on my license & those that have been



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

working for me. I have no problem with this & welcome any scrutiny. The only issue I have is the fact that during the last visit, they asked questions regarding sharps disposal bins, tattoo procedure and the like. We had, probably 3 weeks prior, been visited by our local Council (Health Department) & been questioned regarding all of our procedures & received a certificate (as we always do) proving our methods & procedures are acceptable to them. Why does the police need to be involved with that type of enquiry & are they even trained to know what they are asking? It kind of looked like they were checking off a list. Also, the police asked me questions regarding certain paperwork they said I was supposed to be using & I told them I had never heard of it. They back pedalled a bit & said that it must not have been brought in. I checked with the Department of Fair Trading website later & could find no reference to the paperwork they referred to at all. Also, they provided me with a written request to supply my financial records for the month prior to the visit, which was to be collected by them the following day. I had the records ready for collection, however, they never returned to make the collection & still haven't as of now. I have nothing to hide & all of my financial records are supplied to the Australian Taxation Office so why do the police need copies of them? Do the police ask for these details from licensed builders or plumbers for example? I'm sure they don't. Apparently, since I tattoo for a living, I am a criminal, despite the fact that I have never had any problem with the police & received a clear police check during the license process.

Next year, I am due to apply again for my operators license. Instead of having a renewal process, I have to resubmit all of the paperwork again. I could understand if some of the details had changed, although, according to the rules, changes have to be reported to the Department of Fair Trading. This is a very time consuming process. I have to re-apply & submit all of my details even though nothing has changed since the last time I applied. I am still at the same address, I still have the same people working for me, I still rent from the same people, I even have the same fingerprints as last time, although I will have to submit them again as well. I find this to be absolutely ridiculous. Why is there not some form of renewal process rather than the whole re-apply process?

Another problem with the whole process is the cost of the operators license itself. I wouldn't mind paying over \$2000 for 3 years if I thought the money was going toward the improvement of the industry as a whole but I do not see that being the case. During the license application process, there is not one mention of anything to do with



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

disease control or the correct cleaning methods or the like. There isn't even any check on the standard of work that people are doing. So, it is possible for some home job tattoo 'artist' to apply for a license & continue working from their home, completely legally, despite the fact that they may know nothing regarding cleanliness/ disease control. They may not even have a steriliser or even know how to use one!! They almost certainly wouldn't know how to do a good tattoo either. It really seems to me that there should be some form of certified minimum standard in regard to the disease control matter. Is there something that could be offered through TAFE that had to be completed before the license was granted?

The whole application process took about 6 months from the time I initially applied until the time I received my license. I find that time frame to be excessive & I am sure there will be a similar amount of people who will re apply again next year since they all will be due again. I would hope that it is processed in a much more timely manner this time around but I won't be taking my chances. I will be re applying about 6 months before the expiry date.

I really think there needs to be a license renewal process rather than having to do everything from scratch & having us re apply for our license every 3 years.

If there are any questions regarding any of this, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards & thanks,





AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Honey Ink Tattoo Studio.
N.S.W

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to share my experiences and thoughts on the new tattooing laws currently in place in NSW and QLD.

There are several points I would like to make with the first being;

-Uniformity. There needs to change in regards to having separate licenses in each state. Assuming all states will eventually take on this system then needing licenses for each state is short sighted at best. This is a major concern for many in our industry as traveling interstate to work for a short period of time, known as a "guest spot", has been such an important part of tattoo. It allows the furthering of our education, traveling to conventions, working holidays and lastly the opportunity for our clients interstate to have us come to them.

-Genuine effort regarding unlicensed operators. One simple rule but one massive change in the current laws would be the inclusion to force tattoo suppliers to request tattoo license number on ALL tattoo equipment sales. This would halt existing suppliers selling to backyard/underground tattoo shops and would also force online operations like eBay to stop selling cheap Chinese gear. This also has a massive impact on our industry and the wider community. The spread of blood transmissible disease and infections is a genuine concern amongst professional tattooers.

-Renewal system. This should be obvious. A letter in the mail and a simple renewal fee (even if you want to spend the time fingerprinting again) would be much better than the current system. Re applying from scratch seems unwarranted and the guessing game of how long till the license gets back makes the current system unsustainable. Longer than expected waits could see honest tattooists out of work till the plastic card is in hand again.

-Business Licenses. Same can be said for the business license. Currently you must be renting a studio, THEN apply for the business license then wait for its return to start trading. With up to 8 month waits,



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

it makes it plain uncompetitive for new business to start up. Even with a cheaper rent of \$500/week could potentially add \$16,000 to the start up of a new business. Perhaps being able to specify a proposed area of operation within a XX/km limit would work better for all.

Although there are more points I can make I leave it in the hands of the Australian Tattooist Guild to handle to other major points. These are the ones that effect me the most. I have been tattooing for 13 years now and would one day like to own my own studio.

Regards.


Manager/Senior Artist



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
Third Eye Tattoo
Melbourne, Vic

The most saddening thing regarding the recently implemented licensing requirements in NSW and QLD for an out of state artist is having to go through the whole process and paying the full fee the same as a resident of those states to work for only one or two weeks for a guest spot.

I had to cancel my guest spot in Brisbane this year as it wouldn't have been processed in time. 7 months is a ridiculously long wait.

As an ex high school teacher it's disgusting that the licensing requirements for tattoo artists is more strict and complicated than the teaching license/working with children act. More expensive and has to be renewed more often.

And the pitiful excuses for bringing in the license is an even more pathetic smokescreen for the government to squeeze more money out of us.

If the license ensured anyone was up to date with the c.c and bpp knowledge instead of their criminal record it may have even been welcomed..... Shame nothing can be done about all the terrible people who can't draw or tattoo..... But let's not get into that.

I could carry on but I'd still be writing this time next week.

I have a license in Oregon in the USA also and its a simple process as well as being only \$75. Why Australia couldn't have mirrored that I don't



know

The license exists simply for the wrong reasons
[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Melbourne, Vic (formally NSW)

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a Professional Tattooer since I was 19 years old. 23 years. This is a personal impact statement regarding the Tattoo Parlours Act NSW 2012, on it's effect personally to me and my professional career.

First of all I would like to start with that at first I was fairly excited that this industry was going to get some sort of regulation, and that it was designed to rid the industry of the outlaw biker element. As it was stated that was its sole purpose, however, I soon came to realize that wasn't exactly true. It became evident that anyone with a criminal history regardless of association was indeed targeted as an unfit person to hold a Tattoo license.

Knowing that I had no OMC affiliations or associations I applied for my tattoo license on the 14th Feb 2013, payed my \$699 fee and continued about my business eagerly awaiting a reply. 8 months later I met my now Wife in Melbourne and decided that I wanted move interstate. At this time I had no word or contact or anything from dept fair trading. after several useless and severely frustrating phone calls to the relevant people, which seemed to change every time I called, I was finally able to be notified that I had to have my fingerprints taken, so the appointment was arranged and I did so. Come May 2014 I was moving to Melbourne to be with my girlfriend and get married and settle down. Still no word from the dept of Fair Trading. several attempts were made to notify them about my new address, all failed. So, time went on and I had no notification even though the had all of my contact details in all forms. again I had to call them with only my receipt of my payment as proof, to be notified that I was refused 8 moths prior and that a letter had been sent to my old address. So mind you this was 2 and a half years after I applied. Also I have no right of appeal as I no longer live in the state of NSW And no reason was given to me as to why, I know I have a record, Mostly driving convictions and only two Bar fight related offences in the last 10 yrs, not squeaky clean but not a serious criminal or bkie related in any way.

this has effected me greatly, as it is now illegal for me to work as I have done for the last 22yr's in my home state. can you imagine! any crime I may have committed in my life I have already payed the price through



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

the judicial system like any one else. This basically is another form of punishment for the same crimes that I have served my time for. I am outraged, cannot understand how my past (unless OMC related) would effect my job as a Tattoo Artist, and well known and respected the world over. Not to mention the good things that I have achieved through this job, EX: Helping breast cancer survivors regain their dignity through tattoos, hiding scars and reconstruction tattooing. I Have also donated a huge amount of monies To charities throughout the years, always trying to give back to the community.

I am now living under constant fear that sooner or later I will no longer have a job as these laws move through the country. I can only say that I feel like my life is in constant danger, this job is and has been the only constant, and it has pretty much saved my life, if I hadn't started this job all those years ago my life would of been far worse and I don't think I would be around to tell this story. I was a troubled youth who grew up on the streets of Sydney, I only made it to yr7 in high school so I have no education or any other Job prospects. Without this job I would be either forced into a life of crime or to live out my days on welfare. There is much to be said here however I'm trying to keep it brief, I'm all for regulation and following the laws in this industry, however the criminal aspect needs to be revised so that some of us with checkered pasts can still contribute to society and not revert to being a drain on it.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Trailer Trash Tattoo
Brisbane, QLD

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a professional tattooer in Brisbane, QLD for approximately 18 years now. I have worked some of Brisbanes most respected studios and created a strong clientele and have a solid reputation amongst them and my peers
In 2008 my husband and I started our own private studio in Archerfield –

[REDACTED]
Included in this was, from what we know, the only health department approved mobile tattoo studio in Australia, set up in our vintage Australian 1965 Sunliner caravan.

We invested all we could afford and continued to improve it, and our studio continuously from that date a sum in excess of \$100,000. We have taken it to numerous Wintersun festivals, it has been a fixture at the Greazefest Kustom Kulture festival for 8 years, along with the Logan Tattoo convention (Sin the Skin), the Sydney tattoo convention and now the Melbourne Leg of the Greazefest brand. The Van has become an icon in the industry and helped in no small way to create our very successful and world famous brand. I have tattooed many times over seas and many people have come to me from around the world and Australia.

I am a professional tattooer as I mentioned and have obtained the skills taught to me by my mentors and peers, and the required level of attainment for infection control required by the industry for many, many years now.

In 2013 the QLD government "Informed" the industry of the implementation of a tattoo licensing scheme. I think the industry as a whole held it's breath as this system was quite clearly and in fact blatantly a knee jerk reaction to local OMCG problems the police and Government were having.

Most of the leaders in our industry have been expecting and supportive of some sort of regulation/licensing system to help control the influx of back yard and unskilled tattooers who can buy



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

all they need to tattoo from the internet for a fraction of the cost of **"professional"** equipment and supplies that **"professional"** tattooers use to create beautiful and amazing permanent art on peoples skin.

The products and equipment these people use are inferior quality and come with no guarantee of sterile nature or even quality of manufacturing, especially inks. Least of all they do not come with **skill and experience.**

These people endanger and disfigure their victims on a daily basis. A professional tattoo studio can tell of the poorly executed tattoos that pass through its doors weekly, for repairs and cover ups or even expensive and painful laser treatment.

The reality of course was very far from this hope or expectation. In fact now with absolutely no experience these people could be licensed!!

What would this mean to a client? What should they then expect?? In fact, despite the size and comprehensive nature of the application form the only mention of the health department approval in your application is whether or not you have been refused an infection control certificate - not "do you have one" and "what is the approval number"!!!! Unbelievable.

The legislators made absolutely no attempt to liaise with any industry leaders, who would have been easily identified if they tried, or suppliers or the health department!!!!, No attempt was made to apply a licensing scheme that in fact had any intention of helping or regulating the tattoo industry at all. The facts are now clear that the "tattoo license" is plainly and simply an identity record system designed only to prove whether the applicant is a criminal or associated with a criminal organisation or not.

It is a complete breach of any civil liberties we thought we had, The form itself is very insulting and the finger and palm printing absurd. The fees are crippling and the underlying regulations have not only not helped control the backyarders but have stopped or seriously hindered the professional tattooers from performing their job and pursuing their careers.

A major part of the artistic flow and advancement of experience and influence has always been the travelling artists doing guest spots with other and particularly interstate shops. This is no longer possible, the application process, cost and the finger & palm printing has deterred even the most die hard artists.



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

We, like many shops, have offered to pay or subsidise the cost but even this has mostly fallen short of the mark. The fact that the state police are making the artists fly into QLD for the finger printing alone is turning them away, and it's no easier for us to go to NSW. It is in fact easier for an international artist to come to Qld and tattoo, than another Australian from interstate. This has left us with no way to fill empty stations when artists are away on holidays or guesting in other states of Australia has left us floundering for many, many months and has cost our business many thousands of dollars and nearly brought us to our knees earlier this year. On top of this is the unfair treatment by police, turning up at our studio with bullet proof vests, guns on hip in numbers of 4 or 5 on our busiest day (Saturday morning) while our shop was full of customers asking for paper work, licenses (not yet distributed after 10 months of waiting, what were they thinking) and then proceeding to line our staff up against the wall and photograph them and their tattoos!!!!

This is total deprivation of our civil liberties.

At last count none of us were under investigation or even suspicion of any criminal activities, oh except the criminal activity of "Criminal Tattooing in QLD"pfft. This has left us feeling embarrassed and violated in front of our customers. It was akin to a raid. WE had to apologise to our clients and make up the time. We are totally disgusted by the whole scenario.

Further to this, after making our application and continuing on our way waiting a seemingly indefinite period of time to get the approval, we were shocked to receive a phone call from the organisers of the 2014 Greazefest show wanting to know why the Office of Fair trading was demanding they apply and pay for a convention license to have our mobile studio on site at the show. They then informed them if they did not the police would be arriving on site on the Saturday morning to shut us down and fine them a ridiculous amount of money for breaking the law. The legislation will not annexe our mobile van under our already \$2000 studio license and requires that we now ask all promoters to apply and pay \$430 every time we take the trailer out to a show. This cost obviously will be passed on to us as they are not running a tattoo convention, we are a fully self-contained tattoo van and do not require anything from organisers and are and have always been fully health department approved since 2008. Our previously successful, unique and health dept approved mobile studio was now breaking the law. Now with this



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

extra cost, if we were to take the van out 10 times In a year we would incur a licensing cost of in excess of \$4000, plus our initial \$2000 3

year license a potential total over three years of \$14,000. It's the most expensive license in the country and is driving our law abiding, family owned, tax paying, and small business to the ground. I thought the government wanted us to strive for excellence and to promote our small businesses as stated by the governments' small business boost program currently running.

In summary our particular major issue is with the mobile tattooing scenario and how we get this sorted out, the many other also major issues as stated I'm sure by nearly every other shop in the state are just as important and crippling financially to the overall problem for this industry. This matter needs to be sorted out immediately to help save and revive the beautiful and unmatched art form that is the Australian tattoo industry.

Sincerely and hopefully,

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
Gold Coast Tattoo
Gold Coast, QLD

To whom it may concern

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a tattoo artist at Gold Coast Tattoos. I moved to the Gold Coast nearly three years ago with my now wife and immediately began working for the industry legend [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Tattooing in New Zealand is lacking a type of licencing system to combat the growing 'backyarder' problem. One of my hopes for moving to Australia was that the tattoo industry was more recognized and taken more seriously by the government and local councils. The level of tattooing coming out of Australia led me to believe that whatever health or licencing system was in place it was organized and recognized the more established studios/artists. When I learned of the new licencing I had no idea how it would affect not only the current studios but the future of the industry in the two states. I find it extremely disappointing that the industry licencing unit has done so little research and is so ignorant to think an entire industry is linked to bike clubs. As a positive outcome I would like to see the current laws updated to benefit the established shops that have remained independent and make it harder for backyarders to operate. We are not criminals and have proved this by obtaining a licence so it would be nice if we are not treated as such.

Regards [REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Formally of – Lust for Life Tattoo
Brisbane, QLD

Currently – Green Lotus Tattoo,
Brunswick, Melbourne, Vic

As a tattooer of 18 years in the craft I have seen a lot of changes....
Some good and some bad. The tattoo licensing regime, as it stands at
the moment, is one of the bad changes that has occurred.

I am not opposed to sensible regulation for the tattoo industry. I feel
however that no actual consultation was done prior to the
implementation of this scheme.

Every tattooer is considered a criminal, being forced to prove otherwise.
This is a gross discrimination on behalf of government and shows a
deep lack of insight on their behalf.

I was personally subjected to this after the regime came into place in
QLD, being routinely targeted by police officers who enforced random
ID checks whilst I was in public. Which as I know is a breach of my civil
liberties!

I was not committing any crime but simply going about my day. Due to
the fact that I am heavily tattooed I was immediately identified as being
some type of "undesirable or criminal".

Due to this continuing harassment I decided to move, with my family,
interstate. I was tired of being singled out by police law enforcement
agents.

I did apply for a QLD tattooist's license and was successfully granted
one. I do not think the intense scrutiny of applicants has aided out craft
in any way.

If gov are going to regulate the tattoo industry they need to ensure that
regimes work for both tattooers and gov.

Thanks, [REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Top Of The Range Tattoo Studio
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Firstly, the new laws in Qld have put a very negative image on our industry as professional operators. Basically all the good and honest tattooists have been targeted as criminals and misfits. The VLAD law simply does not make any sense and is certainly not helping to abolish the backyard operators or any who may be connected with the criminal gangs.

In the 35 years I have been in the tattoo industry, I have never seen so many poorly executed tattoos done with professional equipment which is so readily available through on-line stores. The impact all this has had on my business is immeasurable - backyarders everywhere who do not wish to pay the licensing fees and the general public questioning our integrity of being associated with criminal gangs. Media only ever appears to cover the negative side of the tattoo industry.

The tragedy of this law to license every Tattoo Studio owner/operator along with their staff members, is that we are being tarred with the same brush as the criminals and gangs who are responsible for this law to be legislated in Queensland.

In my view, it is not very Australian and I can only hope the change of government will acknowledge that not all of us are the persons the Newman government has portrayed us to be. Hopefully, the government will make the necessary changes to the policies and separate us from the people these laws were directed.

The new licensing system has failed to control the non-compliant operators from working at unlicensed premises. The so-called 'professional' studios which have since been closed due to the legislation, have gone underground and working from safe-houses which are not publicly advertised or known to the investigators of the Licensing Unit within each local government area.

Hope this will help in some way.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
Top Of The Range Tattoo Studio



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

Toowoomba QLD 4350

[REDACTED]
West Side Tattoo, Brisbane, QLD

My name is [REDACTED] I have been tattooing since 1991, and have owned and operated Westside Tattoo in West End, Brisbane since 2001. Westside Tattoo was started in 1998, and has become one of Australia's premiere tattoo studios in it's 17 years.

We have faced many challenges over the years, including a "hostile takeover bid" by an OMCG. This was handled by members of the "Hydra Taskforce", and resulted in a favourable outcome for us. The police installed cameras inside my home and business, to gather evidence if anything were to happen to me or my family. This was a very stressful time, and cemented my very firm belief that something needed to be done about the problems associated with organised crime groups being involved in the industry.

I welcomed the introduction of licensing and other forms of regulation, as I had experienced threats and intimidation my entire working life. It was a constant source of anxiety knowing that I would be forced to interact with OMCG members at some point again in the future. On average I experienced some form of threat to mine, or my family's safety every five years or so. I might just add that the last fist fight I was in was in 1987, with my sister. She flogged the crap out of me. I am really, really not cut out for staring down Balkan war criminals.

Westside Tattoo has grown from a three person operation in 1998, to now employing 9 artists, a laser technician, a full time manager and an apprentice. In 2011, the Australian government received tax revenue from my business that was twice that paid by Google Australia and Starbucks combined.

The introduction of licensing 18 ago has led to my business being on the verge of collapse. As things stand now, I would be financially better off to wind up the business and tattoo my customers at home. Essentially going "underground." This is one of the things the laws were meant to combat.

The culture of tattooing has always been fairly transient. I filled 2 passports in the first 10 years of my career. I now employ 8 tattooers who all enjoy this

aspect of the job. In the past when one of my crew would take off for a few weeks, there was no shortage of tattooers from other parts of Australia lining up to "guest" at Westside. There was never an empty seat in the house. There



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

was also a freshness and excitement that came with having somebody new in the shop. It also meant that there was a sharing of skills and ideas that has

elevated tattooing in Australia to a world class level.

Today I am lucky if there is a full house at Westside. We have offered to pay the license fees for any interstate artists that will commit to guesting with us. Only two people have taken us up on this offer. The red tape, and implied guilt that many people associate with the licensing process has stifled one of the fundamental aspects of the industry. The introduction of state based, non-transferrable licensing has made my business no longer viable, and I am in the unenviable position of having to shut down.

This problem could be rectified by making the license transferable between states, much like a Driver's license.

There are many other problems with the new regulations, but none of these have impacted my business as seriously. The lack of consultation with the industry, and the lack of a united voice with which to consult are the primary reason for these problems. The establishment of the Australian Tattooers Guild should go a long way to addressing this. I ardently hope that the government will hear our concerns and make changes to the legislation, that will allow our industry, and the thousands of people it employs, to grow and thrive.

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Black Throne, Brisbane, QLD

Statement re: Licensing impact

Below I have highlighted some of the experiences that occurred during the application process for a Tattoo Operators license, in QLD 2013.

When I applied for the Tattoo Operators license in QLD in 2013, I called the Office of Fair Trading because our shop is a partnership. I was told I would need to get an Operators License and another Tattooist License as only 1 person can tattoo under an Operators License. I was also told that I could get 2 Operators licenses if I wanted. I opted to get an Operators License and a Tattooist license (\$2700) rather than 2 Operators Licenses (\$4000)

Part of completing the Operators License was to fill out a "Close Associate's" form. This was so background checks could be done on anyone that we pay money to for a service related to our business. I rang the Office of Fair Trading to enquire if our accountant was included in this. The first person I spoke to **told me** "I don't know" and transferred me to someone else. The next person said "I don't know" and also transferred me. The fifth person said "Accountant... no he's not a close associate". I asked him if he was sure and he said, "I think so"

It was apparent from this experience that the staff that were responsible for handling this process were uninformed.

On a letter that we received on the 5th of Sep 2013 from the DFT regarding making an appointment to get fingerprinted it said that it would take up to 3 months after being fingerprinted to receive our license.

It is now the 17th of Feb 2014 and no license has been issued or received.

I had a visit from 3 plain-clothes police people (from the department of Drug and Prostitution) 3 days after the Laws came into effect. Two of them were quite friendly, bad cop was not. They asked me to stop tattooing. Then they asked me if it was my shop.



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

I said "no I have a business partner" and they said "we know that" and proceeded to tell me her full name and listed off everyone that works

here.

I asked them why they had asked me, if they obviously already knew. and they said, "to make sure you're telling the truth". They also asked whom I banked with and requested to see the Government form that we now have to record all information regarding the tattoo process we preform on.

I received an email from a police officer saying they wanted to ask me a few more questions about my application. I called them but they were out of the office. I asked the receptionist if they could email me as I have irregular work hours and am very busy with family and life and had already attended the police station on a prior occasion for the application process.

The officer phoned me at 7p.m. on the Saturday night. She said she had my application in front of her and needed to ask me some more questions. She asked my date of birth, address, car registration, shop address, etc. I said to her that all this should be on the application she has in front of her. She said she was just double-checking my answers.

██████████ Senior Tattoo Artist
Black Throne, Brisbane, QLD



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
Lust for Life, Brisbane, QLD

The implementation of licensing in the tattoo industry as it stands in my eyes is lacking in several areas.

Firstly, a tattoo license can be granted without any cross reference as to whether an individual has attained an infection control certificate which is a legal requirement of operating in Queensland, or whether or not they are working out of a licensed premises.

Under the current system, anyone who is not a member or an affiliate of an OMCG is free to be granted a license and as such may market themselves to the unwitting public as being a legitimate operator by virtue of obtaining this license.

In regards to license renewal, as many have stated before the process has been clumsy at best. Numerous contradictory answers from different bodies, lengthy processing times and drawn out correspondence. The need to collect many documents and signatures and be re-fingerprinted every time the license needs to be renewed is time consuming and inefficient.

Travelling artists from interstate and overseas, often with large client bases, are now also being discouraged from visiting the state for conventions or guest spots in local studios. More consultation with ATG members about how the industry operates on a practical level could help improve the system in regards to temporary licenses etc which in turn would encourage more people to bring their business to QLD.

[REDACTED] Tattoo Artist
Lust For Life Tattoo, Brisbane QLD



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
Lust for Life, Brisbane, QLD

The impact of licensing laws in Queensland concerning guest artists.

1. The licensing laws hinders guest artists traveling from other states of Australia to a large degree. The paperwork procedures are foreign and lengthy, time consuming and expensive. This ostracizes Queensland tattooists from the day to day working interaction with other tattooists, sharing ideas and general relationships between studios. Many tattooists will avoid visiting and working in Queensland. Planning is essential and fair trading and local councils should be contacted regarding any questions.

2. International tattooists are granted only two periods of 31 days a year tattooing in Queensland and the 31 days need to be in the same studio and consecutively (not allowing for days off) ,thus making it difficult to travel and tattoo in a few studios. Queensland is a large state and has many great studios to visit and interact with.

Solutions to this is to have easy booklets on how to in basic steps. And to be less rigid within time frames.

Cheers, [REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
True Love Tattoo Brisbane, QLD

Statement re; Licensing impact, QLD

When I originally applied for my license in 2013, I felt that everything was ok, and then I called the Department of Fair Trading in January 2014 to find out where my license was. I was told it had been sent to the wrong address in September 2014.

Besides this I also have a problem with the QLD license being a piece of paper and not a plastic style card. The paper copy is easily damaged.


The DFT have now sent it out to the right address but the license has retained the original number.

Due to the original confusion, and my license being issued to an incorrect address, someone else in Queensland now has my license as well, which means **that** this person can use my license even if they are not a tattooer.

[REDACTED] Senior Tattoo Artist
True Love Tattoo Brisbane, QLD



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD


Brisbane Tattoo, Brisbane, QLD

We are Brisbane Tattoo, a husband and wife team that run a private operation (that is one whose doors are not open directly to the public, so the usual crowd cant just walk in off the street and annoy you with mindless needs and careless choices that stick around a lifetime, We cater to a more serious crowd). We take huge pride in what we are and also what we do , between us we have put close to 23yrs into this industry and have seen many many changes , n some eras where things just stagnated for years n years, which in a way compared to today were good years. As it was left to the individuals to cut their track .. These new laws n licencing practices leave oh so much to be desired, not only are they pointless in our eyes, but they have also allowed alot more undesirables into the industry and in some cases legitimised those who either ARE not or SHOULD NOT be..I refer to the old scratchers, backyarders, illegitimate mobile operators, ebay buyers of crap equipment etc etc , Not only are they still out there but in alot of cases they now have a licence which fools the public into thinking they are legitimate operators and also fuels their ego, which drives them to continue, under old law it was them whom were to be prosecuted by the council for not being registered , now they are licenced??

Which brings us to another point of why this licence is a pathetic excuse for the govt to just take the place of BIKIES who were extorting people in order to keep operating, this new system is no different, just different patches , Now the GOVT demand we pay them or we cannot work, n they will take our gear n prosecute..That is exactly the sort of behaviour the Patches used to try n carry on with??? Except the govt will issue you with a worthless piece of paper, that has no qualifications needed to acquire, no competency needed in any way is to be shown to acquire this, NO acknowledgement of ANY HYGIENE knowledge or competency, NO SKILLSET , NOTHING !!! This we find a joke ! How the police try to compare it to having a car licence , n they say you cant legally drive a car on the road without a licence?? I'm sure SOME of them must feel stupid in having to say that, As there is nothing the same in that scenario at



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

all?? In order to achieve a car licence you MUST PROVE COMPETENCY ?? through written exams exhibiting knowledge of road rules etc also pass a practical skill set exam, thus proving you CAN drive such a vehicle? Not so with the famous Tattoo licence.. So this is what we would call a MAJOR flaw. And in no way compares to their example of the car licence!

We have had emails some of which we have kept, stating the individual was after a job in the industry , has no exp, is 19yrs of age , does not even have a tattoo but has a licence??? and would like us to give her a job? Despicable is all i have for that!! So in that case you have someone that HAS a licence but has no job, no exp, nothing but can run around with a licence stating that she is a tattooist?? Kind of says it all right there...

The length of time it took to process our licences was so pathetic, it took them 7 months , We have no criminal records, no history of ANY affiliation with anyone, hell we dont even assoc within the tattoo industry , due to a sincere lack of interest in all the politics assoc with that, So what took them 7 months to decide??? In that time they expect you not to work??? After myself regulating my own high standards for the past 17yrs?? On this note the renewal process does need to be overhauled, If someone has been issued a licence prior, n its time for renewal to use their own analogy here why not treat it like a car licence just renew it , this way it happens instantly and there is no down time in between and no grey area's , they get their money and we can keep working free from persecution??? If the individuals have already been anally checked in the first place n been issued with one , i'm pretty sure not alot will change in their lives once renewal comes around, n lets face it the govt keep an eye on things anyway , by regular "random" visits n if there was cause for alarm in situations changing i'm sure they would know about it...

Which does bring up another point, seriously why should we have to prove every dollar that comes through our shop and every job thats done to the police upon arrival? If we have been issued a licence that would suggest that the licence holders are 1 .. not criminals 2 .. have no assoc with any crime elements syndicates or omc 3 .. if the following



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

two points are true then why is there any concern of laundering or shonky cash deals etc etc ? We deal with eftpos only here, n every single transaction is recorded in our bank account, which no doubt they could gain access to, so why the need for extra paperwork n records that again mean nothing but a simple power trip??? We are a two person owner/operated studio, Not like the factory style shops out there who are owned by one person or an organisation (who are not even tattooists), with 5-9 minions working for them raping our industry daily, Its that scenario that needs further investigations into how to deal with it....

I can guarantee you that more shonky deals are done every single hour of every single day in cafes around the country!!! They are widely used as fronts for alot of other operations, So do they have to show the police every dollar earned? do they have to go through the strict laws n licencing we do , I think not!! There is far more to worry about with other industries than there is with ours. I understand the undesirable element has existed in our game, we all know that, but a blanket law does not fix every problem, it only serves to create other issues for those of us whom have nothing to hide. I once asked a question in the early days of this enforcement as to why we needed to give our fingerprints etc to the police, if we were already criminals then our details n fingerprints would already indeed be on the system, as i'm sure anyone who has affiliations with omcs would be flagged as such, as lets face it the police are not entirely stupid they have done their research into association and affiliates and would have a very good idea of the target group, The answer given to my question perplexed me, it was as follows, you need to supply us with those details to prove your innocence!! If you have nothing to hide , then you have nothing to worry about ,was a common catch cry! In fact those of us with nothing to worry about DO have something to LOSE !! Our civil liberties n privacy!!! This has been overlooked by every single dept to date!! We now have all been assumed criminals and need to forever prove ourselves to them?

So all in all ... licence if its to stay needs to actually MEAN something by having to prove some level of Competency in not only work standards , but all areas of hygiene, cross contamination , and ALL work ethics, It is through organisations like the ATG that this can now ONLY be achieved ,



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

By the govt consulting directly with the ATG its MEMBERS can this major issue be dealt with appropriately..

... Renewals need to be IMMEDIATE upon payment, NOT go through the whole malarkey system again and again..

... We should not have to prove each transaction that the studio or each artist has done, and produce financials etc to police upon "random" inspections . No other industry is obliged to do this , n those of us with licences whom are clearly not criminals especially those like us who are a two person team owner/operators with a keen sense of righteous and love for our industry, not a Viking mission of rape n pillage to cash in on something new and fad filled cash cow...

... Another misconceived point is the general public have been FOOLED by the smear campaigns into believing that any operator without a licence is shonky or untrained or unqualified in some way, I know for a fact there are many who do HAVE the licence who definately should not be wielding a tattoo machine..... In our opinion the licence itself is a JOKE! With NO CREDIBILITY...

We could go on with points of interest, but feel you may get the gist..... MORE THAN A CHANGE IS NEEDED HERE ON SO MANY FRONTS..... SO PLEASE LISTEN TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ATG, AND WORK IN WITH THEM TO HELP MAKE IT SOMETHING WORTHWHILE TO SOMEWHAT RESTORE SOME FAITH IN GOVT LEGISLATION IN THE FUTURE AND PROVE ITS NOT JUST AN ILL INFORMED WITCH HUNT AND MONEY GRAB.

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]
LDF Tattoo
NSW
24/07/2015

I guess the main problem is, why did I pay \$700 to become a licensed tattoo artist in NSW, having to have a criminal background check, fingerprints etc to prove I wasn't a member or associate of a outlaw motorcycle club or involved in organised crime, and yet there's still a tone of shops owned and backed by these sort of groups? Why also was tattooing targeted when there are a lot of other businesses deeply entrenched with organised crime? It seems like a bandaid solution and a cash grab. With no positive outcomes for the industry itself.

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

[REDACTED]

Sydney, NSW – 16/09/2015

I applied for my license when I moved to Sydney I was told that when I move down to Sydney I should get my license strait away considering I have a Queensland licenseafter I applied the police come into the studio and warned me if they saw me working in the studio again I would be fined \$11000 they said I had to stop work until I had the license..... fair trading took 9 months to get my license! I had to borrow money from my parents and sell some of my stuff to live ..it was a joke and when ever I rang up to ask they treated me like a criminal and said.... don't call again or they will put my form at the bottom of the pile.....thanks Australian government you have put me in debt and caused me so much stress when all it takes is 5 min to check someone's record ...awesome

[REDACTED]



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
FB- White Lion Custom Tattoo

21/09/2015

To Whom it Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the owner of White Lion Custom Tattoo in Toowoomba. I have been a professional tattooer in Australia for over 20 years and have owned my own studio for 7 years. I am a member of the PTAA.

The initial impact on me firstly understanding what was expected of me (a LOT of new laws within this legislation, still not sure I know them all) and getting my first Operator License application in on time pushed me into symptoms of severe anxiety: sleeplessness, tremors, mini panic attacks etc. I am a single mum, I run it all on my own, I have a seriously disabled child and teenage son in school. Just getting the extra \$1190 together on top of all the other overheads was hectic. I had to see my GP for sleeping pills and tranquillisers for especially bad days. I felt like a criminal. Fully armed cops were twice in my studio, taking pictures in and out, asking lots of questions. Getting fingerprinted was demeaning. I felt I was losing control of my own carefully built and hard worked-for business and someone else was taking over. I was a nervous wreck.

Then I got it done and was licensed. Until just over 6 months had passed and I had to save the money and do it again. All of it. Getting it in on time was such a heavy load on my shoulders. This time around if I wasn't re-licensed by July 1st then I could not legally run my business. Once again I made it through by the skin of my teeth but could only pay 1 year (yeh I have rent, tax, GST, power, phones, Internet, shop supplies, council licensing, insurances etc AND a family to look after and home to keep afloat..) so will be in the same boat next year. Why on earth do I need to be proven to be NOT a criminal every year? Why my fingerprints every year?!

Then there's the cops visiting. 4 at once, it doesn't matter if you're working, too bad if you're in the middle of a portrait of a clients deceased child. Too bad if your customers quietly freak out and leave and tell their friends they were in White Lion and it was getting raided. They seize your books, take more photos (of you, your workers, the



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

books and the shop), ask lots of questions, go through your shop. It doesn't matter how polite they are. It's unsettling, inconvenient, embarrassing and it makes you angry. For that time it's not yours anymore, it's theirs, you lose all power and control. The businesses next door don't get this treatment! Why me then? They know who the crims are! Leave the rest of us alone!!

Then there's if someone leaves or someone new starts. God forbid you get caught up in your business and your life and let over 20 days pass before informing DFT! You'll be fined!! Or if your workers get distracted by a new client that just walked in and don't get their paper work on Form 7 filled out! You'll be fined! What boss can watch everyone else like a hawk and all their books as well as their own books PLUS tend to clients in a busy custom studio and be 100% on the case ALL the time?! What if a worker leaves and forgets to leave their completed Form 7's behind? They have to stay on premises for 3 years or...you'll be fined!! I haven't been fined yet. I have stayed on top of it so far. But I am not infallible and I work approximately 70 hour weeks on my business as well as care for my kids and home. The responsibilities are over the top.

I am not a criminal and never have been. I pay ridiculous tax (as we all do) and have employed 5 subcontractors and kept them off the welfare system or out of garages/kitchens via my above board business over the past 7 years. I contribute to society!

More I could say but end rant.
Hope it helps our cause.

Regards

FB- White Lion Custom Tattoo



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

[REDACTED]
Lighthouse Tattoo Studio
NSW
17/8/2015

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I have been a tattoo artist for 6 years. I have worked in 3 studios in NSW, 1 studio in VIC (as a guest artist) and 1 studio in Auckland (also as a guest artist). I also regularly participate in tattoo conventions within Australia and New Zealand.

I became a tattoo artist because I wanted to pursue a career in art and be able to support my young family. I have also had a love of tattoos and tattoo art since a young age.

At the beginning of my career, I was fortunate enough to do an apprenticeship under an experienced tattooist as well as work alongside some of the most experienced artists in the industry. I learnt how to do things properly (such as cross-contamination prevention, tattooing techniques, book keeping and bedside manner). I also worked long and hard to hone my skills and continue to do so everyday.

When the licensing was introduced, I was shocked that I had to go to the police station to give my fingerprints for my tattoo license. It was a scary time because no information was given as to who would receive a license and (it seemed) little could be done if you were not approved for any reason. The whole process could be made easier with information readily available as well as the Police and RTA having a complete understanding of what to do in the event of receiving applications or giving out licenses.

My girlfriends family lives in Victoria and I sometimes work in Melbourne as a guest artists (so that we can afford trips away to see her family). I would struggle financially if I had to pay for 2 licenses so that I could work a couple of times in a different state. I believe you should create a single 'national license' which will allow artists to work throughout Australia, without having to pay separately for each state. I also feel that the process of 'fingerprinting' applicants is over the top, degrading and a simple photo should suffice? I didn't need to get finger prints to get my drivers license, passport, or 1st degree black belt in Taekwondo? Why is applicable for a tattoo license. The license should also be able to be renewed without going thorough the whole application process again!




AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

Also, in order to have a license, I believe that there should be a component of: having to pass a test to make sure that the licensed tattooists understand what he/she is doing? Otherwise, what is the point of the license? It means that anyone can pay and receive a license and then tattoo with no understanding of health and safety procedures. This is not going to benefit our industry in anyway, instead it will cause further problems for clients who presume someone is a professional purely because they have a license. This puts a lot of people at serious risk of injury and needs to be resolved asap. You would not allow someone to drive just because they paid for a license and do not have a criminal record! It would put other motorists in grave danger.

There needs to be some kind of education and support system set up so that we can continue to improve the standards of our industry.

Thank you


Lighthouse Tattoo Studio
24th September 2015

Rachael
Lonie

19/01/2016

Bundaberg, QLD.



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

To whom it may concern,

In mid-2015 I made the decision to transition into tattooing from five years in the nursing profession for personal health-related reasons. I have been a strong follower of the tattoo and art community for a number of years and strongly support the work of the Australian Tattooists Guild. To begin working as a tattooist, I have had to apply for my tattoo license which has been a logistical nightmare. To work in a shop, I have had to fill out an "associates" form which had to include passport photos signed by a JP. To work as a tattooist, I have had to provide more passport-photos signed by a JP, along with documents such as my birth certificate, car license and other identification signed and witnessed by a JP. I must also pay \$375 for a year license - which I will have to go through the entire process again next year. Scraping together these funds has not been easy with the cost of living as I am a current full-time student studying my Bachelor of Nursing at university and working full-time to support myself independently.


I have been advised as a Bundaberg resident that I will have to travel to Maryborough to get my fingerprints taken, despite there being facilities for this in Bundaberg. This is also personally insulting as I am not a criminal, I do not associate with criminals (but it should not be the business of anybody if I were related or choose to be friends with such a person), I have never committed a crime nor intend to, and I have never been subjected to this as a nurse.

The requirements to working as a qualified "Health Services Assistant" or aged care nurse are to provide a partial police check which I recall cost less than \$60 and lasts between three and five years before renewal is required. This check results in finding out whether I have any convictions such as harm against other persons or drug convictions. I have not had to provide fingerprints, JP signed documents or fill out documentation in regards to "association" with OMCG members. I also had to pass a TAFE certificate III in Health Services Assistance or a certificate III in Aged Care to attain my current position. Both require training in sanitisation in the work place (such as hand washing), working with clients (appropriate workplace mannerisms and working with client's bodies in regards to professionalism and modesty), ensuring a safe workplace (using appropriate equipment, wet floor signs, identifying risks and hazards in the work area, ect) and privacy and confidentiality. I believe a lot of these things I have learned as a nurse are vital to the tattoo industry. None of these things are a requirement to attaining the tattoo license. Any person can attain this license without any knowledge or experience in hand-washing, keeping a clean and safe workplace or more importantly, handling clinical sharps items such as needles in a safe and appropriate manner. This lack of professionalism and health safety standards with the license has angered me and displayed the lack of correct industry input in creating this legislation.

I have also been advised into my foray into tattooing that I am to expect visits from police to over-see my documentation and interview me. It is up to the police to determine if I am of worthy character by my associations and financial decisions as to whether I should be permitted to engage in an art form that is a body-cosmetic procedure and therefore should be treated under health laws instead of criminal or persecution laws. I am a tax-paying, law abiding citizen with nothing to hide, so I am disappointed that my tax-dollars are spent ensuring the stereotype that tattooists are OMCG members trying to launder money, instead of 23yo artists with nursing background who enjoy crochet and have to save every dollar just to pay for the rip-off registration costs on a tiny car.

The tattoo license should become a more stream-lined service to ensure it is a quick and easy procedure to attain one (and not a six month wait as I am expecting) with a better renewal service and focus more on the abilities of the applicant and not on their instant portrayal as a criminal with the provision of fingerprints.

I am an artist, not a criminal.



Korpus Tattoo Studio
Melbourne, Vic



AUSTRALIAN
TATTOOISTS
GUILD

21/01/2016

As a professional tattooist working in Melbourne, I have not felt the full impact of the QLD and NSW licensing regime. My professional practice has however been impacted by some of the secondary effects of licensing in these states. Firstly the new laws have made interstate work and trade of information significantly more difficult. The invasive nature of palm and fingerprinting and criminal history checks is in breach of our civil liberties and is a giant deterrent to artists wanting to take their craft to these states and to work with and learn from the artists working there. This has been a terrible shame for our industry, what was once a thriving information sharing environment has been crushed by a misguided and unethical licensing regime. Secondly, the licensing has created an environment that supports the influx of non-professionals in the industry. This is detrimental to the artistic, the ethical and the hygienic integrity of our industry.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Brisbane, QLD
03/02/2016

Impact Statement



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

There are two particular areas of concern I would like to address:

1. Application process

- At expiry I must complete, in full, a new Tattoo Operators License application as there is no renewal in place. So although I have a current Operators License, I must again request a 'Close Associates' form be completed again by my landlord, a form which he completed only 6 months ago when I moved into the premises. On a side note, I completed a 'Change of Circumstances' form to notify the relevant authorities when I moved (insert date), to this date I have not received my updated form.
- I had some question regarding the paperwork & so called the Office of Fair Trade. Sadly, the lady I spoke with could offer no further assistance & when I asked questions she simply recited what she had read online, which was the same information available to me, I was left none the wiser. I simply needed to know if it was necessary to get my landlord to fill out another form, her response ... 'she assumed so'. I had hoped that if this license was deemed to be so vital that the people handling queries regarding said license would have knowledge of it. It was frustrating to say the least.
- My landlord is not very happy about being inconvenienced again & feels he's being treated like a criminal for renting to a tattooist. I consider myself one of the lucky few who have landlords that, while unhappy, are still willing to do the paper work to support us. I know many other tattooists are losing out on business properties because landlords are unwilling to have their information held on a federal database, simply because they don't feel they deserve to be on the federal database. I don't believe any of us deserve to have our palms and fingerprints taken, never mind also held on a federal database.
- The cost of the license is considerably high. Personally it's a challenge to afford the Operators License, I'm a soul trader and don't have a shop of tattooists paying me money every day. Everything I pay, I pay on my own. This in turn means obtaining the funds for a 3 year license is particularly difficult but what choice do I have; I can't see my landlord being happy to re do the paper work every year & I don't want to jeopardise my lease and him choose not to renew it at the end of my five year contract.

2. Guest artists

- Tattooists have travelled and worked with each other for years, it's a community we're all part of. Licensing now restricts our ability to work in N.S.W. I can no longer work with my peers, sharing ideas, gaining knowledge & developing my craft. Granted I can go to other states that aren't licensed yet however my Australian tattooing career started in NSW & I have strong base of studios I would regularly do guest spots in. In turn, I also have peers who would like to come here but simply cannot justify the time & cost of obtaining a QLD Operators License when they might only get up here once or twice a year. If we're held on a federal database, why not have the license cover all states allowing us to continue to work in alternate spaces. Traveling and

Introducing new artists is good for our industry, it brings in more business. Some customer will travel interstate to get tattooed but many would wait for their tattooist to guest spot closer to them. This license also restricts customer's choice.



AUSTRALIAN TATTOOISTS GUILD

My personal experience is that the introduction of the Operators License & media portrayal associated with it has greatly damaged the growth of our industry and our craft. I personally have experienced a dramatic decline in clientele. Granted there are other factors at play such as a change in government, change in economy still, I firmly believe the media coverage of bikers linked with tattooing has tarred us all.

Ultimately, I don't believe the knock on effect of introducing an Operator License has been fully considered. It's damaging our industry, 98% of tattooists are in no way affiliated with outlaw motorcycle clubs.

[REDACTED]