



# COOLCHANGE

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## Summer campaign drives up licence verifications

The Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) runs a 6-month digital campaign each year from October to March, leading up to and through the summer. This campaign aims to raise awareness about the permit scheme and help people connect with licensed refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) professionals.

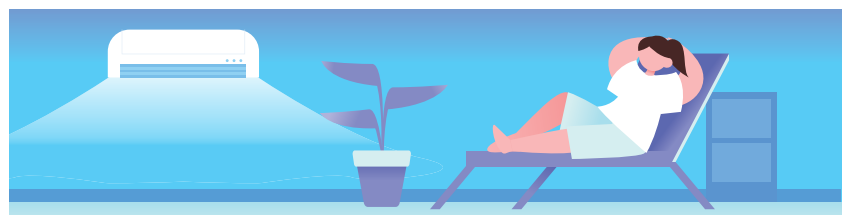
This year's campaign included a range of highly engaging creative assets, including short videos, animations and images promoting the 'Look For The Tick' message. The campaign is important as it connects consumers with licensed experts. It directs people to the **Look For The Tick website**, so they can:

- check if a technician's licence is current and valid
- search for registered businesses in their area
- download helpful guides about home and car air conditioning.

This makes it easier for consumers to make smart choices. It helps them find trustworthy businesses and workers who are approved to carry out RAC work.

The latest campaign resulted in a significant boost in website activity. Over the campaign period, 189,684 people visited the website. Further, users performed over 15,054 licence checks, 19,234 business searches and 14,611 free AC guide downloads.

This consumer awareness campaign helps customers feel more confident in ARCTick licensed professionals. To ensure you remain visible to consumers searching for the tick, it's essential to keep your licence current and valid.



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# Government financial support for RAC apprentices and employers

The Australian Government introduced changes to the apprenticeship system which came into effect on 1 January 2026.

As part of the reforms, a new incentive was introduced for employers of apprentices undertaking training in Key Apprenticeship Program (KAP) occupations. Employers include those in the refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) industry. The following provides an overview of the new incentives.

## New incentives in 2026

- KAP Employer Incentive – Employers of apprentices working in KAP occupations can claim up to \$5,000. This will be paid in 2 instalments during the first year of the apprenticeship.

## Changes to existing payments in 2026

- The Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment (AATSP) pays \$2,500 for full time apprentices. This is paid over their first 2 years on priority list occupations.
- The Priority Hiring Incentive offers employers a matching \$2,500 for these same roles. This is available for employers of apprentices working towards a Certificate III or above in a Priority List occupation, excluding KAP occupations.
- Apprentices and employers who started before 1 January 2026 retain current \$5,000 incentive rates. This applies for both AATSP and Priority Hiring Incentive.
- The Group Training Organisation (GTO) Reimbursement Pilot Program commenced on 1 January 2025. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can get reimbursed for apprentice places through GTOs. The pilot will close to new entrants on 30 April 2026 or once it reaches 400 caps, whichever occurs first.

## Incentives continuing in 2026

- The KAP Apprentice Incentive offers full-time apprentices up to \$10,000 in total support. All part-time apprentices are eligible for a \$5,000 incentive. This is paid at 6, 12, 24 and 36 months, and on completion.
- Apprentices who move away from their home for training can access the Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA). This allowance provides weekly payments of \$120 in the first year, \$90 in the second and \$45 in the third year.
- The Australian Apprenticeship Support Loan (AASL) provides interest-free loans of up to \$25,983. Repayments start once annual income exceeds \$67,000 (2025–26 threshold).
- Loan indexation is capped at the lowest end of the wage price index or consumer price index. A 20% discount applies on completion of your apprenticeship.
- Employers of apprentices with disability can access the Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS). This provides a weekly support payment of \$216.07.



To find more about the support options, contact an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider. Find your local provider at [Search for an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider](#).



## WorldSkills Australia heads for Shanghai

WorldSkills Australia has selected Adam Morgan to represent Australia in the refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) trade at the 48th International Competition in Shanghai, China, in September 2026.

The competition is often referred to as the 'WorldSkills Olympics', with gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded to the top-performing young professionals in 64 different skill categories. The competition takes place every 2 years. This year, 89 member countries will participate.

Adam won the gold medal in WorldSkills' 2025 Australian championships. He works at Clements Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Electrical in the Hunter Region of NSW. Adam will be accompanied by WorldSkills expert and judge, Joshua Seymour from RMIT University. The ARC's Technical and Training Manager, Noel Munkman, will be supporting Joshua and Adam for the internationals. Noel has been a WorldSkills Australia RAC Expert and Assistant Technical Delegate in the past. He will be mentoring both Joshua and Adam in the lead-up to and during the competition.

Joshua identifies the passion and drive of young competitors. 'Adam is a clear example of this,' he says.

'At just 22, his professionalism and technical knowledge are what you would expect from a tradesperson who has spent years on the tools. With apprentices like Adam emerging, the future of the refrigeration industry is not only bright but also in very safe hands,' says Seymour.

The RAC category of WorldSkills Australia is supported by TAFE NSW, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia (RRA) and the Australian Refrigeration Council.

**WorldSkills Australia International**  
**WorldSkills Shanghai 2026**

# Retailers: Get on board with Look For the Tick



Retailers play a key role in helping customers make the right choices when buying air conditioners.

That's why the ARC has launched a **pilot Retail Engagement Program**, partnering with retailers to cross promote licensed installation and build customer trust at the point of sale.

The pilot's goal is to encourage retailers to spread the Look For The Tick message to their customers, as a high percentage of consumers purchase their split systems through the retail channel. The program connects consumers to licensed installers as a key part of their purchase journey.

So far, 6 retailers have joined the pilot program. The ARC is engaging with these retailers by giving them simple promotional materials to use instore and online, like flyers, counter cards, videos, website badges and assets for social media. These materials help shoppers understand the importance of using licensed technicians when installing or removing air conditioning units.

Participating retailers are featured as partners on the **Look For The Tick website**, which attracts over 180,000 visitors during the summer period.

The pilot program is simple to join and designed to fit seamlessly into your existing sales process – so there is no extra workload required.

If you are a retailer and would like to take part, you can fill out the **expression of interest form** at the Look For The Tick website.

Retailers are urged to join now to help their customers make informed choices and position their business as a trusted provider.



## Reminder: Report breach incidents

The Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) has improved the 'Report a Breach' form on the ARctick website.

Now, it's easier for people in the industry and the public to let ARC know about possible breaches of refrigerant handling rules, under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*.

If you think someone is breaching the law, you can use **this form** (<https://arctick.org/information/report-a-breach-relating-to-regulated-refrigerants/>) to notify the ARC.

The ARC compliance team reviews all reports and decides the next course of action. You can also report a suspected breach directly to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water via the **Report a perceived breach of environment law – DCCEEW** (<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/about/contact/report-environmental-incident>).



# ARBS 2026

AIR CONDITIONING, REFRIGERATION, BUILDING SERVICES EXHIBITION

## Catch ARC in action at ARBS 2026: Seminar and stand information

The annual HVAC&R and Building Services event – ARBS 2026 – is back in Melbourne from 5 to 7 May 2026 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event will feature over 350 exhibitors showcasing the latest innovations, new technologies, energy-efficient solutions and next-generation HVAC&R products.

You will find ARC at Stand 786, where you can meet and chat with the ARC team. The ARC's Acting CEO Susie O'Neill will also be presenting a seminar, offering data-driven insights and an update on ARC's current initiatives.

Ms O'Neill will also be part of two panel discussions, including 'Workforce of the Future' and 'Women Shaping the Future of HVAC&R'.

Visit **ARBS 2026**  
for information



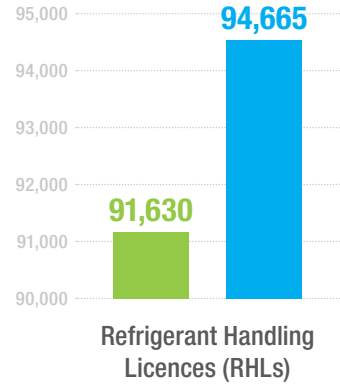
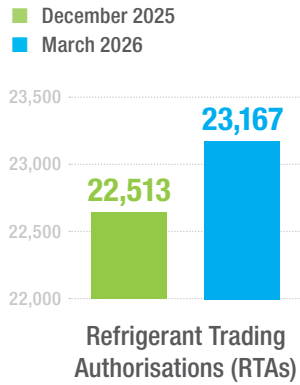
# BY THE NUMBERS

## ARC Licence Scheme: Quarterly review

### Permit Numbers

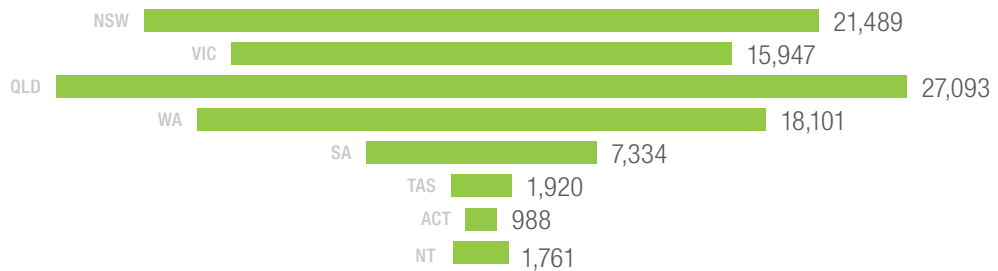
▲ 467 RTAs  
▲ 1,166 RHLs

increase in Q3 2025-26 current permit numbers, period ending March 2026

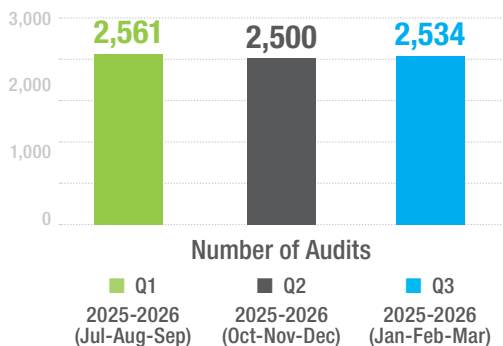


### RHLs by Location

current licences, period ending March 2026



### Field Engagement



**7,595**  
total audits conducted  
2025-26 YTD period ending March 2026



### Summer Campaign

Consumers **LOOK FOR THE TICK**

Campaign period:  
October 2025 to March 2026

**189,000+**  
website visits

**13,500+**  
Licence checks

**19,000+**  
Business searches





# Robert Mandla

Robert Mandla is a Queensland-based field engagement officer, who has been working with the ARC for over 6 years.

Robert began his career as an apprentice at the University of Queensland, where he discovered a passion for the physics behind refrigeration. After finishing the apprenticeship, Robert went on to work for a commercial refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) company, eventually becoming self-employed in the industry.

With over 36 years of experience, Robert knows running a business in refrigeration can be tricky. He understands the challenges, especially with all the paperwork required. During Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA) holder visits, Robert has found that people are eager to show what they do. 'When I'm out meeting RTA holders, I like to learn about people's backgrounds,' says Robert, who often discovers surprising connections in the industry.

Since joining ARC, Robert has had the chance to visit automotive and aviation companies, pharmaceutical labs, mining firms, transport refrigeration businesses and anyone who buys refrigerant.

Educating others about best practice and industry standards is an important part of Robert's role at ARC. Speaking for the team, Robert says, 'We help others follow the Code of Practice and regulations in the industry.'

Robert has also been invited as a speaker at Registered Trading Organisations' training sessions. He enjoys supporting individuals who are working towards obtaining their Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA). Robert considers the changing RAC landscape quite exciting. 'The industry has changed since I was younger – phased out refrigerants, brought in new refrigerants. It's an industry that keeps evolving and changing, and it's exciting to be a part of,' he says.

# Say no to quick top-ups



Refrigeration and air conditioning systems are meant to operate as sealed units. If a system is low on refrigerant, it often means there is a leak – not that it simply needs a top-up.

As a technician, it is essential to understand that topping up refrigerant without first identifying and repairing leaks is not an acceptable practice. It can lead to ongoing system issues, repeat call outs, and unnecessary environmental harm. Even if you are short on time or the client is pushing for a quick fix, the correct approach is to locate the leak, repair it, and then recharge the system if needed.

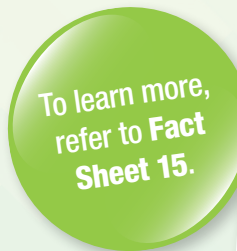
**Good technicians don't just rely on quick top-ups, they fix the problem properly the first time.**

'Topping up' refrigerant without first checking for and repairing leaks is harmful to the environment and is not allowed under the Australian codes of practice for handling both stationary and automotive refrigerant systems. Releasing refrigerant this way is illegal under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* and may result in significant penalties.

**Best practice for technicians includes:**

- checking if the system is low on refrigerant
- using appropriate leak detection methods
- repairing the leak before recharging the system
- making sure the system works properly before returning it to service.

Following these steps improves system performance, reduces environmental impact, and helps keep you compliant.



# Reminder to participate in the RHL field engagement pilot



The ARC has launched a field engagement pilot for a select group of Refrigerant Handling Licence (RHL) holders.

This program is intended for RHL holders who work independently and are not affiliated with a Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA). The pilot aims to conduct educational field engagement visits. An ARC field officer will visit your workplace to answer questions and help check that your tools, processes and paperwork meet licensing requirements. If you have one of the following licences, you are invited to participate:

- RSS03 – Restricted heat pump installation and decommissioning
- RAC01 – Full refrigeration and air conditioning
- AAC02 – Automotive air conditioning

Field officer visits offer hands-on support to help technicians clearly understand their licensing conditions and responsibilities. These visits also provide a chance for technicians to ask questions and share feedback. Eligible RHL holders are encouraged to participate. Interested technicians can set up a field engagement visit by emailing the team at [RHLprogram@arctick.org](mailto:RHLprogram@arctick.org).

To learn more, see **Field engagement visits for RHL holders**.



## What's on

### AIRAH Industry Nights

Discover the latest technologies, connect with industry professionals, gain new insights and stay up to date with current trends. Details at **AIRAH Industry Nights**.

**21 May 2026 | 4-7 PM AWST**  
**Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre**

**23 June 2026 | 4-7 PM AEST**  
**The Ville Resort-Casino, Townsville**

**5 June 2026**  
**RWTA QLD Golf Day 2026**

Join RWTA for the Queensland Golf Day in 2026 at the beautiful Brisbane Golf Club, located at 70 Tennyson Memorial Ave, Yeerongpilly. Enjoy a great day on the course with fellow members, colleagues and industry partners. Details at **QLD Golf Day 2026**.

**31 July – 2 August 2026**  
**VASA Wire & Gas 2026 | The Westin Brisbane**

Following the success of Wire & Gas 2024 in Brisbane, the event is back in Queensland's capital – this time with The Automotive Technician (TaT) as a co-hosting partner alongside VASA, to deliver a program of networking, technical training and industry insights. Details at **VASA – Wire & Gas 2026**.

## Understanding refrigerant recovery 4-part series



### Part 2: How much refrigerant can be safely stored in a recovery cylinder?

In this part, we delve into the key information needed to safely fill a recovery cylinder with refrigerant. Any overfilling of the cylinder presents danger to you and the environment. It is therefore critical that all Refrigerant Handling Licence (RHL) holders fully understand the following information to know how much refrigerant can be safely stored in a cylinder.

**Safe fill capacity (SFC)** is the weight of liquid refrigerant that can be safely added to a cylinder without causing undue stress (as per Standard AS2030.5). Recovered and recycled refrigerant may contain contaminants like oil or water, which can affect safety. Therefore, for recovered and recycled refrigerants, a minimum ullage (empty space) of 20% must be maintained for safety. This means cylinders should only be filled to 80% of the capacity. Using the below formula from the **Code of Practice**, you can calculate the maximum amount of refrigerant that can be safely stored in a recovery cylinder.

$$\text{safe fill capacity (SFC)} = 0.80 \times \text{fill ratio (FR)} \times \text{water capacity (WC)}$$

- **Fill ratio (FR)** is the ratio of the weight of refrigerant to the weight of water at 57 °C that is permitted to be filled into a gas cylinder. Fill ratios are available in **Australian and New Zealand Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice 2025, Parts 1 and 2**, and AS 2030.5 Gas cylinders – Filling, inspection and testing of refillable cylinders.
- **Water capacity (WC)** needs to be carefully checked. It is the maximum weight of water that the cylinder can hold, which is stamped on every cylinder.

Ensure the cylinder has enough remaining capacity to safely accommodate the planned recovery activity by:

- determining the weight of the recovery cylinder when it is at its SFC
- weighing the recovery cylinder as the refrigerant is recovered and stopping the recovery when its weight reaches the SFC.

Additional information and breakdown of the requirements for refrigerant recovery can also be found in the **Australian and New Zealand Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice 2025, Parts 1 and 2**, under the following sections:

- Refrigerant recovery, recycling, reclamation and disposal
- Handling and storage of refrigerants.

All ARctick refrigerant handling licence holders must adhere to these requirements when recovering regulated refrigerant. The correct handling of recovery cylinders reduces refrigerant emissions and protects the environment. In Part 3, we will discuss the question 'Are your recovery cylinders to standard?'

To view the series online, head to <https://arctick.org/refrigerant-handling-licence/refrigerant-recovery/> and navigate to the *Additional Resources* section.