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IN OTHER NEWS

Well Done

Well done to the Board's Communication Adviser who is doing a wonderful job of making the Board appear to smell of roses after they continually get in the shit.

She has the task of turning a pig's ear into a silk purse.

Preventing Falls in the workplace update.

We have confirmed this week that there hasn't been any change to legislation but more a change to interpretations and enforcement policy.

It appears the Department of Labour inspectors will have the standard preferred by the department and will enforce that standard and any deviation from that standard will need to be justified by you.

They have assured us that the inspectors will be reasonable about what they enforce.

Time will tell.

Was responding to consultation worth the effort?

"YOU HAVE ENEMIES? GOOD. THAT MEANS YOU'VE STOOD UP FOR SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE."
-Winston Churchill

Hell yes!!! If we didn't respond or take action then where would we be? Now is not the time to second guess our actions but a time to keep up the concerted effort to affect change in the industry. Of the 148 respondents to the consultation on CPD – 101 were PGDF members.

Well done for standing up and speaking out. We are yet to see what difference it will make to the Board's final decision. If they do not listen to those that spoke up then they run the very real risk of yet again, losing more faith from practitioners and the exercise will be viewed as being another waste of our money.

People claim to be working constructively with the Board but where has that got the industry so far? Perhaps if people had spoken up sooner we wouldn't be in the situation we are in. It's always easy to walk away or change the way you think so you don't make waves or so you don't appear to be a shit stirrer but is that not cheating yourself?

You would get pissed off pretty quickly if people starting dictating to you what van you can drive, what tools you can use, where you can work, where you can holiday and what time you can spend with your family so why let the Board and others dictate issues to do with your chosen profession?

When your grandchildren ask you what you did in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry are you going to say "Not much, I was a plumber, I was a gasfitter or I was a drainlayer" or are you going to be proud of your actions and say you changed the industry into a profession to be proud of, that is regulated in a fair and equitable manner.

So again, well done to the 101 members who responded to the Board using the Federation format and the 24 others who put in their own submissions opposing the Board's recommendations. This combined effort equated to 84.45 % of the responses opposed to the Board.

We have noted on the summary of the submissions that Master Plumbers supported the proposal and that the one submission was on behalf of its members. Well we have spoken to a few Master Plumbers who have said the executive had no right to speak for them – and in fact never asked its members their opinions on this subject. Perhaps our mutual members might like to hold the Master Plumbers

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I read with interest your article last week on inmates undertaking training. Don't you think they deserve a second chance?

Ed: Yes people do deserve a second chance but we believe that second chance should not be at our expense or the expense of the young guys who are after their first chance.

Dear Editor. Mr Bickers is an engineer so this is what we are up against.

Engineering Defined.

Engineering is the art of modelling materials we do not wholly understand, into shapes we can not precisely analyse so as to withstand forces we cannot properly assess, in such a way that the public has no reason to suspect the extent of our ignorance.

Productivity

The average New Zealand worker spends between 15 per cent and 21 per cent of their time doing work of no value dealing with emails, company red tape and technology woes, according to Ernst & Young.

Its Productivity Pulse Survey has found workers think 15 per cent of their time is spent on wasted activities.

The report suggests companies stop wasteful, bureaucratic and non-value work, improve technology, develop talent and innovate more.

Perhaps the Board should

executive accountable on this subject?

We wonder if the one submission from the Federation was counted as representation of all our members. The Federation believes it's not about making decisions for you but more about representing you and your opinions. Walking away and leaving the Board and Master Plumbers Executive to it would be easy, but for those of us on the Federation Committee it's not an option and that's because it's our choice to seek change.

Letter to the Minister

This week the Federation sent a letter to Maurice Williamson.

Dear Mr Williamson

We have been informed that the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board have sent their latest Gazette Notice proposal for Continuing Professional Development to you for approval. The responsibility for the future of the industry now lies squarely with you. We fully understand you base your decisions on the information supplied to you by those whom we should be able to trust but this note is merely to forewarn you that all is not as it seems and most of the industry rejects the Boards Proposal.

The Boards proposals were rejected at the first round of consultation and the second round of consultation resulted in 84% of those who responded rejecting the proposal.

This system has lost its credibility along with those who have been pushing for it. You yourself have even criticised the system and now you are in the position of having to approve the same system with minor tweaks. We believe it is now time for you to hold the Board accountable by rejecting the proposal. If the Board can not implement a system which the majority of the industry supports then it will never succeed.

This issue is a nail in the coffin for a lot in the industry and will do nothing for the protection of the public but what it will do is create more conflict in the industry and make more people reject the regulatory system in all ways.

No doubt you get provided with what people want you to see but we implore you to look further. Have a look at some of the statistics where the size of the industry is reducing in experience. The Boards Annual Reports show that there were 2122 exams passed over the period 2008 until 2011 and you would expect most of them to result in licences in the industry thus increasing industry size and productivity but over the same period there were 1095 less licenses issued.

This means that even with around 2122 new licenses being issued the industry still issued 1095 less licenses. The combination of these two figures means 3217 licenses of experienced practitioners with 4-5 years plus experience were not issued and were replaced with 2122 licences of inexperienced practitioners.

The Board has also indicated fees increases on those who choose to remain in the industry which will not be tolerated. For those of us who are prepared to fight for our rights and our industry we will continue to expose illegal activities and incompetence by the Board and its staff.

Such a simple process turned into a shit fight by people who are trying to impose their will on individuals who simply want a fair deal. The lack of Government leadership in the governance of our industry is disgusting.

read the report to work on efficiencies so they can reduce our fees. Perhaps if there was less bureaucratic non value activities the industry may be able to move ahead.

Did you see this?

There are concerns increases in teacher student ratios will lead to less teaching of technical subjects, leading to a shortage in the trades.

Intermediate schools say the changes announced in Thursday's Budget will force them to cut all specialist and technical teaching jobs.

Green MP Catherine Delahunty says some students aren't academic and rely on these subjects. "We want to improve the number of people available to work at the trades level and the government does this to them. It's really quite disastrous and what's going to happen is they're going to realise this in time, and have to go back and rebuild a workforce that's been decimated."

Ms Delahunty obviously hasn't seen what the ITO has done with the latest version of the apprenticeship training, nor the skyrocketing fees that are putting an apprenticeship out of reach of some, nor the PGDB fees for first time registrants that absolutely make it impossible to jump the bridge from trainee to licensed person.

Donations

The Federation operates on your generosity and every little bit counts so if you want to make a donation you can either send a cheque made out to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers

The Truth behind the Telephone Numbers on Gas Certificates spin

Some supporters were concerned that they had to pass on privileged information given to them by their customers that was often private information that they had intentionally held from public view. One supporter was informed by the Board that it was the Board's right to collect the numbers under the current Act and they would enforce that Act. In fact more than one member contacted the Board with queries over this sudden change which was forced on gasfitters with no explanation (yet another in a long line of bad decisions!)

The Federation got involved, and after confirming its views with the Privacy Commission sent an email to the Board's Privacy Officer stating that most practitioners collect contact details of customers for the purpose of contacting them regarding work issues which the customer is aware of. The Board seems to be requiring practitioners to hand on privileged information. No purpose had been given for the collection of the telephone numbers and that the Board was demanding practitioners hand on information for a purpose other than what it was collected for. The Federation asked for clarification.

No response has been received yet but the Board has since sent out information to practitioners stating the numbers are no longer mandatory.

The Privacy Commission had this to say:

If you collect any personal information about your customers you're required to make the customers aware of the purposes for that collection and also any further disclosures you intend to make. You are also correct in that the information should only be used for the purposes for which it is collected.

In regard to the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board wanting to collect personal information of your clients or in fact wanting you to disclose the information to the Board, again the Board needs to make you aware of the purposes of their collection such that you may make the customers aware that their information is to be disclosed to the Board and the purpose for that disclosure.

The Board is required under the provisions of the Privacy Act to have appointed its own privacy Officer and you may wish to contact their privacy Officer to discuss your concerns over the collection and use of your customer's information.

Yet again we believe the Board have acted without due consideration to relevant legislation in that practitioners have been forced to breach the Privacy Act. Another example of the Board making a decision without thinking of the impact on the industry and the flow on consequences. These is shameful of them, and remember, this organisation has a number of lawyers on its staff – wonder if they were asked about this one and if so how could they have got it so wrong? Seems that yet again, we are doing their job for them and pointing out some pretty obvious shortfalls – any idea where we can send the bill for this???

Changes to the online public register

Next month, the Board will make changes to the online public register for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers. In accordance with the purpose of the register, the Board is required to make publically

Federation,

available to consumers, the contact details of registered tradespeople and provisional licence holders.

or

Make a direct deposit at any National Bank,

On June 25, contact details of registered tradespeople currently held in the Board's database will be made available to consumers through the Board's online public register. These public details will include postal address, phone number, mobile number and email address (if any). Contact details of trainees and exemption holders will not be made public.

or

deposit on line through internet banking

The Board encourages all tradespeople to log in to the register and check that their address details are correct before information is made public on June 25. The 'postal address' field will be renamed 'public address'. The 'physical address' field will be renamed 'private address' and should contain the address that you wish the Board to use when corresponding with you.

or

set up a month direct credit.

A new mandatory field, 'preferred contact information', will be added to the register beneath the 'public address' field. This is where tradespeople should enter their business phone number and/or website address for public access.

Account: National Bank
06 0773 0319398 00

Cheques can be posted to:

Further to these changes, the register will now also contain information about any licence conditions, suspension, cancellation or disciplinary action taken in respect of a tradesperson in the last three years.

Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation, 3
Jupiter Grove,
Trentham,
Upper Hutt 5018

These changes are being made in order to fully comply with the requirements of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006. Consideration has been given to the information privacy principles set out under section 6 of the Privacy Act 1993 and the public register privacy principles set out under section 59 of the Privacy Act.

Recruiting

Remember to recruit for the Federation and get the message out to as many people as possible.

The Act provides the Registrar with discretionary powers to withhold information. If there is a reason why a tradesperson would object to their contact details being made public, an online option will be available to apply to the Registrar for it to be withheld.

The more people we have the easier our work becomes.

We strongly encourage practitioners to update their information but feel they should have the right of reply to any disciplinary information provided on the site to the public as the discipline section may adversely affect people's decisions on employing that practitioner.

A few minutes out of your day to talk to someone about the Federation and what it is doing could save you thousands of dollars.

How long does a person get penalised for a mistake or for pleading guilty as some do to save money on costs imposed by the Board. The right of response is part of natural justice and the Federation feels this information on the Board's site may only give a one sided view of the situation.

People can join on line at www.pgdf.co.nz or they can email wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz.

Well done to the Board for wanting to fully comply with the 2006 Act – hell it's only taken, what – three years? Oh if only tradespeople were given such leeway.

If they want more information they can telephone Wal Gordon on 0276564811

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