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## IN OTHER NEWS

### Too Hard Basket



A lot of Government departments and agencies seem to be taking their time with complaints laid by the Federation and supporters so we'll help them keep track with what's happening:

- Ombudsman's Office is still investigating several complaints.
- The Charities Commission is still determining if the Board is a Charity.
- The Board's independent QC is still dealing with historical complaints.
- The Regulations Review Committee is still dealing with complaints laid with them.

### What does the Board do?



What does the Board do? Well they are not here to help us as an industry - they are simply a government appointed regulator who does the government's bidding. No one really knows why they are funded solely by the industry - but it is. The Electrical Worker's Registration Board are not solely industry funded – and in fact get a decent portion from the electrical levy on your power bill given to them – that's probably why their licence fees are only \$94.00 per year!

The Board has existed in some form since 1912 to control entry to the plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying trades. In the last decade it seems to have expanded its role from the primary function where the Secretariat was run by a Registrar and half a dozen staff, to an organization with a CEO/Registrar, Deputy Registrar, General Counsel, Senior Solicitor, numerous other legal staff, compliance officers and all sorts of other positions and contractors. As far as outcomes goes – we do not see any vast improvement in industry standards, prosecutions against unlicensed people or increased members of the public being made safer.

It is quite evident the extra secretariat staff were required to rebuild things that weren't broken and to repair mistakes of the fairly recent past - stupid mistakes that shouldn't have been made, but that sit firmly at the door of fairly recent Board's and their Chair and Registrar. It now appears that the general perception is the Board's main functions are to cover those mistakes to save face for themselves and the Minister.

Bureaucracy has got in the way of common sense on a huge and expensive scale. What is quite astounding are the claims the Board continually make about all they do and what their functions are under the Act. When you look at the functions and break them down, they are not done daily or even annually - and you would have thought that after 100 years each function would only need maintaining not a total rebuilding every year and yet this is what we seem to be going through.

The function of the Board is an administrative registration one but it seems, due to outside influences, that the Board is an industry in itself in that everything gets a complete rebuild to achieve the same previous outcomes. We even question the need to register annually, Parliament has discussed this and there appears to be no valid reason why licensing could not be extended out to two, three or even five years thereby creating a lot of efficiencies and savings to both the Board and Industry. Section 137 of the Act sets out the Board's functions in details. The Board's functions include:

- to administer and regulate registration under the Act, including

- The Social Services Committee is still reviewing the Petition submitted by the Federation.
- The Office of the Auditor General is keeping a watching brief on the activities of the Board.
- Maurice Williamson has sent Gazette notices requiring his signature to the Department of Building and Housing for analysis.
- The Department of Building and Housing is checking the Gazette notices before making its recommendations to the Minister.
- Other Members of Parliament are sitting watching waiting to see what happens.
- The Prime Minister is .....who knows - but he's not helping us!!

#### A sign of the future



Is this going to be a sign of the future if the Government doesn't take notice of the discontent in the industry?

#### Letter to the Editor regarding the Public Register

*When I read the brief from our dear Board I was devastated by what they are going to put on line and went on*

designating classes of registration,

- prescribing the work that persons working in those classes can carry out and setting the minimum standard for registration;
- to prescribe the terms and conditions for registration and licensing under the Act and administer the licensing system;
- to prescribe standards for competent and safe work practices and promote and monitor those standards;
- to hear complaints and administer the disciplinary system, including instigating prosecutions for offences under the Act and
- they also have a role in setting examination and education requirements, as well as other things necessary for the effective administration of the Act.

As you can see it is purely an administrative role but seems to have grown into a "stick wielding trade police", where things have got so mixed up and difficult that the Board and Secretariat don't even understand their own legislation or where their powers start and stop.

Now this is the real funny or not so funny part - members of the Board are collectively accountable for its governance and ensuring the **credibility** of the Board with the general public and the trades. They are expected to develop and maintain **good working relationships** with Ministers of the Crown, Government Departments and **those having dealings with the Board** and the wider public generally.

Board members are required to bring to the Board a huge list of skills such as high level strategic thinking capabilities, governance experience, policy experience, business and management expertise and the list goes on.

All of those attributes and not once does it mention "common sense", openness, honesty, integrity and a sense of fairness. For those who have an underlying feeling or the belief the Board is there for the industry forget it - they are there for bureaucracy (and in fairness they keep telling us they aren't here for us, but as we pay their wages I guess we feel a sense of entitlement to get some value from them. They do nothing for the industry and the industry does not have representation either on the Board or as a group. Sure there is a requirement for a certain number of practitioners – but they do not represent industry interests.

So there you have it – for us as an industry they do nothing except take our money to perform functions on the Government's behalf. So if you think the fight's over once CPD is resolved and fees are consulted on think again - as there are still qualifications, training and every aspect of the manner in which we are regulated.

For decades the industry has gone without grass roots industry representation and look where we are. We need representation that will speak up, as it is no use having a watchdog if it doesn't bark and **BITE!**

Even as we go to print this week we hear of another person who is pleading guilty to an offence simply for financial reasons. We have a despicable situation where the Deputy Registrar gloats of a 100% success rate in prosecutions but in reality how many are truly guilty?

The inquisitions and witch hunts in medieval times have nothing on this Board.

*their site and looked up my profile or the one they want you to see which is your address and phone numbers.*

*I, like a lot of other tradesmen have a post box and thought that this information was all they had - well I was wrong, somehow they got my private address and I think that was when they audited me on my gasfitting which I think they should not have if I don't give it to them.*

*I have deleted it and all contact details other than mobile and email plus box number and now check the site in case they decide to reinstate it.*

*I have advised all my friends to do the same or restrict them from advising our details.*

*I believe like us all that the public should only be told that we are licensed that's all as our number is ours and if its on the web site what's to stop the public doing their work then looking up a number on line and putting that to council etc and if things are not right, which they never are, the council going you for work you have not done leaving you to prove that you didn't do it.*

*Plus what if we have a customer complain to the Board over work we have done - often a lot of rubbish because they don't want to pay the account then have this displayed on the website for everyone to see.*

*If you get charged in court for a crime is all that put on line for all the public to read? No*

## Are you up for it?

This is a pie and there is nothing special about it, except, that it holds your future instead of mince and cheese! Intrigued? Then read on ... For the price of one of these each week you can help establish the representation the industry needs. We all want fairness



and equality and to see the industry become what it should be, a well trained, profitable, progressive industry that people want to be part of. An industry free of corruption and interference where tradespeople can walk with their head held high.

The issues going on at the moment are just part of our future and as you will see in the news, governance roles are relying on badly established law that requires legal action to get a fair response and that is what the Federation predicts we will need.

We have talked about legal funds before, but now we know the direction the Board is taking us - we know we will need to take legal action against them. This is our industry and we can no longer sit back and hope things get better.

Some have sold their souls to outside influence and have let their moral standards slip. Their lives are now dominated by the power of sponsor-ship but all in the name of the industry.

As tradespeople we work bloody hard for what we have and it's getting taken away from us by bureaucracy. We work in the shit, we work with gas, we work in holes, in the mud and the rain and for the privilege of doing that we pay \$100.00 per productive week to license and do CPD.

So what are we saying is this – will you give up a pie a week and donate to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation so we can continue to fight to get a fair deal for **OUR** industry.

Make a bulk donation or set up a weekly or monthly payment and help us to help you:

- Send a cheque made out to the "Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation", or
- Make a direct deposit at any National Bank, or
- Deposit on line through internet banking or
- Set up a month direct credit.

Account: National Bank 06 0773 0319398 00

Cheques can be posted to:

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

Just let us know if you want a receipt. We intend to put this money towards legal action against the Board. All funds collected are used directly to assist practitioners. None of our executive are paid, nor do they seek reimbursement for travel costs or meeting costs, they do all of this at their own expense because they believe in what they do.

*that's private. But our dear Board want you to pay then pay then pay again and again. Time I agree to stand up and tell them "YOU'RE FIRED".*

*Please keep me up to date and I will definitely reject them if that's where we go from here.*

*PS keep up the good work you are doing*

**Ed:** Well done for being proactive and voicing your opinion. This is a timely reminder to everyone to log on and check the details on the Board's site.

### Licensed Building Practitioners

You need to be aware of consultation that is underway at the moment regarding "Deeming of registered plumbers and gasfitters as Licensed Building Practitioners".

This will affect how you work and is another example of poor legislation costing our industry work.

Will you have to become a Licensed Building Practitioner to do roof work?

Are the changes going to cost you directly and indirectly?

More next week.

You will not be funding any fat cats to sit around drinking tea or coffee, but will be helping to build a fund that will give some teeth to the legal fight we anticipate is coming.

Remember when sitting around at smoko or the pub tell others about the Federation and get them to join. Simply send their details to [wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz)

### Town Visit

Wal Gordon and Paul Luxton travelled to New Plymouth last week and attended a "meet and greet" meeting facilitated by Robinhood Industries and hosted by Zip Plumbing Plus. Both these organisations are providing the opportunities for tradespeople to make their own decisions about the future of the industry and they should be congratulated for it.

We would like to thank Rachel from Robinhood and Chris from Zip for organising the event. We would like to also thank the twenty eight people who braved a cool evening to hear Paul and Wal speak about the Federation's activities and current events affecting the industry.

A large number of apprentices were in attendance and voiced their grave concerns about the pitiful training they are being provided by the ITO. It is a sad indictment when the trainees can see the faults in the training system but the educationalists can't. The apprentices appeared to enjoy the opportunity to voice their concerns to people prepared to listen.

CPD, fees, training and Board expenditure dominated the discussions as did activities of other organisations. The distrust and dislike of the Board and its activities was very evident.

The Federation is happy to visit your town/city if you or another interested party is prepared to organise the event. We can help with flyers and getting the message out to existing members. Organising a meeting would be beneficial to you and the industry. Very little work for a big return.

We aim to represent grass roots practitioners – you don't need to own a business, or be an employer. If you are an apprentice then your view is as important to us as the person who employs 50 people. Licensed or a certifier – then your views count – are you happy with the industry as it is – or do you want to see real change. We are a voice for the people, by the people. Join today if you want your views represented.