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Still waiting



Yes we are STILL waiting for investigations, reports, gazette notices, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Regulations Review Committee, the Social Services Committee, the Charities Commission and a politician with enough balls to stand up and be counted by

standing for what is right.

IN OTHER NEWS

Federation is participating in reviews.

Members of the Federation have been responding to invitations to participate in reviews that are currently being conducted.

One in particular is the review of NZQA qualifications pertaining to the Plumbing Gasfitting and Draining industry.

The Federation has taken the stance that we will only get one go at this in the next ten years so have been very vocal about getting it right.

Obviously there are other stakeholders involved who have their views and agendas who will disagree with the Federation's views and vocal stance.

This is what the ITO have put out to the industry

The mandatory review of plumbing, gasfitting, drainlaying, scaffolding, rigging and rope access qualifications is now

The speed things are happening at would indicate we will be handing these issues over to our grandchildren. Oh what a legacy we are leaving them. No one but Government Departments and quasi government departments could work this slowly – private enterprise would be bankrupt if they worked at this speed.

The Annual Report

We have started working our way through the PGDB Annual Report and it appears the Board had nothing too much write about - using up three pages showing photos of themselves, a page on their roles and functions (where they forgot to mention they are a registered charity), two pages on how they did with the Minister's Accountability Agreement and eight pages reporting on their business plan.

In the introduction Mr Bickers states the Board has made substantial progress over the past year in addressing issues in relation to the Board's accountability to the Minister, and in resolving the legacy issues identified in the report from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) - but there isn't any mention about current issues that THIS Board has created. No doubt we'll get a report on those issues from a new Board in a couple of year's time, where they will be referred to as "legacy" issues.

Mr Bickers reiterates his personal goal of restoring the reputation of the Board so that it is respected and appreciated as a fair and responsible regulator in the public's interest. After nearly two years you would think we would see some sign of this happening- but alas no Changes from our perspective!

Mr Bickers gives the Board, CEO and staff a pat on the back for contributing to a very sound performance.

The foreword is very much two pages of blah blah blah, but they did mention the Board had entered a period of strategic rebuilding of its direction and is moving to strengthen the capacity, capability and credibility of the organisation. As you can see we are rebuilding again. It seems to us that it takes so long to rebuild things that by the time it's rebuilt it's out of date and its time to start again at a greater cost to us. What benefit do we get out of all this rebuilding?

underway.

Qualification rules have changed significantly following a targeted review of the qualification system (TRoQ) by NZQA (the Government).

The TRoQ found that the qualifications system was difficult for learners, employers and industry to understand because it:

- *Was not relevant to some employers and industry*
- *Was not user-friendly, and the status of qualifications was unclear*
- *Contained a large number of similar qualifications which made distinguishing between qualifications and identifying education/career pathways difficult.*

The career pathways of the qualifications are being re-examined. Existing qualifications will be replaced. The new replacement "New Zealand" qualifications will not be owned by any ITO or provider. However, under NZQA rules, providers may be able to develop their own curriculum and programme of learning that will lead to the new qualifications.

We need you

Please contact the ITO or your member organisation if you have any feedback or qualification requirements that you would like to tell us about.

If you would like to be added to the consultation

The foreword explains that the Board undertook a review of its governance and operational policies. We are presuming this is their internal governance and it had nothing to do with us, as they stated in other documents that they have no governance role over the industry.

They mention the public awareness campaign where we all got a sticker each to display on our van, and state they are going to target an area in New Zealand with the objective of identifying and prosecuting those people it finds are working illegally.

The foreword mentions the fees reviews and has a sentence softening people up for a fee increase, stating that the Board will lose its gas certification role and income which will be financially challenging for them – in other words brace yourself for yet more increases.

Apparently they conducted a review of their disciplinary processes in 2011, where they were mindful that these processes were carried out in a cost effective manner and also should focus on rehabilitative rather than punitive outcomes. It's quite amazing how this review was conducted - we haven't spoken to anyone who was the subject of action by the Board who was asked for their view.

Last but not least, the Board talk of their satisfaction survey where overall they claim a relatively high level of satisfaction in terms of the Board's general performance in general service and communication. Bad results were explained away as being influenced by views on CPD and the disciplinary levy.

More on the Annual Report next week.

Lets do it again

It doesn't seem that long ago that we opposed the registration class names of Certifying Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers and Licensed Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers and we ended up with licensed Licensed Plumbers Gasfitter and Drainlayers and unlicensed Licenced Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers.

We opposed it, but the powers to be knew better and went ahead with the changes and now they are considering whether to undertake a review of the existing registration class names. Talk about groundhog day!

Since the 2006 Act's implementation in April 2010, concerns have been raised, largely by industry, about the Board's registration class names.

The Federation has been asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the existing registration class names, specifically Certifying and Licensed tradespeople.

The Board would appreciate if we could send our feedback on the effectiveness of existing registration class names by 31 August 2012.

So if you have any ideas or opinions on this then send them to us and we will compile a submission to the Board.



database email list please email Lagi.Asi@ito.co.nz Updates about the review and further information can be found at the ITO website

So there you have it. If you have any views get them to us and we will do what we can to affect change that we feel the industry needs but don't be mistaken, the Federation members attending these meetings are up against years of entrenched lines of thought and agendas.

Change is not going to come easy.

Letters to the Editor

This is what I think about how the Board uses our money:

It is a normal slow day at the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. The rain is beating down and the streets are deserted.

Times are tough, everybody is in debt, and everybody lives on credit.

On this particular day a plumber is visiting the Board for an interview with an investigator. He decided to pay his overdue licensing fees while he is there so he places a \$1,000.00 on the counter for processing while he is getting interviewed and off he goes.

The Registrar notices the money and knowing the Boards credit situation, grabs it and runs next door to pay the Boards debt to the lawyer.

The lawyer takes the \$1,000 and runs down the street to repay his debt to the supplier who sold him a shower (which he installed himself).

The supplier heads off to pay Master Plumbers who had run Continuing Professional Development

At this stage what comes to mind is "do it once do it well."

Accounting for our money

Studying the Board's Annual Report and Regulations Review Committee response by the Board reminded us of Treasury Guidance on Memorandum Accounts. These are basically a set of accounts that run inside the organisation's normal accounting systems to ensure money collected for a set purpose, such as the Discipline Levy and the Offences fees, are used for those purposes and not bundled into other areas.

This issue was raised with the Board over 18 months ago and still we don't see any sign of reporting on the Memorandum Accounts to prove we aren't being overcharged, and any surpluses are held to be used for the purpose to which they were collected.

This is what Treasury says:

7.5 Memorandum accounts

Determine whether the use of memorandum accounts is appropriate.

Memorandum accounts should be used wherever possible.

They are notional accounts that record the accumulated balance of surpluses and deficits incurred in the provision of certain outputs on a full cost-recovery basis.

Memorandum accounts exist to:

- *bring transparency to charging (through publication and use as part of consultation on charges);*
- *discipline agencies not to over-recover or cross-subsidise;*
- *provide a credible commitment agencies will not inadvertently benefit from over-recovery;*
- *avoid the use of erratic fee adjustments to manage a previous year's over- or under-recovery; and*
- *establish an even-handed regime allowing for both short-term surpluses and deficits, consistent with a long-run perspective.*

Memorandum accounts should be used wherever:

- *third parties are to be charged for services provided on a full cost-recovery basis;*
- *refunding surpluses or levying short-falls through a contractual arrangement is costly or impractical; and*
- *the benefits of preparing a memorandum account clearly outweigh the compliance costs involved.*

We don't know why the Board has chosen to continue to hide the real costs and possible surpluses but we do know that the over charging for cost recoverable services can be deemed to be a tax and the Board does not have the authority to tax us.

Memorandum Accounts would answer a lot of questions regarding the actual and real costs of discipline – we ask the Board WHY they aren't using them, and WHY they aren't providing this information. It could mean that in some years there is enough in the "pot" to scale these fees back to nothing.

training for them.

Master Plumbers slip the money to the Plumbing instructor who had conducted the training.

He was tempted to use that money to pay his Air NZ account so as to continue receiving his air points while travelling around NZ instructing on Master Plumbers business, but realized that the board, in its capacity as a registered charity was also about to fly around NZ looking for people like him who hadn't donated fees to the charity.

The instructor races up to the Board to pay his annual licensing fee, discipline levy and offences fee.

The registrar receives the money and places it on the counter.

At that moment the plumber comes out and is so pissed off he picks up the \$1000.00, stating he's not paying his fee and walks out. No one produced anything.

No one earned anything. However, the whole network is now out of debt and looking to the future with a lot more optimism.

And that is how the system works.

You carry us and we'll go in that direction we think?



This is the impression most people have of the relationship between the Board and the industry, the industry propping up the Board and following them where ever they force us to go.

Someone once asked "Is leadership telling people what they want to hear or taking people where they need to be?"

This opens up all sorts of questions about our industry and as you know we have about 7500 licensed tradespeople and over 10,000 registered people - but who is actually providing the leadership?

The Board have stated they don't provide "Governance" and they make no mention of leadership, the ITO seem to claim they provide leadership with regard to training, and of course the Government always provides leadership (NOT).

Master Plumbers is a membership organisation so doesn't provide leadership for the entire industry, so in reality a hell of a lot of us are getting on with our lives looking after ourselves, but as an industry we still need to be united and have some form of leadership to make life easier.

One of our readers sent this to us:

LEADERSHIP – *Ensure the right people are brought together to affect a coordinated, transparent approach that will enhance clear decision-making and planning.* - (CanCERN strategic plan Feb 2012).

A pretty good description of what's needed which can be broken down to include motivation, leading by example, inspiring, mentoring, coaching, teamwork and vision. Now all we need is for all this to happen for the industry.

How do we get all these things? How do we get what is best for the industry? This is something we all need to think about so send us your views.

The industry is in so much turmoil now that this is probably the best time for the fresh start so badly needed.

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