

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- Fees Review Consultation meetings
- Fees Review Behind the 8 ball
- Memorandum accounts
- It's Real



**IN OTHER NEWS**



Re CPD training:

This might be a good idea to get practitioners upskilled but the Board has just chucked this thing out there telling us we have to go to it and do these courses that charge fees that are a total rip-off.

If you are doing this crap by correspondence you have to do it after normal work hours when you're knackered from working all day and you still might not be finished work because you are still on call.

The only course I've done this year is a Dux Secura evening at Micos because that was free and it was pretty informative but as for paying fees of around \$85 per course at learning institutions I just cant afford that especially when you have to cough up for around 3 or 4 per year on a single income.

Why can't these things be made cheaper and accessible and during normal work hours, held in a classroom and you get paid to attend after all

**Fees Review Consultation meetings**

The Fees review consultation meetings are under way and four meetings have been held. As yet, we haven't received any feedback which could indicate a number of things ranging from "its all good", to "we didn't go because we can't believe a word they say", to "what's the point?"

We know we will be attending meetings to get some very serious questions answered. Let your thoughts and feelings be heard and attend the meetings!

Here's a great idea from one of our supporters:

*"Sorry to be a nuisance however I had a thought that perhaps you may wish to include in your next newsletter that at the end of each consultation meeting being held around the country, someone asks for a hands up vote as to whether everyone at the meeting is satisfied or in agreement with the changes. This is due to the fact that nothing is recorded from these meetings and after the consultation process the Board always seems to say they are generally satisfied of the outcome and acceptance of those who attended the meetings, when in fact very few are, and there is now way of knowing as one can't attend all the meetings so they just make up stuff that cant be verified. Then the process just keeps rolling on".*

**Fees Review Behind the 8 ball**



We had the opportunity to read the recent fees review conducted by the Electrical Workers Registration Board (EWRB).

This Board has a similar function as the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board but what a difference the human connection makes.

The EWRB fees review portrayed the EWRB, from start to finish, as an organisation that is operating efficiently and is connected with the industry. No doubt there will be electrical workers who would disagree with us but compared to what we put up with it looks professional.

we do a bloody important job in the community and if the Board had a brain between their ears and got out and met a few plumbers and talked to a few of the guys they would soon see it's really not the plumbers gasfitters and drainlayers that need upskilling.

Doctors, teachers and lawyers for example have CPD and they get special leave and allowances to do this stuff and it's all funded not by the individual but by the company or the government during normal work hours so how about it?

### Make Williamson Listen

Dear Editor:

Quite simply put the time has come to circumvent the suits at the top and go straight to the media.

If that tosser Williamson won't play with us, let's force his hand. Just remember, any politician is not an expert in their portfolio – and in my opinion Williamson's history in politics proves he is more incompetent in his portfolios than most, just a puppet controlled by those giving them the information.

Their role is to orally dress it up (with lies and misinformation) so the majority of the populace will support their position through ignorance.

We need assistance and the general public may have considerable compassion for our industry if they know the direct reasons for the large cost increases (both historical & future) to their pockets.

Go to Campbell Live and Close Up.

Let's not forget, also, that Government, in its various forms, are directly responsible for the every-increasing decline in trade competency, due to its introduction of the present apprenticeship scheme.

Firstly they outlined the changes to the electrical certification requirements will mean a reduction in the work of the Board and a reduction of approximately \$1,500,000 per annum in Board's revenue.

This is the same scenario we face with gas certification; however the income to our Board was in the vicinity of \$734,538.

The EWRB responded by looking at positive issues for the industry such as:

- delineate registration application fees for New Zealand and overseas trained applicants to recognise the additional resources required to consider applications from overseas;
- standardise and cross subsidise all written examination fees and associated examination functions to ensure there is no monetary impediment to persons wishing to enter the industry; (wow a regulatory board that "get's" the fact that we need new people coming in at a reasonable cost!)

- amend the requirement for practitioners to uplift an annual practising licence in favour of a two yearly requirement which aligns with the two yearly competency programmes the majority of practitioners are required to carry out for the issuing of practising licences; (and they have common sense as well!)

- delineate between online and manual practising licence applications to recognise the time taken to process the different applications and thereby; - set the on line practising licence fees at \$120 per two years as opposed to the present annual fee of \$94.04 (a reduction of \$34.04 per annum); - set the manual practising licence fee at \$190 per two years as opposed to the present annual fee of \$94.04 (a reduction of \$1 per annum);

- draw down on the Board's Memorandum Account reserves over the next few years to offset the increase in fees;

- review the fees at least once every two years in the future.

A full copy of the review can be viewed at:

[http://www.ewrb.govt.nz/content/publications/fees-discussion/Fees\\_Review\\_Discussion\\_Paper\\_March\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ewrb.govt.nz/content/publications/fees-discussion/Fees_Review_Discussion_Paper_March_2012.pdf)

A few major points we picked up on were:

- The reduction in fees for on line registration and even a reduction in manual fees even though revenue is down.

- Two year registration is being recommended.

- Exam fees are being cross subsidised to ensure no monetary impediment to people wishing to enter the industry.

- Memorandum accounts are being used to offset increases.

It appears to us the EWRB have looked at the situation and have deemed they need to save money and think smarter where our Board seem to have taken the attitude that they just need more money.

So what did our Board come up with in the same situation:

- Need more money to cover reduction in income as gas certification contributes \$385,000 to overhead.

Re: Mr Williamson

If the Minister won't talk to the Federation then they should get political by engaging with the opposition so they ask the hard questions in the House where the Minister is obliged to answer in the public forum

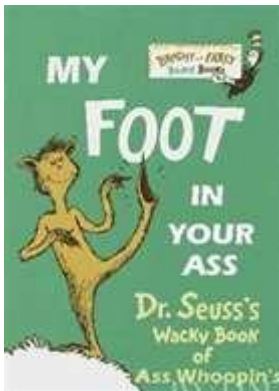
Dear editor.

For your entertainment

If the Board does this



They should get this



But there is a problem in that they protect themselves by doing this



Have a nice day editor and keep up the good work.

- Put up license fees
- Implement a fee for trainees
- Increase registration fees
- Increase disciplinary levies
- Increase exemption application fees
- Increase exam fees
- Increase exam reconsideration fees
- No subsidisation from memorandum accounts because they don't exist

Its quite sickening the difference in attitudes and compliance with Treasury and Office of the Auditor General guidelines with regard to Memorandum Accounts which will be discussed later.

Two reviews that are chalk and cheese. One full of comparable useful information and the other full of smokescreen figures they want the industry to follow without question.

Here's a crazy idea – perhaps we should be requested the EWRB take over the function of the PGDB, much like the Electrical ITO have absorbed the Plumbing ITO.

### Memorandum accounts

Memorandum accounts have been around for years but have been ignored by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board even though their use was recommended by the Office of the Auditor General, the Regulations Review Committee and are found in Treasury Guidelines.

Memorandum Accounts basically keep track of the funds collected and used for a specific purpose so the funds are not used for other activities.

For example, the discipline levy should have been accounted for in Memorandum Accounts for a number of years (and it would surely be in a surplus situation as costs do not appear to have equalled income), and we can only surmise that they haven't been as the levy has been treated as a cash cow for other activities and for the survival of the Board.

Look at the actions of the Registrar and Board in not implementing memorandum accounts until now when they have accumulated sufficient funds as reserves.

The extra money accumulated will never be used for discipline and even in this fees review they want extra for discipline which they will now put into memorandum accounts.

We believe this is absolutely despicable behaviour and tactics.

Perhaps the Board and Registrar should check their liability for being held accountable under section 171, PGD Act 2006 where subsection 1 does not exclude the liability of any body or person for anything done or omitted in bad faith or without reasonable care.

The Board needs to realise that when individual credibility is gone - it's gone forever.



We all need to step up and tell a friend about what is happening to the industry and if you don't have any friends tell anyone who will listen and even if they won't listen - tell them.

Silence won't achieve anything at this stage as we need people to know what we are up against and how it will affect them.

Get the message out there and get recruiting.

Direct people to the Federation website [www.pgdf.co.nz](http://www.pgdf.co.nz)



Prior to going to print we heard from one person who attended one of the Boards Consultation meetings and he said it was ten minutes of blah blah blah from the Registrar who was accompanied by a note taker and two Board members who didn't say much.

The party line was user pays and everything should cover its own costs and obviously they have to work to the Act.

## It's Real



Mr Bickers continually spouts about his goal of the Board being credible etc., but have we reached a stage where these are simply wasted, hollow words.

To begin with it looked a promising situation, with a new Registrar and new Chairman - but their actions have put even more strain on the credibility of the Board.

As an industry we need to be convinced and believe that the Board is trustworthy. This trustworthiness should result from their expertise and experience but all we have really seen is dirty tricks.

Are they believable, convincing and does their documentation display expertise? Why should we believe anything the Board says to us?

In days gone by there would be no question of the credibility of people appointed by the government or people in so called positions of authority, but in reality that is what has got this industry into its current situation.

We have been trusting in those who we should be able to trust and they have abused that trust and let us down. Not just the Board, but the Minister and the Industry Training Organisation.

The Federation seeks a government and Board that respect the industry and that are ACCOUNTABLE, like we are accountable for our actions.

The Board's behaviour is not that of a competent, open, fair organisation. We believe they knowingly breached Treasury and OAG guidelines so they could accumulate reserves for general use, ignoring memorandum accounts.

They continue with basic ongoing violations of legislation and expect us to trust and believe them. Mistrust continues due to us refusing to adopt the Board's methods.

We don't condone illegal activities and we also don't condone similar behaviour from the Board.

Look at it in context that we are defending our rights and industry in a non aggressive manner and are playing by the Government's rules with regard to complaints in a direct response to the Board's actions.

Is it time for dialogue? Well yes it is, and it has been for a long time but the Board have adopted a siege mentality.

John Simmiss stated to Wal Gordon nearly two years ago at a meeting with Max Pederson, that he was the Board's Industry Liaison person, the "go between". Well what a joke that was, he has never approached the Federation since.

This Board and Registrar simply can't be taken at face value.