

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Letters to the Editor Board Consultation
- Credibility

IN OTHER NEWS

A Way Forward

The Chairperson of the Federation this week invited some of the previous Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Members and Chairpersons to comment on the direction of the industry. This is what was sent out.

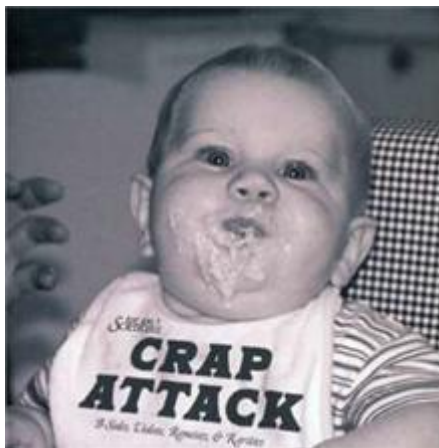
Dear Sir

You are no doubt aware the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation was established two years ago in an attempt to get fairness and equality in plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying regulations and legislation. We want fair and proper governance.

The Federation is looking for a way forward and reminiscing may be a way we can learn from the good and the bad.

Those of us who remember how it was, pre year 2000, when three licenses cost \$75.00, there was no disciplinary levy and the then Plumbers Gasfitters and

Letters to the Editor Board Consultation



This is how one supporter summed up the Board's consultation meeting in Wellington on Tuesday 25 September 2012.

There have been numerous comments and notes to the editor about the worth of the meeting and questions as to if it qualified as consultation. You be the judge on that - at- this stage.

Dear editor: The meeting in Wellington was simply a crap attack. I don't know how many times I heard "the Act says" or "we do what the Minister tells us in the Output Agreement". I thought it was meant to be an independent Board with industry representation but it seems more like an episode out of "Yes Minister". The feeling of the few there wasn't what you would call welcoming or trusting. I personally feel it was a bunch of lies.

Dear Editor: At the meeting last night I couldn't believe Mr Bickers and Mr Pedersen when they said they had never looked at why fees had gone from \$75.00 ten years ago to the \$500 plus level they are at now. What planet are these people living on? Are they on the planet of "tradespeople are stupid and will continue to pay money?"

Dear Editor: Is there any chance of the Federation paying for some CPD training for Mr Bickers as he really does need some anger management training. I understand that in Napier he raised his voice when he was called a clown and last night he yelled "Excuse me I'm talking". Perhaps if anyone had respect for him they would be quiet when he speaks but they don't, so he will have to live with it.

Dear Editor: I attended the PGDB Consultation "road show" last evening in Wellington. I made a few observations which I would like to share:

- Apathy is alive and well in our industries. The turnout was pathetic given the large number of practitioners in Wellington, the Hutt Valley and Kapiti. Either we don't care what they do to us, or we are fatigued with being asked what we think and then ignored.
- The Board "listened" but I don't think they "heard". They are servants of the Minister and this Government. Despite practitioners still thinking they are there for us – they are most definitely NOT and they never have been. We need to get over this misconception which is alive and well and instead look after ourselves and each other.
- The Board have done a risk analysis around losing their charitable status. This, I would say, is becoming more of a reality for them. They spoke of paying 28% tax on any profit – but aren't they meant to be a "non profit" organization?

Drainlayers Board was held in respect, working in harmony with Tradesmen, Government and the Public wonder what is it that has gone so horribly wrong?

We would like to invite you to comment on the good and the bad and about the direction we are being taken. We aim to publish your unedited reply in an edition of the Federations "Fellow Practitioner". We have chosen you as one of the people who were held in respect by the industry and would be grateful if you could respond.

With any luck we will get some good responses that will help form our future direction.

Protest Action

As stated last week we told you we had touched base with Police National Headquarters regarding protest action during the visit by Prince Charles.

They have got back to us and we will be having a discussion with them about possible protest action.

We have emphasised to them that the protest is NOT against Prince Charles but rather the Government's in-action with regard to the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry.

We have indicated we will have tradespeople sitting on toilet pans with protest signs every 10 or so meters close to the end of the routes travelled by the Prince.

This will no doubt get

• They are holding fast to the notion that they legally collected the discipline levy from us in 2010 and 2011 – only time and some good lawyers will tell if this was the case.

• They recorded the questions asked, but not their answers – they said that was because this wasn't a "public meeting" but a "consultation" - I think we all suspect it's so nothing can come back and bite them in the arse.

• When they got asked some of the harder questions – they didn't really have the answers – questions around the accounts and how the figures didn't add up – how it looks like the overcharge on the disciplinary levy seems to have funded their reserves, why they are on the Terrace with a huge rent (there is still about three years to go on the lease – thanks Ms Singleton!), they quoted percentages and had some pretty graphs – but let's face it – we are facing increases when I don't believe they have done enough to cost cut.

• When asked about the \$145k of savings they had around losing gas certs – they couldn't or wouldn't say if this equated to job losses. My goodness you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that if they aren't performing this function – people have to go, desks can be sold and the space needed to operate should reduce. They will no doubt argue the function of auditing will become harder and need more input.

• There was a strong feeling expressed that if the Board really and truly believed in protection of the public they would lobby government around the selling of plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying gear through DIY shops. You don't sell someone a gun without a fire arms licence, but our DIY shops can sell HWC's and gas appliances etc to anyone – "bombs" surely in the uneducated's hands. They said we made good points – but do you honestly believe they will represent this to a National Government who are their masters? I don't think so.

• The Board is answerable to the Minister – that is the one and only opinion they care about. Individually they are good hard working citizens, keen to get on this politically appointed Board – some to really make a difference, others no doubt to clip the ticket and perhaps use it as a springboard to bigger and more lucrative government appointments. As a collective - "the Board" - I do not think they have served our industry well – they have, and continue to make legal blunders and in spite of all information at their fingertips, a gaggle of lawyers in-house and outsourced – they still can't interpret the Act correctly. The folly of their ways will bite them in the backside, and industry need to join together to ensure we get back what was rightfully ours.

• The Board continued to make excuses about not knowing what previous Board's did – I didn't believe this for one second – there are Board member's there who have been sitting in those positions for change over's, and staff and records that show who did what and when. They simply don't want to acknowledge the wrong doings of the past, the mistakes of the past or the bad decision-making of the past – and yet they have built on this past so that we have ended up in a situation of further mistrust and continued lies.

As to the questions around standards being ours for \$5 – well they aren't downloadable – they are the most common ones most of us already have and I believe this is a smokescreen to divert our attention away from the real issues – like the fact that this Board simply "takes" from us what it needs to operate without any regard to the economic climate, to tightening their belt and to being as ruthless with themselves as they are with us. Should trainees pay for their licenses? Well I would say, like most of the proposal, this is a done deal. They ask us, but they have a clear idea of what they are going to do, the asking simply allows them to tick the box to the Minister

national and international coverage. Let the embarrassment be on the Government for treating us with contempt.

One sided

One of our supporters asked for a copy of the minutes from the fees consultation meeting he attended and what he got was very one sided but not in the way you may think.

All he got was a list of the questions asked. There were no responses from the Board so perhaps they will fill in the answers later once they think of some replies.

We suggest if you are going to attend one of the meetings video it so there is a record of the meeting

5 interesting facts about Wellbeing:

1. Giving time, effort (and even money!) away tends to make people happier.
2. Trust is a major determinant of happiness.
3. Doing good is one of the best ways to feel good.
4. In every society, family or other close relationships are the most important.
5. Positive emotions feel good in the moment and also affect our long term well-being.

A new survey is set to find out whether New Zealanders are happy, sad, stressed or relaxed. Sovereign and AUT have launched their research into

and say – “yes Minister we consulted”.

Will I go to another consultation meeting – yes always, because if you don't go and try your best to get your opinions across then you can't moan afterwards. The Board were told a lot of things last night – ranging from the incredulity that certs are going – to the distaste of some around the quality of auditors, the lack of transparency in their actions, and the fact that the industry still mistrusts them was heard loud and clear.

To those of you in areas still to see the Board – turn up, represent our industries and ensure your voice is heard – and then – get in your submissions!

Credibility



Last week we said we would look at credibility and why it must change for the industry to progress so we ask has the Board's credibility increased or decreased?

Well it depends if you support their tactics or if you have morals and despise their methods.

The Federation feels there needs to be a huge change in the Board's methods and attitude before it can even get close to gaining any credibility.

It wouldn't have been so bad had this current Board not carried on with tactics and attitudes of the past.

It was quite evident at the Wellington Consultation meeting that the Board doesn't accept any responsibility for anything. The standard reply was that the Act permits it to do certain things which it does and the Minister tells them what to do by way of the Output Agreement.

Quite frankly we left the meeting in Wellington firmly believing the Board are a bunch of puppets on strings operated by the Minister and the three people the Board mentioned for the Department of Building and Housing who provide the Minister with advice.

After that comment it makes you wonder if the Board isn't just a level of bureaucracy to give 30 people jobs.

How can they ever have any credibility when you can't believe what they say - and a prime example was bought up this week in Wellington when at the consultation meeting Wal Gordon asked about there only being \$10,000 allocated for CPD accreditation when a figure supplied by the Board indicated it would cost \$3,500.00 for that process per course.

The Registrar and Chairman denied any knowledge of any statement. Wal sent this to the Registrar at 5.38am on the morning after the meeting:

Dear Mr Pedersen

The document referred to last night that you and Mr Bickers denied seeing was Review the polices of professional development, Board Meeting 258, Date 26 July 2011, Board Paper Reference Number TC1.

people's wellbeing. You can complete the online survey at:

www.mywellbeing.co.nz

Charities

The Charities Commission became part of Internal Affairs last year and had been investigating and clamping down on organisations that don't meet the criteria for being a Charity.

As well as their own regulatory investigations they have received complaints about organisations.

Department charities general manager Brendan Ward said there would always be those unhappy with what it did as a regulator.

"We are trying to be as open, transparent and consistent as we can."

He said Internal Affairs did look at the big picture of whether an organisation was beneficial, but was constrained by the law, which was explicit about profit.

"A key driver is public trust and confidence."

Hmm food for thought for our regulator we think!

When referring to the Modified CPD Page 10 clearly states "Therefore the accreditation of a course would be \$3,600.00 per course compared to the current accreditation cost of \$200.00 per course"

If you have difficulty finding it or if it's already been shredded then I can provide you with a copy.

This was Mr Pedersen's response

Dear Mr Gordon

I have located the paper that you refer to, which presumably you obtained through an OIA request. The paper is an officer's draft report that was never presented to the Board. In fact there was no report on the review of CPD presented to the July 2011 meeting.

The draft report should have been marked as a draft when it was released to you. You will also have noted that the section of the draft report within which the figures in question are included, describes a CPD option that is quite dissimilar to the one proposed and adopted by the Board.

I confirm my advice at last night's meeting that there is no intention to change the CPD course accreditation fee from the current \$200.

What can we believe when the covering letter to the document states in part: "a copy of a report submitted by Kern U'ren, Deputy Registrar, to the Board that includes a summary of feedback received at the industry forum"

If the registrar and Chairman are telling the truth why have we paid the Deputy Registrar to produce 15 pages of recommendations after what appears to be extensive research – who was managing his work load?

Why wasn't this tabled at the Board meeting if it was after consultation (yet another example of them not listening to us?) Who do we believe? Who should we believe?

Beware of bugged eels

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