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## IN OTHER NEWS

### Short Fuse



Some people say the Federation is too quick to criticize issues, that it has a short fuse for want of a better term, but we prefer to call it a “swift and assertive reaction” to the bullshit that seems to surround stupid people. We simply reflect the discussions going on in smoko rooms every day.

### The Petition

Last week we received a letter from the Social Services Committee regarding the petition submitted by 1228 of us requesting a Commission of Inquiry into the regulation and governance of the industry.

The Committee referred to the 2010 Office of the Auditor General's (OAG)

### Talk to the Butcher not the Chopping Block



After attending the consultation meeting last week it was quite evident the Board only listens to the Minister so you can imagine our surprise last Friday when the Minister's Office contacted us regarding a request for a meeting which was submitted by the Federation Chairman a few weeks ago!

The Federation Chairman, Wal Gordon will be meeting with Maurice Williamson in a couple of weeks time so we will keep you informed of what transpires.

The committee requested the following items be placed on the agenda as a starting point:

- Fees
- Continuing Professional Development
- Credibility of the current Board
- Governance of Industry - the future and how it might look?
- Training and Apprenticeships
- Discipline and enforcement
- A look to the future if nothing changes

This is the first opportunity the Federation has had to voice its concerns about the state of the industry formally to the Minister. Even though the Minister has agreed to meet with the Federation it is business as usual as far as the cause goes as words alone will not stop us in our quest.

### Fees and Levy Consultation

All meetings have been held throughout the country and we have not heard one good report from them.

This is an excerpt from a post on the Plumbers Forum:

*“Just been to the Tauranga show and I think show sums up their performance. They go through the motions, make believe they have our best interests and smile like their one of us when you know everything has been put in place and prices are gonna go up”.*

*“Thing that got me the most was some dickhead plumber saying that the costs were what they were and that we should just suck it up and get on with it. No wonder we're in the position we are now with idiots like that in the industry. I think a mass boycott of paying our fees next year is the only solution in bringing these fools down”*

report and stated it was up for review in 2013.

They noted the issues raised in the petition touch on those addressed in the report and will monitor the outcome of the review.

As a result they have no other matters to bring to the attention of the house.

In other words they are going to leave the illegal activities and pitiful governance in place for another 12 months.

Excuse us for being cynical but that review has been scheduled for quite some time and by the time it comes around we as an industry will have been ripped off for millions of dollars and good trades people will have left.

We really can't believe how stupid the politicians are being. We know this is costing both major parties votes and for what – what is the advantage of everyone protecting this incompetent Board who are stealing from the industry?

We believe that's it's more about people saving face than what is right for the industry.

We feel the industry is being pushed too hard for too much and for no return.

Push people too far and they will retaliate. It's happening all around the world and the parties that support the average person are starting to rule and the way its going a new party may be formed here to do just that.

It fairly well sums up a lot of the feelings in the industry.

This was picked up in the Media and is very appropriate to our situation:

*"But you have already decided what's going to happen. Only the details remain to be settled. It's like telling someone you're going to bomb their house and then asking whether they'd prefer carpet bombing or laser-guided missiles"*

*"Yes" said the minister. "And your point?"*

*"My point is that consultation after the fact is not consultation, it's more sugar-coating of strings, even as those strings tighten around our necks"*

*"Exactly said the minister, "neat eh? And now I think that's enough consulting for one day."*

The Board will no doubt be claiming the recent levy and fees review was a success with outstanding numbers where constructive discussions were had on a variety of subjects. We believe it can be added to the list of failures from this Board.

The proposed review scams in excess of \$369,407.35 from us and the Board claims it needs the increases- but do they really? Are you happy with where your money is going – vast numbers of you are telling us your are not – that you do not trust this Board in any way, shape or form. Perhaps it is time for the Minister to take another long, close look at just who he has appointed and what they are doing.

The cost of "accompanying" Board members at the Fees road show is something to consider. If Wellington is anything to go by, these "extras" were simply there to make up numbers as they had almost nothing to say. It would have been much cheaper simply to send the CEO/Registrar and Mr Bickers out as the additional decorations were just that.

With past performance and the tactics the Board uses it appears to us to be just another cover-up.

The Board offers a legislation service for Standards which people without access to computers will be paying for but can't use, and those that do have access can't download. It seems cheap individually but is it? Most people have been saying "it's only five bucks" but remember that's per licence so for most it's \$10-\$15, and in total they are looking to spend \$75 THOUSAND DOLLARS on this. Is it worth it?

We don't believe we are getting sufficient information or that the Board are telling the entire truth. It seems to be a situation of the Board trying to gloss over a bad situation in order to save face with the people who have appointed them.

It was interesting to see how they switched from answering questions in dollar terms, then percentages, then graphs – but nothing consistent, nothing transparent, nothing easy so that you could work out just where they were dealing to you.

We will get our fees submission to you over the next couple of days.

## From the internet

Forty percent of New Zealand workers think they're overqualified for their current job, but employers are struggling to find highly qualified people.

The Randstad Work Monitor Report shows more people are actively looking for a job, with 38 percent wanting better employment conditions.

But more than half are happy with the amount of training they receive and a similar number believe their employer offers sufficient career opportunities.

However, many are slightly more nervous about their job security.

And from the bosses' point of view, the survey shows two thirds are having trouble finding the right people for specific jobs.

Three out of ten employers expect a shortage of highly-qualified employees within the next three years.

## Letters to the Editor

Hi, As I near the end of my time in the Trade I still have a will to support the Federation in some small way.

Your proposal to engage such a high profile Law Firm is a positive effort and should be supported by Federation Members.

Change is never effected by talking on Building sites or at social venues. I urge members to stop sitting on their hands and

## Letters to the Editor

*Another informative edition last week Editor, I like the accountability bit to Mr Pederson - sadly these types are political beasts and don't have the industry at heart...that went out when money became more important and ticking the right box.*

*Hi Editor, as usual you are doing a great job and I thank you for you efforts.*

*With regards to Chen / Palmer do you think you will get a fair go from a company that obtains a large amount of its funding from the Govt when you will be asking them to obtain a result which the Govt will not want or like?*

*I suspect that these companies with their close associations in Govt business achieve a lot of their results on a nod nod wink wink basis with no record of any one being accountable. Any way I fully support your actions whatever they be.*

*Onto other matters I attended the consultation meeting which occurred last week in the North Shore event centre Auckland and listened to all the usual arguments and to the proposed fee changes. The basis of the detail which was discussed revolved around the act and any thing controversial was referred back to a requirement under the act.*

*Thinking about that surely the board was involved in the creation of the act and therefore responsible for the issues that are causing so much grief now. Disappointingly there was not a lot of discussion from the floor about plumbing issues other than the details of the proposed fee changes and I don't think anyone had time to absorb the consequences of what was proposed in such a short presentation.*

*There was a very vocal group of Gasfitters who raised their concerns about certification etc and to some extent hijacked the meeting away from its intended purpose, and when confrontation occurred out come the act quote again.*

*I went along to the meeting intending to raise some issues which I will outline as follows but for various reasons I did not stand and have my say.*

- 1. In its own silly way the board is gradually diminishing the value of any trade qualification under its control*
- 2. I do not see the purpose of any Qualification when it is not recognized in the forum it was created for. I.e. Local Authorities*
- 3. Why do we pay a fee to the board for a license which is not recognized by the local authority.*
- 4. Why as person who is fully qualified with many years experience in the trades yet I cannot carry out my work without authority from a second party.*
- 5. In addition this person gets paid a fee to inspect my work even though he may not understand the principles of the installation*
- 6. Why is an engineer able to sign off on a plumbing design yet I am not*
- 7. I do not see any advantage of my qualifications other than additional fees to the board and perhaps this is part of the reason for the drop off rate in licensed trade's people.*

*The above primarily relates to a situation I had with the Auckland council*

help bring about change.

It could be a David Vs Goliath effort.

**Dear Editor** We haven't met but I have read your emails regularly and appreciate the time and effort you and your fellow members spend on the issues facing our industry.

I think it is entirely appropriate that you engage Chen/Palmer to assess whether or not the actions of the board over the last ten or so years have been legal.

In my view the confrontational and money grabbing nature of the board since it restructure ten or so years ago has created a situation where, rather than working constructively with the industry to enhance public safety, they have created a wide division between themselves and the workers on the coal face.

As a result the costs to the consumer have risen and the incentive for unregistered and unqualified people to dabble in gas has risen. At some point I'll sit down and send you a decent email, but for now I'll just send a payment through to you for your fund.

*when after changing the design of a plumbing installation to suit structural problems a smart arse Audit inspector stopped the job until a new design had been drawn up and approved by either the architect or the engineer but he would not accept it from me .*

*As you would expect I drew up the design because neither of the above could understand what the problem was and after they stamped my design we all carried on.*

*As you can see this situation makes a complete nonsense of any qualification. This has been raised with the board without the courtesy of a reply and the Auckland Council department head would not speak with me.*

*As usual I know this consultation process we are going thru is a complete farce as that Ken Uren stated last year here in Auckland that they only do these consultations because it is a requirement under the act.*

*Generally from my observations the board has done very little to achieve harmony in the work place and seem determined to steam roll their requirements thru.*

*Finally I ask why do other skilled trades groups have less issues with their controlling authority and why do we pay so much so often when the situation in Australia is much more user friendly. I will send \$300 dollars shortly.*

Editor: Firstly we value the feedback from all our supporters and are happy to share views with others.

We want to thank all those who responded to last week's letter supporting getting legal advice to assist us in finding a clear path forward for the industry.

We extend our thanks to those who forwarded money to the Federation to help fund the engagement of the lawyers.

The Federation has the first lot of advice and can now respond to a Preliminary Report sent by the Ombudsman with regard to a series of complaints submitted last year.

The writer above brings out some very good points regarding the diminishing value of the qualifications in the industry. There have been a lot of changes implemented by the Board over the last two decades and we would ask the question "has anything improved?"

The Board has shown clearly that it is not an independent Board and that it does what the Minister tells it to do. There is no real industry representation on the Board but the Minister has appointed a lot of training providers to support the CPD concept.

It is rapidly becoming a comedy like "Yes Minister".

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