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IN OTHER NEWS

Meeting with the Minister

Every good conversation starts with good listening.

Every good conversation starts with good listening but there seems to be a trend now where you stamp your authority on the meeting first.

Mr Bickers tried it in Napier along with the Minister and then again at the Wellington fees consultation meeting and now the Minister attempted the same at his meeting with Wal Gordon this week.

The Minister read out an abusive and threatening email sent to the CEO of the Board and then asked if the writer was on the Federation Executive.

The response was that he was a Federation member but not on the committee.

This was an obvious attempt to unease Wal

Charity Gives but Accountability Changes



A charity or not a charity that's the question?

Dear Editor

Your readers maybe aware that the Board's role as a Charity is under question, and rightly so! This scam was a set up so as to avoid accountability and provide the Board with a method that allowed it to take in additional money from practitioners through fees by avoiding tax on income over and above what should only be cost recovery, the Board's books confirm this.

The good news is that the Board was formally notified last week by the Charities Commission that it will lose its Charitable status on November 2 2012 even though the Board and its legal team have argued their right for the last 12 months to retain their status as a Charity. The Board does have an option to appeal to the High Court the Charities Commission's decision before that date.

I note that the Board Chairman a Mr Alan Bickers has stated that it was interesting to him that during last year's consultation meetings he found that many tradesmen do not understand the Board's role. I would suggest to you Mr Bickers, that you and your Board do not understand your role. You appear to be under the illusion that the Board are a Nationwide Charity funded upon the income of practitioners. I look at the names of your current Board members who believe they are operating a Nationwide Charity and say outright, where is your competence?

Time to stand-up and tender your resignations Mr Alan Bickers, Mr Peter Jackson, Mr Craig O'Connell, Mr Graham Hardie, Mr Bill Irvine, Mr Ian Rowe, Mr John Simmiss, and lawyer Ms Susan Simmons.

Your continuation of the scam by rushing to add your names as Charity Officers, questions your integrity, ability and understanding of functions in administration and compliance.

Will the Board appeal, I would say they will, for what they have done is now bringing many other Organizations under review that will have widespread implications, of course the cost of taking this to the High Court does not come out of their pocket, but again that of those practitioners who still bother to fund a Board that believes it is a Charity.

Editor: Well that's certainly saying it the way it is. No one begrudges a charity doing its work but when people claim to be a charity and their charitable purpose is questionable then they should be held accountable otherwise nothing will change. If people are allowed to flout the law and rules and regulations then nothing will change and people will suffer. It will be interesting to see what actions the Board take from here.

but you would think the person feeding the Minister the information would have given him a full brief that the writer of the email is a fully paid up member of Master Plumbers and is in fact a past president of one of their local Associations.

Wal being the gentleman he is didn't inform the Minister as he didn't want him to feel bad so early in the meeting.

As for the meeting - the Minister listened and questioned. The Building and Housing Group representative did the majority of defending but the Minister was very attentive.

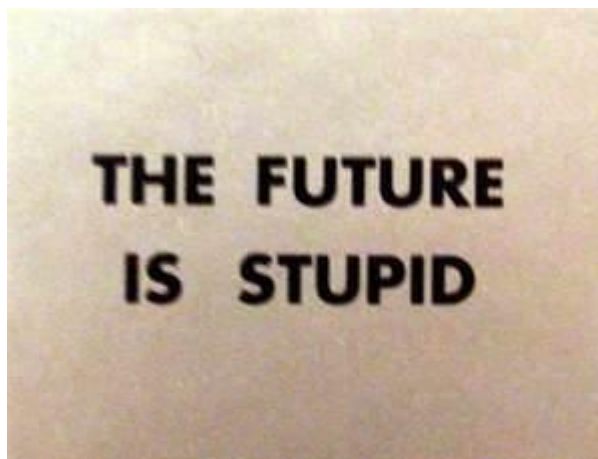
The Minister alluded to the fact that there seemed to be a vast difference in the picture Wal was painting and that which he was getting from the Board and the Building and Housing Group. (Ed – no surprises there then!)

Wal was given the opportunity to voice a large number of issues until the Minister stated he had heard enough and felt the Board should be there to defend itself.

The Minister tasked his staff to organise a meeting where the Federation can put forward its concerns and the Board can reply. The meeting should take place in the next couple of weeks.

Wal was also asked to supply a list of suitable people for the Board so if you are interested give your name to Wal.

Media Release



Media release from the Minister 27 September 2012

Safer outcomes for gas and electrical work

Changes to gas and electrical certification regimes mean safer outcomes for consumers, Energy and Resources Minister Phil Heatley and Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson said today.

The changes mean all gas and electrical installation work will now require certification.

The amended regulations will be published in the New Zealand Gazette today and are the result of a review of the regimes to ensure they provide cost-effective public safety outcomes.

The certification regimes have also been updated to permit practitioners to design their own certificates, and store and send them electronically. This means that gas and electrical practitioners will no longer be required to buy Certificates of Compliance from their worker registration board, removing a compliance cost.

Mr Heatley said that improving the certification regimes will raise standards in the gas and electricity industries while doing away with unnecessary compliance costs.

"The changes provide for an improved certification process with a new risk-based system that emphasises safety and accountability for installation work," he said.

"Details of all work classified as high-risk will have to be registered on a new publicly available database run by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

"This will improve the monitoring of 'high-risk' work and focus attention on the areas that will provide the greatest improvement in safety outcomes."

Mr Williamson said that the changes will benefit consumers.

"The changes mean consumers will always be entitled to get a certificate once work is completed. This will assure consumers that installation work and connection to energy supply is safe to use.

"Consumers should always check they are using a licensed practitioner before work begins and keep a copy of their certification once work is completed," he said.

When we spoke with Wal after the meeting he was positive, as usual, and stated "We have been to the "Nice Place" before and have eased off in the belief of an historical event where someone in government will take a stand for us. This time we continue on with business as usual."

The committee will now start working on the issues for the next meeting.



I refer to the letter written by Mr Harold Thomas.

People often say you should never go back but we certainly should.

We should go back to mutual respect, honesty and integrity and get away from the dishonest money grabbing self preservation environment we seem to be operating in.

I agree with Mr Thomas that we need to get this industry back to where it belongs.

Thanks to Mr Thomas for sticking his neck out and for those on the Federation committee who do it every day.

You have my support.

Re: It's Time to Get Real

I've been in the industry for 7 years and I've seen nothing of the good things that Mr Thomas describes.

I could not imagine how smooth life would be in

The amendment regulations also update the fees charged by the Electrical Workers Registration Board in relation to examination and licensing.

The changes are effective from 1 July 2013. For more information go to www.energysafety.govt.nz or phone 0508 377 463.

Editor: It seems the government has learned that pleasing everyone is impossible but pissing everyone off is easy. With regard to the gas certificates the Government will no doubt gloat that they have saved a couple of million dollars but what they don't say is that the cost has simply moved on to the industry who in turn will pass it on to the consumer. What we don't understand is how they can put such a spin on issues like this and never feel bad about it.

What they don't say is that the current system is transparent – homeowners, practitioners, potential home purchasers and the general public can all log on and check if a building or house has a gas certificate(s) against it. Easy, simple! Not so with this proposal. Most practitioners were against this change to the gas certificate regime, and we believe the PGDB weren't wildly excited about it either, however the suit wearers far removed from what happens on the ground thought it was a GREAT IDEA – so let's see what happens.

Of interest is what will be done with the existing system that we have all paid for i.e. the computer system that the Board currently run and that holds a wealth of information on gas certs. It belongs to us – we paid for it through our fees and we want it kept at least for historical data.

To us SMART has the plans and STUPID has the stories.

A Person in the Know



It would be interesting to ask the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board what feedback they have received from the general public about their "Ask for the Card Campaign." We wonder if the Plumbers, Gasfitters and

Drainlayers Board are preaching to the converted with this campaign and should they be focussing on a greater picture?

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and the Electrical Workers Registration Board are both now governed by The Ministry of Business and Employment (MBIE).

Given the massive changes in recent legislation, still on-going; to the Building Act in relation to the licensing of building practitioners and what work has to be carried out by whom, and what work is now classified as "exempt", it is suggested that all three organisations conduct a combined campaign informing the general public of their rights and responsibilities for carrying out any work on their property.

This could be carried out in a number of ways and all information should be aimed at educating the general public about the possible consequences of having any work carried out without the proper documentation and completed by unlicensed tradespeople.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) which has replaced the Department of Building and Housing advise on their web site that: " If you are building or renovating, it is likely you will be affected by the Building Act. As the homeowner, it is important you make sure work on your property is done in accordance with the law. It must be done to a good standard for your protection, and to protect

such and environment.

It sounds like a productive environment that I would like to work in so what can I do to help?

Editor: Just send an email to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz and tell him what area you are in and any specialist skills you have that the Federation may be able to use.

We know that protest action is being considered so put your name forward.

Board Policy

Two POINTS for you Editor - did you notice Anything that is too stupid to be spoken is put in Board policy and everything the Board does happens for a reason. But sometimes the reason is that they're stupid and they make bad decisions

Consultation

The Federation thanks all Federation members who sent in submissions to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board on the recent consultation on fees.

It would seem over 60% of the submission were from the Federation.

Well done everyone.

It will be interesting to see what the outcome is.

people who buy your property in the future.

The Ministry has essential information about your rights and responsibilities as you build or renovate. It tells you what you need to do at each step to ensure your building project is done legally, which will hopefully help avoid potentially costly mistakes or delays. It also explains how the law will protect you if things don't go to plan".

Some building work has now been classified as being exempt under Schedule I of the Building Act. Anecdotal evidence is appearing that owners may be receiving misleading information about what work is exempt when discussing a job with a tradesperson. The owner may be incorrectly advised through either ignorance by the tradesperson or as a deliberate method by them in an attempt of keeping the perceived cost of a job low to gain the work. A recent prosecution in the Wellington region highlights the potential damage and cost to the home owner when work is carried out by a non-licensed person.

Take the case of a simple carport. Under Schedule 1 of the Building Act it states that "A building consent is not required for the construction, replacement, alteration, or removal of a carport that does not exceed 20 square metres in size and is on ground level".

HOWEVER the carport must comply with the Town Planning Regulations, AND also the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 if drainage is provided to the carport. At the least a building consent is required to be applied for to cover the drainage component of the work as under current legislation, Drainlayers cannot self-certify their work.

Even when exempt work is correctly carried out under Schedule 1 it is strongly suggested that property owners should have some form of documentation/contract to protect not only themselves, and the contractor; but more importantly there is then a record of the work (including photographic evidence). The owner may then apply to the Local territorial authority to have this documentation The owner can show this documentation to any prospective purchaser that the work has been carried out using correct materials and has been installed by a competent person.

It is believed that the aim of all parties under MBIE should be more focussed on the education of the property owner rather than primarily the trades.

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