

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Commitment to Change](#)
- [Wanted Twenty plus keen plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.](#)
- [A Nice Try](#)
- [The Ombudsman Office](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

A Second Meeting with the Minister

Four members of the Federation Committee are scheduled to meet with Maurice Williamson on 8 November 2012.

This is the meeting agreed to by Mr Williamson at the meeting last week with Wal Gordon.

Also present at the meeting will be the Chairman of the Board Mr Allan Bickers, the CEO/Registrar Mr Max Pedersen and members of the Building and Housing Group.

The meeting is primarily for the Chairman and CEO/Registrar to be able to respond in person to the allegations being made by the Federation.

The Federation has drawn its line in the sand and will do whatever is necessary to ensure our industry gets treated in a fair and equitable manner.

The committee will meet next week to finalise discussion points so if you have any issues send them to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz

Commitment to Change



If you draw a line in the sand, you establish a limit beyond which things will be unacceptable and that is exactly what the Federation is doing.

The Federation is committed to long overdue change in the manner in which the industry is regulated. We know this will ruffle

the feathers of a few people who are living in the past, on past reputations, but for every person who has a dislike for the Federation there are others who support what the Federation are doing because it is obvious what has or hasn't been done in the last ten years just hasn't worked.

As the Federation hasn't done anything apart from expose wrong doings and opposing the aspects of the current systems that are wrong then we can only presume the people that don't like the Federation are the ones who support the current systems and direction and are benefitting from them one way or another.

The Federation has been told numerous times that it needs to work constructively with others, but that is a two way street. We don't see working constructively as being told by others what's going to happen – that's simply following like sheep. Working constructively is combining ideas and coming up with the best solution for the industry.

Nothing will change unless people and ways of thinking change. The Federation has been participating in the review of industry qualifications and has had concerns from day one about the process and the single line of thought. As a result this week the following email was sent to the project manager:

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation wishes to advise it is suspending its participation in the NZQA Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Review.

This decision has not been made lightly as we want nothing more than a system that provides to the individual, the industry and the public. We feel options have not been properly explored and we believe the path being followed is nothing more than a re-packaging of the current failing system designed by the same people.

Tim Fowler stated there were far too many qualifications and a lot did not demonstrate community or industry needs. He wants to reduce the qualifications numbers particularly in levels 1-6. This review so far has increased the number of qualifications and we don't believe it meets the industry needs. However, it certainly meets the needs of the training providers by providing extra avenues of income.

The Federation's ethos is to work with people to make change and reach compromises but at the end of the day if we disagree we will not make the mistake other organisations have made in the past and

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor. We haven't seen Dirty Harry in our area this week checking on our licences.

Has he moved to a new location?

Let us know and keep up the good work.

Editor: We are unsure where he is but no doubt he will need a rest after such a strenuous week under cover.

Is it a witch hunt

I read with alarm the fact the Deputy Registrar of the Board is travelling around the country following tradesmen's vehicles, then asking to see their practicing licence, and presumably reporting them for prosecution if they do not produce a current licence.

What is this, the English witch hunts of the 1670's, when the witch finder general (deputy registrar) travelled around the country accusing innocent people (plumbers) whom just happened to own a black cat (was in a plumbers merchant), then were dragged off to the court, convicted and fined (tied to the stake and burnt).

For petty offences like having a licence overdue and buying a tap washer.

I hope his highness the deputy registrar (witch finder) stops and asks me for my licence, he will receive some abuse and told to go away in no uncertain terms, as I am a registered Plumber and do not practice the dark arts (work illegally), and do not have the devils mark (an overdue

continue working on a project we disagree with. We will withdraw when it becomes obvious change can not be made and leave the responsibility on those who are pushing the path being taken. We will not be drawn into a situation where we are attesting to participating in something we disagree with.

You mention in your notes about an "overwhelming consensus" and "the group agreed" – these are fine words to make it look like it was a group decision but in effect the Federation voiced its concerns that not enough options had been explored and the Chair of the Governance Group gave his direction of what was going to happen.

The appointment of Mr Peter Jackson to the Governance Group without calling for nominations is an example of the Governance Group appointing people to support its position. With regard to Fiona Gavial she was nominated for her skills and experience and to simply be replaced by another Master Plumber member, to be notified, is yet again an example of nepotism to support the avenue taken.

If the process has no respect how can the outcome be respected?

We believe a couple of basic questions have not been asked regarding the purpose of the qualifications namely why are they needed and what does the industry and public really need from the qualifications? The addition of the Level 3, when the current Level 3 is simply a money making avenue for polytechnics at huge cost to young people who have yet to gain an apprenticeship does not inspire us with confidence. The questions will arise again about a credit of hours for anyone gaining Level 3 prior to an apprenticeship – when industry have made it clear they want 8000 hour apprenticeships. The costs will also be debated at length in the future.

This was a chance to make a change – to improve the lot of apprentices and industry - but alas it has been lost.

We are of the opinion the process is following a single line of thought. With so many training providers it simply provides the views of one section of the industry and we feel practitioner's views are being discarded.

We have attempted to contact Paul Hollings, The Skills Organisation, to discuss these issues but he is not returning calls. It is quite obvious the wagons have been circled with regard to this issue.

This is not a matter of spitting the dummy but more a case of drawing a line in the sand to achieve change. At the moment all that seems to be happening is a re-packaging of what we have, and feedback from our members (employers and apprentices) is that what we have isn't working for anyone.

Wanted Twenty plus keen plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.



Warning Order:

Situation: For over a decade the concerns of the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry have been ignored by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and the Government.

Discontent in the Industry saw the formation of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation who are fighting for the industry to be treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Recent events have shown the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers

licence).

Remember fellow practitioners the Act says you must be ABLE to produce your licence, which means you can say to the witch finder (plumbing police)–” I have it in my pocket, but I’m not showing it to you because I don’t legally have to”. Now go away and find an unregistered unlicensed cowboy, who is stealing work off of me to burn, who doesn’t pay the discipline levy and your wages every year.

It is in this writer’s opinion that if someone is breaking the law, it is a matter for the police, and not the board appointed staff (Plumbing Gestapo) – who in HELL do they think they are (the witch finder).

Editor: Well there is another strong view. Keep your comments coming.

Mis-guided Missile



We often wonder where the Board is going and how it is getting there. The other day a person mentioned to the Editor that the Board was like a guided missile so we looked for a definition and found one description which said a guided missile is “a missile that results in destruction, desolation or ruination”.

Our next question was how does a missile get to where it is going, and we found the following description where we have deleted the words “the Missile” and inserted “the Board”. We have added “DBH” and “Policy” and editorial licensing. Enjoy the read.

The Board knows where it is at all times. It knows this because it knows where it isn’t. By subtracting where it is

Board, backed by the sitting Government, are not listening to the industry and are stifling the progress of the industry whilst removing employment, skills and the rights of the industry.

Mission: To draw media attention to the plight of the industry by conducting a peaceful protest during the Wellington visit of Prince Charles.

Execution and General Outline: The intent is that the group of tradespeople aided by trade fixtures (toilet pans) and signage, will conduct peaceful protest on the route taken by Prince Charles whilst Prince Charles is in the Wellington, Fielding, Palmerston North and RNZAF Base Ohakea areas.

This is not a protest against Prince Charles but rather a protest against the Board and the Government, utilising the media interest in the Prince’s visit.

The Police have been contacted and a message will be sent to the Prince’s Aides to inform them of the action and that the protest is not against the Prince.

Wal Gordon, wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz is the point of contact at this stage.

This is a tentative action which is dependant on the outcome of events over the next three weeks.

We realise this may upset some people but our industry choices are rapidly being stripped away from us.

The responsibility for this embarrassment to the Country sits squarely with the Government and the Board.

The best outcome for the Federation is if we don’t have to conduct the protest, but it is a bit like Continuing Professional Development in that if it is forced upon us we will do it.

A Nice Try

Have a look at page one of this weeks “Info Brief” and read the article from Allan Bickers but try not to get dizzy from the spin!

He starts off stating a complaint to the Charities Commission from Wal Gordon, on behalf of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation, has led to the Board receiving notice that it is to be deregistered as a charity. Great news - but wrong!!

The complaint wasn’t from Wal on behalf of the Federation. It looks like Mr Bickers was on some crusade to point the finger at Wal and the Federation and got his facts wrong (not for the first time)! We won’t hold our breath for a retraction though.

What is also interesting is the Board “blowing the whistle” albeit it with incorrect information before the appeal period is up.

He goes on in the article to state how beneficial being a Registered Charity was to the industry and shows his obvious concern about the costs to the industry, but he must have forgotten what was written on page two of the same issue where it states:

“Quite simply the Board is the Government appointed regulator for the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying trades. Our role is to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that tradespeople are competent to carry out their work in a safe and effective manner. We are not here to represent or advocate for the interests of

from where it isn't or where it isn't from where it is - which ever is greater - it obtains a difference or deviation.

The Boards guidance subsystem uses deviations to generate corrective actions to drive the Board from the position where it is to the position where it isn't and arriving at a position where it wasn't – and it now is.

Consequently the position where it is - is now the position that it wasn't and it follows that the position that it was - is now the position that it isn't.

In the event that the position that it is in, is not the position that it wasn't, the system has acquired a variation. The variation being the difference between where the Board is and where it wasn't. If variation is considered to be a significant factor it too may be corrected by the DBH however the Board must also know where it was.

The Board's guidance computer scenario works as follows; because a variation has modified some of the information the Board had obtained it is not sure just where it is, however it is sure where it isn't within reason and it knows where it was.

It now subtracts where it should be from where it wasn't or visa versa and by differentiating this from the algebraic sum of where it shouldn't be and from where it was - it is able to obtain the deviation and its variation which is called POLICY.

It all seems so simple when you read it like that.

tradespeople like other membership organisations do for their members."

Concerned, not concerned, concerned, not concerned – wish he'd make up his mind.

We are heartened to see Mr Bickers' concerns for our fees and the fact that the reserves are there to offset the fees in coming years.

Amazing isn't it - how over all the years that have passed there has been no reduction in fees and even this year where the Board had a huge excess it hasn't happened - in fact they have consulted to put up the fees.

We believe the reason they had a surplus was that they simply charged us too much – but hey it took KPMG to work out their budget, with coloured graphs and % charts. We just employed some common sense to come to our conclusion.

To quote what we heard at the Wellington consultation meeting "we don't write the Act we just enforce it" and that's what happened here, the Board doesn't qualify so that's it, the Federation didn't write the rules and as for the Board choosing to spend \$24,000 trying to fight what they know is right is just wasteful expenditure on their part. Shame, shame, shame on them.

Mr Bickers seems to be implying that if a complaint hadn't been made the Board could have continued on operating as it was. We thought that was the type of behaviour the Board was trying to stamp out or does that only apply to tradespeople?

Don't worry Mr Bickers we contacted Wal and the Federation and they are happy to accept responsibility for holding the Board accountable if that's what you want.

The Ombudsman Office

The Federation has responded to a preliminary report from the Ombudsman's Office regarding three complaints laid twelve months ago.

The report was quite favourable to the view of the Federation and we have responded confirming our position.

Obviously the Board and the Minister have the same right of reply.

The Federation is now reliant on the independence of the Ombudsman.

As long as there is no influence applied to the Ombudsman or Government interference it should be a successful outcome for the Federation.

We'll keep you informed.

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Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation 3
Jupiter Grove Trentham
Upper Hutt 5018 Ph (04)
5277977 Mob 0276564811
Fax (04) 5277978
information@pgdf.co.nz