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IN OTHER NEWS



The Board believe they are under a constant barrage from the Federation and perhaps they are, but whose fault is that?

Did Federation members just wake up one morning as say *“not much on today I might just establish an organisation to barrage the Board just for the hell of it.”*

We are very confident it didn't happen that way and are fairly sure a group of like minded people were SO pissed off with the decisions and actions of the Board that they decided to do something about it.

Instead of laying blame the Board should look at correcting the actions.

United we stand divided we pay and obey



It's a simple choice - you can put up with a Board that is extending its powers and the bounds of the legislation ably supported by Master Plumbers Executive who claim to be working constructively with the Board - or you can get involved and get others

involved with supporting the Federation and push for change. At the moment the industry is not united - we just simply pay and obey. The Federation is providing the opportunity for the industry to stand firm and voice its concerns and objections.

No where in the Act does it state the Board is a consumer protection Board, no where does it state it's a charity, no where does it state the ten members of the Board represent the consumer and nowhere does it state you have to buy points to be deemed competent and yet all these things happen because we pay and obey.

No where in the ACT does it state about a Chief Executive Officer position, in fact the CEO position holds no power or delegations – they are all with the Registrar position. The CEO position, as far as we can fathom, was developed by Phil, for Phil, and it's just carried on from there based on the decisions of the Board. A CEO to look after 18 staff seems a bit overboard so why not save the industry \$100,000.00 plus annually and have a Registrar.

We believe the Act is there as the guiding legislation and everything that has happened after its implementation has been based on interpretation and actions by the Board. One supporter wrote *“The PGDB need to understand – that you don't have power if you surrender all your principles – you have office.”*

Mr Bickers and the Minister have been saying we must leave the past behind but how can we when the past is causing today's problems. Trust, credibility and respect are things that must be gained over a period of time. They don't come with position and they don't come immediately so it's all very well for the Board and the Minister to say to *“forget what's in the past,”* but the trust and respect won't be forthcoming when the behaviour of the past continues.

It seems if the Board causes the issue it is left behind in the past but if a tradesperson causes a problem it takes at least 6 months to get the issues dealt with and then it's promulgated to all and sundry and put on the register for three years for all to read. So how balanced and fair is that system?

**Tool Magazine issue
31 Dear Editor:**

Well done to the Federation for its comments in the recent issue of the Tool magazine.

I wish to comment on one comment by Mr Bickers where he states: "It is high time for those who continually dredge up the problems of the past to move on as well."

Mr Bickers I believe you are one of the problems from the past now, so do as your recommend and move on.

Dear Editor,

I have recently seen an article in the "Tool Mag" and would like to raise a question.

The minister heartily commends the Master Plumbers constructive engagement, rather than the stand offs and threats (I suppose made by the Federation, amongst others).

How could the Master Plumbers have any opposition when 50% of the represented trades people on the Board ARE Master Plumbers??

Then surely they are only agreeing with themselves, there are no arguments to have. They are following their own agenda.

I was once told by a Board member and life member of the Master Plumbers, when I asked about the lack of

General Complaints

Forget the past we are being told but here's a prime example of the past affecting the present. The Office of the Auditor General's report recommended that the Board establish a simple and effective complaints process for tradespeople who are unhappy with a particular Board decision or action, so that there is an accessible and transparent mechanism for getting a prompt review of a decision or action.

The Board did implement a complaints process but the policy does not cover complaints about an action, order or decision of the Board under Part 3 of the 2006 Act (relating to discipline and offences) and of a general nature about the Board's policies and processes under the 2006 Act.

We broached the subject of having a general complaints process that doesn't deal with general complaints when we met with the Minister who got Mr Bickers to respond. The response was along the lines of if they implemented a policy that dealt with general complaints they would be forever dealing with complaints.

So it looks like rather that get decisions and actions right you just don't have a process for dealing with those complaints.

If you find the Board rejects your complaint because it is of a general nature then send it to the Office of the Ombudsman at complaint@ombudsmen.parliament.nz or you can always send your complaint to the Minister at m.williamson@ministers.govt.nz

Mr Bickers and the Board Say!



On the Website: "The Board consists of ten ministerially -appointed members representing both the trade and the public"

In the Info Brief: "We are not here to represent or advocate for the interests of tradespeople like other membership organisations do for their members"

In a letter to a tradesman: "The membership of the Board is specified in the Act. The Board comprises of 10 persons 6 of whom must be persons who are registered tradesmen. The Tradesmen on the Board are able to reflect the views of the industry and tradesmen which is the purpose for their membership. The "mixed model" of Board membership which you seek already exists with tradesmen having a majority of membership on the Board.

You could lay money on it that the membership provisions in the Act pertaining to the Board will be a subject of review next year. A big question is "do those six representatives speak with or represent the entire industry"?

Does the industry have access to the Board so they can represent our views or is it that the Board have interpreted the issues the way they want so those practitioners simply represent the

action taken on a written complaint about dodgy certs covering dodgy work, made 3 years before a near fatal explosion.

I was shockingly told by him "that it was probably lost amongst all the other complaints". Do you think this attitude still prevails?

I would have thought that the fact the Board was receiving so many complaints that it would show how wrong things are, wouldn't performance be better monitored by the number of complaints, with work done to cut the number of complaints.....not use the amount as an excuse for lack of action.

Dear Editor: Ref Output Agreement

A word for Mr Williamson in regard to the Output Agreement with the PGDB – Governments tend not to solve problems, only to re-arrange them.

Dear Editor: With regard to CPD

I have a question regarding the courses we have to attend to get points for relicensing.

Do the people who are teaching us to be competent have the appropriate qualifications and unit standards to make them competent at teaching?

I feel this is very important as my livelihood hinges on them being able to teach me.

Ed: *Some might and some might not. We*

consumer. Remember also that three of the members are Master Plumbers.

Fees Review

The subject of the fees review was mentioned at the recent meeting and the Board appeared to take great pride in the fact that they had around a \$600,000 plus surplus last financial year which was due to hard work by Mr Pedersen and his staff.

We believe it is more likely the surplus came from overcharging the industry. The worksheets used for the existing fees shows one off events that have been taken off us for over two licensing periods to date being:

- \$250,000 for a consumer awareness campaign.
- \$30,000 for a practitioners road show
- \$20,000 for a fees review
- \$10,000 for an organisation review
- \$15,000 for an infringement notice project • \$5,000 for a debt collection project
- \$30,000 for an office systems and process development project.

So that's \$360,000 which we believe has been taken from us twice remembering they are one off events and the fees notice was in 2010.

Also worthy of mention is the \$85,000 annually for database development and web maintenance.

Another issue broached was to do with the fees for registration and remarkably Mr Pedersen stated they didn't know where the \$1,433.00 figure came from but the figure consulted on is \$500.00 (remember what's in the past doesn't matter).

The Board do not appear to have made any changes to the registration process so we believe the cross subsidisation of \$61.00 from the licensing fee is wrong which means the Board have taken \$61.00 per licence from us and let's be nice and say they only issued 12,000 licences then that's \$732,000 they have taken from us each year, that was in our opinion, not needed for registration.

Now other savings the Board made was on contract and temporary workers of \$513,000 but surely this is only making staff do what they are paid to do. The Board has employed communication and legal experts so there should be savings there.

Let's not forget the unexpected income of \$40,000 from extra interest, \$145,308 from exam fees when costs only increased by \$42,366 (don't forget they are wanting to put up exam fees), an extra \$39,280 from fines and costs and of course \$61,989 from an insurance payout.

So did the Board make a saving through better processes and hard work or simply from overcharging - you be the judge?

have said it before they could have been selling fish and chips yesterday and plumbing gear today.

And yes your livelihood is in the hands of people who might or might not be competent.

Exams

We've had a number of reports the exam process turned to sh#t in Wellington as the Board or whoever didn't supply all the reference material and some wrong material so guys had to sit around while the right reference material was sourced.

Some were told to start on something else and the examiners would get the reference material to them, some were given extra time - sounds like a real balls up.

We also hear of a person in another location being permitted to make a telephone call during the exams.

We feel sorry for the guys who were already going into a stressful situation and then have all this piled on them.

The worst thing is the Board won't learn from it as they are not interested in the past.

Mr Jackson Says



In a Special Issue of the "Info Brief" dated July 2012 Mr Jackson was very quick to announce the Regulations Review Committee had decided not to proceed with three complaints made against the Board.

He stated "*The Board is pleased but not surprised by the decision as, in it's view, the complaints had no substance*"

He later added "*The Board has gone to great lengths to ensure that its processes are robust and legally complaint and this is borne out by the RRC's decision*".

The RRC has this week announced it **WILL** be proceeding with the complaints and has invited Allan Day and Wal Gordon to give evidence in front of the Committee on 29 November 2012.

The Protest



The scheduled protest to help raise the profile of industry problems went ahead outside Government House on Wednesday. A huge THANK YOU to the participants and companies who released staff and also to the suppliers who helped with pans and provided welcomed cold drinks on

the day.

The organisation of the protest was complimented by the Police, which highlighted the facts that if you don't stretch the rules, if you meet and get a common agreement where everyone achieves their objective and do what you say you will do, then the trust, respect and credibility will follow. This was such that the Police did not feel the need to stand over the guys when Prince Charles was only meters away from them.

Our compliments to the guys and gals for their professionalism and support for the needs of the entire industry. By the way the most popular signs with the public were "Clowns should work in the circus not on the PGD Board," and "Jackass compliance regulations hit the consumer in the pocket". We have several members of the public stop and ask us what the protest was about and once they understood they were quite sympathetic.

Well done everyone and thanks to all supporters who tooted as they drove past and for the two Master Plumbers who didn't, we understand.

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