

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Common Sense](#)
- [Decisions being forced.](#)
- [Letters to the editor](#)
- [It's almost believable](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

Is the registration system doing apprentices a disservice.

Over the last few years there have been a lot of issues with training of apprentices and the assessments they attend every 17 weeks.

Fellow Practitioner wants your feedback to help answer a few questions like:

- What ever happened to training courses?
- Why has the price increased from \$6,000 to close to \$14,000 in two years?
- Is the quality of apprentices as good as it was?
- Should training courses be run or continue with assessments?
- Should people with "Licensed" qualifications be required to do CPD as in effect they are not recognised as being competent to do their trade without supervision?

Common Sense



It was a sad day when common sense left the regulation of the industry. Here we are with a Board that we believe doesn't communicate but tries to dictate its position, but are up against tenacity and legal interpretation. They try to impose less than adequate legislation and regulations but are up against common

sense.

Yes common sense has abandoned the regulation of the industry. You see any law, regulation, legislation or rule must be written in such a way that the people whom it is being imposed upon can read and understand it. There is no use having instructions if you can't understand them and they seem to be written in some foreign language.

It seems to us that simple legislation is being made difficult by the Board who are trying to extend the boundaries of what was intended and written - trying to legislate power to support the wants of a few. Legal opinions shouldn't be needed every five minutes to interpret a simple Act.

Common sense would tell you that productivity is not going to double because you have double competency points, and it's not going to decrease because you don't have any points.

Is it using common sense to impose a point's scheme on individuals, a scheme where the points have no real value, and then use regulations to make those points more valuable than the standards recognised by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority?

Haven't most tradespeople:

passed examinations or assessments, or both
 completed a period of practical training
 completes a period of practical experience
 undertaken a course of instruction
 undertaken a period of supervised practice.

As it stands the NZQA recognises the unit standards tradespeople have passed and the Board recognised our competency when passing the registration exams and meeting other criteria they imposed. They take the tradesperson's money and say "you are now

These are just a few questions to get you thinking but we have one big question for the industry - **Should the apprenticeship and registration scheme be looked at so that when an apprentice qualifies they can work unsupervised as a qualified plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer?**

This may require an apprenticeship being 5 years but in reality its 6 years now to get to the same level i.e. Certifying status when you can work unsupervised.

Send us your thoughts to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz.

Labour Promises 100,000 houses if elected.

We see that Labour is promising is promising 100,000 new houses for first home-buyers in the biggest building programme in 50 years, if they get elected and form the next Government.

It seems they want to take on the role of developer, cutting out middle-man costs.

The intention is that the government will be contracting with the private sector to build houses in bulk so they can keep the cost down.

The big issue is they will be using the Crown's cost of finance, which is a lot lower than private sector rates.

For those who have worked for the government you will know you get told how much they will spend and if you can't do it they will find someone else.

on the register". Twelve months later they say "you are incompetent because you don't have any CPD points". Those points just superseded the unit standards and exams the tradesperson has worked hard for and passed.

So now we have a situation of getting valueless points which supersede recognised qualifications, where's the common sense in that? This is just one example of pompous bureaucracy ruling over common sense.

If the industry can't understand the rules and regulations and why they are being imposed then they certainly won't support them.

Decisions being forced.



It was great to see the Board send out letters of reminder to those people who don't have sufficient CPD points.

This move will no doubt be great for those people who actually care about buying CPD points but for those who actually care about competence and courses that are of value to them and their businesses - it's another piece of

paper to shred.

From what we have heard so far from people it would appear the letters are a bit premature because a lack of points really only matters if the tradesperson renews all of their licences.

People have already contacted us stating they have sufficient points to relicense in their primary trade and if they don't have enough points for their other trades they will drop the trade and save themselves some money.

Big decisions are being forced upon us about retaining our second and third trades. Buying worthless points is making people abandon their hard earned New Zealand Qualifications and it is going to create a skills shortage in some areas.

We went through all this when CPD was introduced for gasfitters and all those skills were lost to the industry and it looks like the same is going to happen now.

It may not affect the industry this year or next but long term it will have a huge affect.

Letters to the editor



Dear Editor

I read with interest the latest in-depth articles in the November/December Tool magazine.

I thought overall it covered off each groups' views fairly well – The Federation, Master Plumbers, the Board and the Government. I

Who are the poor buggers that will get their prices screwed down to meet what the government is prepared to pay?

What would the government say if we started to dictate what we are prepared to pay in tax and ACC levies and registration and licensing fees?

It's the tradespeople who will cop the decreases so everyone else can save.

Change or fade into obscurity

There is no simple way of saying this but tradespeople need to change the way they think or the industry will fade into obscurity.

We all know that the majority of tradespeople enjoy working with their hands and thinking about or dealing with the bureaucracy sends them into a state of depression.

The days of being able to trust those who most people used to look up to have long gone.

The positions of authority we used to look up to are now mostly full of people who don't know or understand what we do and don't really care.

Tradespeople must stand up and be counted otherwise they will eventually be forced out of their chosen profession.

Beware of the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

thought it interesting that the nearly 1000 members of the Federation are seemingly dismissed by Master Plumbers, the PGDB and the Government as a "small minority". There seems to be some confusion amongst these groups about what the Federation is achieving on behalf of practitioners.

Fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying legislation and regulations. Quite a worthy cause I would have thought. The Federation has no "sponsors", has no "cross seeding" on its committee and other Boards, does not have its hand in the upskilling pot of gold and simply is shining a rather large spotlight into the cobwebbed corners that the PGDB have operated in for years, unchallenged.

It is a common misconception that the Federation and its members are against upskilling. Paying big bucks for a supplier to talk about their product does not make you competent. Spending serious time listening to someone try to tell you something that you learned as an apprentice does not make you competent. I have no problem with those organizations that require their members to attend some sort of course to retain their membership – good on them – when members sign up they are aware of this and have a choice.

The Federation simply wants the PGDB to follow the Act – to require upskilling "to be necessary". I believe the PGDB should be "requiring" all gasfitters to attend/or do online some sort of course about the introduction of the new Gas Code before they licence again in April 2013. I think this would enhance the public health and safety a huge amount. Do we see this as a requirement? No. Why? Undoubtedly because if the Board make a course mandatory then there would be an expectation that they would carry the cost of it.

The Federation is accused of not being "constructive" – I believe a number of "constructive" suggestions have been made by the Federation and its members. Certainly Federation members have been well represented in all the recent rounds of consultation – my understanding is that the majority of responses have indeed come from Federation members. Yet the PGDB continue to ignore these. What then is the point of these consultations?

While the Board Chair is so adamant that the only person he has to keep happy is the Minister Mr Williamson, then we need to ensure that Mr Williamson wants to keep those that vote for him happy.

Dear Editor

Tremendous edition again last week. I think your Board is a bunch of 'Highway Robbers', what a crock charging such fees etc. As for the recent exams ...appalling.

Any right minded person would ask what is the problem if they were receiving a barrage of questions but the Board think they are right and play the victim....'it's not us, it's them'...honestly they have lost their way; no sensible person likes conflict and just wants to work and live in a fair and just society and the Board need to take a hard look at their 'leadership'..dare I say it!

Good on you with the protest it would have embarrassed a few but we live in a democracy and it makes the general public aware of the



A lot is happening all over the industry at the moment so in dealing with organisations we recommend you beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing.

If you want change then look carefully at what you are being told, look at the future and also look at the past and make sure you don't make the same mistakes that others have in the past.

Hey we don't want to bad mouth everyone or throw suspicion on everyone but we have been exposed to some dodgy sh#t in the last couple of years and as a lot of the industry awaken from their dormant state it could be easy for them to follow the wrong path.

If you want to help the industry, get taking to fellow practitioners and seek advice.

nonsense going on in our organisations ...accountability is one thing that is needed and yet we seem to be shy of that in our day to day life in NZ. But these types justify it how they want and that is where we need organisations like the Federation.

Keep up the good work.

It's almost believable



We have just received the latest copy of the "Info Brief" from the Board www.pgdb.co.nz and it reads like a fairy tale with a happy ending.

There are signs that the Board is doing us all a favour and based on their creative

accounting they are, but do we dare to believe the figures?

The actions and decisions are no doubt true but are the figures they are dealing with accurate or is this a case of making another fresh start because what's happened in the past doesn't matter to the Board or the Minister?

Over the next week we will be looking at what they have said and we will attempt to report on it next week.

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