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IN OTHER NEWS

Standards Online



Registered tradespeople holding active licences are now able to view the standards through a link on their online profile on the Board's website.

When you log on to your Board profile simply click on the Standards Logo and you will be redirected to the Standards website where you can view the Standards.

This is great news for many and will mean that gasfitters will have access to the new joint standards after the older standards expired on 31 December 2012.



Dear Editor

I have these questions I would like answered, in fact they need answering for everyone in the industry.

Should fees be about survival of an organisation or about what is best for protecting health and safety of the public?

The Last Straw



the Board about this "levy" which they call a fee, but for which we get NO goods and services in return.

The following letter was sent to the Minister of Building and Construction from the Federation this week.

Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

Dear Mr Williamson

Recent events have prompted me to write this letter requesting you take immediate action to hold the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board accountable by taking the only option available to you - firing the Board. We also request action be taken against the CEO and Senior Legal counsel for their part in what can only be termed a conspiracy.

The recent Gazetting of the Fees Notice which takes affect on 17 January 2013 is, we believe, a complete act of bad faith towards the industry. The Board have knowingly Gazetted a Fees Notice which is in dispute with regard to the level of the fees to be charged for licensing and also for the implementation of an Offences Fee which in the view of the Office of the Auditor General is more akin to a levy, a tax, which the Board has no authority to impose on the industry. An act which we believe is a clear breach of the Constitution of New Zealand.

You informed me at our first meeting that you would get the Building and Housing Group to look at our accusations regarding the level of the licensing fees and the cross subsidisation and nothing has been reported. It was again an issue at our second meeting and nothing had been forthcoming.

We have reached a situation where the Board are knowingly implementing bad regulations in order to achieve their goals, some of which we believe, are not supported by the legislation. This Board under it's current leadership will NEVER get the respect or trust of the industry as they have displayed total contempt to the industry too many times and we believe have mislead the organisations to whom the industry has a right of redress to.

Is the Board being productive or just active? It seems to me that there is always a lot said and a lot implemented but nothing seems to improve.

Are the Board inventing things to do to avoid the important things that should be done?

You would think that if a Justice of the Peace had knowledge of a regulation not being right or even a possibility of it not being right that they would have a moral obligation to stop the action. If it was a purposeful act is there anyone who can accept a complaint about the behaviour?

Everything happens for a reason but some times the reason is people are stupid and make bad decisions. Shouldn't people who make bad decisions be held accountable?

If CPD is so brilliant then why do we need all this money for discipline? If offences are increasing doesn't that mean CPD is failing?

Dear Editor

We are being forced out of business because of how people interpret an Act that has caused controversy since it was in the draft stages.

I'm referring to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

It took four years to implement the Act and after three years the Act is up for review. I believe the Act itself is okay but it's the way people interpret it that causes the problems.

Perhaps if the Board and others implemented the Act as stated instead of trying to forever stretch the boundaries we would all get on better.

What the Act does need is a performance measurement because how do we know if the Act is achieving its purpose or not?

Look at the last few years when the industry has been fighting with the Board,

The industry will not stand being regulated by people who we believe manipulate regulations and impose them on the industry without statutory authority.

We request immediate action.

*Wal Gordon
Chairman*

The Board and its cronies give the impression that they are above the law and have total control over the industry. In the August/September 2009 issue of the Plumbers Journal there was a title "Now the fate of the industry is in their hands" – this was followed closely by photographs of Hazel Armstrong, Maurice Williamson, Dave Strong and Fiona Gavriel.

In the article it claimed Mr Williamson and his department officials would make the decisions about the way forward for the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry, that Dave Strong, the then President of Master Plumbers, had put forward the practitioners case at road shows and that Fiona Gavriel, the then CEO of Master Plumbers had a firm hand on the industry tiller (controls).

We believe the industry has gone backwards and perhaps the Board are using the wrong interpretation of becoming a fair and trusted regulator of the industry. Fair meaning just, equitable, in accordance with rules but so far it looks like the Board's interpretation of "Fair" is a place where you go to ride on merry go rounds, eat candyfloss and hot dogs and watch clowns and other acts.

People outside the industry need to become aware the industry is more than the Board and Master Plumbers. The industry is over 7,000 people strong, each who have their own voice, each who have their own opinion and each who are entitled to fairness and equality. It ranges from Certifiers to trainees, from exemption holders to administrators – each and everyone has the right to be heard.

The Board and its supporters may have had it all their way in the past but times have changed and people now demand, and deserve, better.

Currently we see the push by the Board and its cronies for CPD and fees (legal or not) and we ask ourselves what they hope to achieve? We hear about the push for health and safety to protect the public, but what direction are we going in?

We are an industry that doesn't have any training courses for the apprentices. 95% of the training is put onto the employer. We have a huge percentage of the industry that have completed apprenticeships and have gone no further because the system obstructed them. These individuals must remain under supervision of certifiers. These certifiers are responsible for the running of businesses, supervision of licensed tradespeople and the training of apprentices. Let's face it, most businesses seem to only have one certifier – so that means these people have a huge responsibility on them if they are supervising a number of staff with lesser licences. Some businesses don't even have a certifier but rely on another business owner to "sign off" for them.

The Board have implemented the CPD scheme and licensing at such a level that people are contemplating dropping the trade they least use, and each time this happens it's one less instructor in the industry. One less person that teaches the skills to the newcomers. Educational institutions have taken control of the apprenticeship scheme and qualifications with a view to now - not the future.

When CPD and auditing was first introduced for gasfitters hundreds, if not a thousand gasfitters left the industry or dropped their license never to return. The Board pushed on with the scheme which resulted in increases in discipline, mostly for licensing issues not workmanship. The Board now use "Discipline" as their justification for increases in fees and levies.

Look at it this way, you come home from work and find there has been a sewer backup in your neighbourhood.....and your home has sewage all the way up to the ceiling. What do you think you should do live with the shit

nothing has changed from when they got on.

Nothing serious has happened and people aren't getting sick. We need to keep an eye on what happens with the review of the Act.

Fight against sale of counterfeit products

This was reported By Philippa Ormrod on NewstalkZB last Week

The building industry says it will fight the influx of counterfeit products being sold in New Zealand stores.

Products such as PVC drain pipes have turned up in stores marked with the appraisal stamps of reputable suppliers, when they're actually not fit for use.

Building Industry Federation chief executive Bruce Kohn says they've circulated an alert to members and hope this can be stopped.

He's concerned that with the rising building market, particularly in Christchurch, some less scrupulous overseas suppliers are seeing what they can get away with.

Bruce Kohn says they will go the Government for help if the problem continues to grow.

As practitioners we should be aware of what we are putting in to ensure it's compliant.

Sometimes those "good deals" could be setting you up for a big fall. Remember that if it sounds too good to be true then it generally is.

By using goods you know or think might not comply, you could end up facing disciplinary action if you are found to have intentionally or negligently created a risk of serious harm to any person, or significant property damage, through having used or caused to be used, faulty or improper appliances, pipes, drains, sanitary fixtures, or fittings.

Do yourself a favour and stick to the reputable gear!

or get it removed?

If we do not stand up for what is right then we deserve what we get given by the Board and its cronies.

Are we paying for propaganda



Each Month we read the Boards "Info Brief." More and more it is becoming the propaganda tool of choice of the Board. Believe it or not there are still people out there that believe if the Board puts it in

writing that it must be true.

There appears to be a lot of "trust us we know what we are doing" propaganda in their publications. Have a wee look at these four statements:

"We are committed to improving our communication with the industry and are seeking to measure the level of satisfaction registered tradespeople have with the range of services that we provide."

We don't think there have ever been very many issues with the service provided by the Board Staff at the coal face. It has been more to do with what they are given to work with, the poor policies and procedures, the statutory legality of issues and of course outside influence. Some of the services they provide such as an unnecessary requirement to buy points are questionable, but there is no doubt their staff are polite and accommodating when contacted.

"The good news for all tradespeople is that you will now pay less next year to relicense. In fact, this is the second year in a row that we have reduced the costs that a person has to pay to relicense"

That's great news and is probably true, but are we paying what we should be, that is the REAL question? It's easy to drop a dollar off a fee if you are charging thirty dollars or so more than you should be!

"It is clear that CPD will become a requirement to continue to work in the full range of regulated trades and professions in the building and construction sector. I intend to work towards ensuring that all the trade CPD schemes are comparable in the future."

Hold the horses, we've just gone through all these hassles for the Board to implement this so called CPD scheme, so are we going to do the same as electricians and builders, or are they in for a real shake up and have to start doing what we are doing? What he intends to work towards and what actually happens seem to be light years away from each other. Last time we looked the sparkies had their own regulatory board who decided what happened to them, and if the adverts for licensed building practitioners are anything to go by – all you need is an outside dunny and some trade literature and you're right!

"In 2013 the Board will go through a process of reaccrediting all the CPD courses to ensure that they have substance and add value for tradespeople and are not simply the "beer and sausage" functions that I have heard criticized (not that I object to a beer and a sausage)"

Does this mean the processes and procedures that put these courses in place as a requirement for us to license failed? If some of the courses don't meet the requirements, does it mean we are incompetent again and have to buy some other points to remain competent for licensing? Finally, will this process "cost" those who submit courses and therefore end up costing the practitioner with increased costs? What will this process be? Will it be transparent?



It's good to see that even in adversity people still have senses of humour.

This supporter added - the biggest joke of all is the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Got Any Points?

No we aren't asking about CPD points but we are asking about any points you wish to bring up with the Board or the Minister.

We are well into our planning for this year and want to know what issues you want dealt with

Let us know as soon as you can.

The Board started this fight and the Federation has been holding its ground. Your support will enable the Federation to gain ground and get the industry what it is due.

We trust all our supporters had a good Christmas and New Year and are ready for 2013 to be the year we show we mean business!

Review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006



What better way to get power than to legislate it in the name of protecting the health and safety of the public.

This year the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 is to be reviewed. The Act was administered by the Department of Building and

Housing which is now the Building and Housing Group, part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

This is what the MBIE web site states:

"The purpose of MBIE is to be a catalyst for a high-performing economy to ensure New Zealand's lasting prosperity and wellbeing. We play a central role in shaping and delivering a strong New Zealand economy. We develop and deliver policy, services, advice and regulation to support business growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of all New Zealanders. We are working to support the government's Business Growth Agenda and are leading initiatives to deliver Better Public Services for Business"

Now that says a lot but can they deliver when the Board will no doubt be making recommendations to make the Board's life easier which will include giving them more power?

So far the track record of the BHG is sadly lacking. It has an over abundance of policy analysts who are perplexing in the advice they appear to give the Minister.

Apparently the process is the Building and Housing Group will review the operation of the Act since its implementation in 2010 and consider whether any amendments to the Act or any other law are necessary or desirable in relation to plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying and will report on its findings to the Minister. At a recent RRC meeting a comment was made by another government official that this act *"was not parliament's finest work."*

The Minister must present a copy of any report provided under this section to the House of Representatives as soon as practicable after receiving it.

The Building and Housing Group will call for submissions from the Board and the public - and that's when we must be on our game. It is imperative we have our say, and say it loud and with numbers. Recent events with the Regulations Review Committee have shown that Master Plumbers are happy to side with the Board whether right or wrong. We wonder what their grass roots members think of this – were they even asked?

The Federation wants it right, fair and legal, which we don't think is too much to ask.

What do you think?

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