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IN OTHER NEWS

Good to see



It was good to see the Board prosecute an individual last week for offences back in 2010 and it was also good to see he wasn't referred to as a tradesman by the Board.

The Courts were very disappointing - when they dished out a penalty where the fine was less than our licensing and discipline costs each year.

The total the guy had to pay was still less than half of the costs incurred by those in the industry for licensing, CPD and discipline.

The individual paid \$2,000.00 in fines and compensation and the industry pays, according to the Board - \$86 x 7027 practitioners = \$604,322 annually for

Stepping Up



Bring your own fire extinguisher because the Federation is turning the heat up this year!

After two years the Federation is well and truly grounded, and is here to stay so others had better get used to it. When people are unhappy with the way they are

regulated then something is wrong, very wrong, and we believe it starts from the ranks of the Board.

We have asked the question before about who it is that represents the interests of the industry and no one knows, although Master Plumbers have claimed to be the "voice" of the industry.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act is written in such a way that that Board is required to have two plumbers, two gasfitters and two Drainlayers around its table, with others appointed for specific skills and two people appointed to represent consumer interests.

What we have at the moment is a Board of 10 representing consumer interests and no one representing industry interests. How and why has this happened – simply because we as an industry have let people rule with their own agendas and people appointed to the Board haven't stood up for the industry they came from.

Imagine a Board with six industry representatives without hidden agendas who were prepared to act in the industry and consumer interests.

Ask yourself why the Act would want two from each trade if they were simply there to represent the consumer? You could simply get anyone off the street for that.

They are there to represent the industry and as long as they don't do this, the Board will continue to fail in the manner it has.

As the Government won't listen to the above, the Federation committee has worked hard to build a solid foundation for the future of the industry as we believe it should be and now we are planning for the next step.

- Do we care that people don't like us - NO
- Do we care if they don't like our tactics - NO
- Does their petty criticism bother us – NO
- Will we back off - NO

After two years of looking and learning and being mindful of our continuing professional development as an organisation we can see how and why things are happening.

offences.

The Board possibly gets 90% of the fine (not too sure on that) to cover costs incurred, so at the current rate we only need to catch and prosecute 1,343 offenders this year to cut even on our industry investment. That's 25.82 offenders per week.

Now there is a measureable target as to the value of the Board's enforcement.

For those who have looked at marketing its all about the buyer so perhaps the Board should be looking at the buyer of the illegal product as well as the supplier.

Charge a few of the people who have employed people not authorised by the Board to do plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying and watch the market shrink.

These people will often be in the cash market and so the consumer is looking for a cheap deal. Very easy to do as the Act does allow for this to happen.

Prosecute some of these people who chase the almighty good deal and bitch and moan when it turns to shit on them.

The Impact of CPD

What is the impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

We know its splitting the industry.

We know its costing hard earned income.

We know its having a negative impact on the

In the past voices in the industry have backed off and wheeled and dealed, but our committee is committed to the Federation's goals and winning back the industries future.

Seeing a list of supporters 18 short of 1000 is encouraging and to know that nearly 1000 tradespeople want to back an organisation fighting for change adds fuel to the fire.

Amongst them are apprentices who have had NO voice until now. It was expected that what their boss thought, they thought – this is no longer the case. This group are the future of our industry and the Federation believes they need to be listened to as much as anyone else.

We are committed to increasing the numbers and to getting a fair deal for the industry. If the pride of those fighting for their own agendas is hurt on the way we don't care. This industry is not following the thoughts of a few any more.

At the moment the Board and others are playing games with time and employing stalling tactics so they can get past the 2013 licensing period but perhaps they are in for a shock as a system that isn't supported isn't going anywhere.

Bureaucrats forget that we can walk away and leave them with nothing, but why should we?

There is truly no better time for the industry to take control of its own destiny and get rid of these like minded people who infest every Board and force an entire industry to follow their line of thought.

We will need your help and will keep you informed about what you can do.

John Key said...



In a state of the nation speech last Friday, Prime Minister John Key said the economy would be "front and centre" during 2013 with new investment initiatives, more funding for research and measures to cut business costs.

Business owner members of the Federation can't wait to see the cut to business costs but wonder how it's going to be done and if it's going to be "a give with one hand and take with the

other" scenario.

He said "It's ridiculous that developers can wait six to 18 months for a resource consent."

We say "It's ridiculous that complainants can wait 18 months for a result from an investigation from the Ombudsman or Auditor General."

He said "It's ridiculous that we allow councils to charge whatever fees they want and it's ridiculous that we allow them to demand almost anything as a condition for a consent."

We say "It's ridiculous that he allows statutory Boards to charge whatever fees they want and it's ridiculous that he allows them to demand almost anything as a condition for a license to work."

Mr Key says New Zealand isn't planning well enough for its future and he's quite right. Who plans for our industry?

We know the Board doesn't represent the industry so where does the Government get all its information from? The Federation is going to make sure it gets information from us and have already approached the

relationship with the Board.

We know other relationships are under stress as well.

What we don't know is what affect CPD is having as we haven't seen any performance measurements.

How will we know CPD is succeeding?

The Federation has sent out an invitation to supplier groups to write to us to let us know their point of view.

We will print those views unedited.

There is more to the conflict than just CPD

There is more wrong in our industry that just CPD.

Ask yourself these questions:

Are you happy with the level of fees you pay?

Are you happy with the apprenticeship scheme?

Are you happy with the manner in which the Board is appointed?

Are you happy the Board continues to make the same mistakes?

Are you happy that you would get a fair investigation if someone complained about you?

Are you happy you would get a fair hearing?

Are you happy the actions of the Board are justified?

Office of the Auditor General about being involved in its follow up inquires into the Board's progression.

We have a fair treasure chest of information and examples of their ineptness and wasting of practitioner's money. Moves are also afoot to tackle apprenticeship training and qualifications where we believe the process had been hijacked.

It's not just the Board that cause problems it's others as well. Mr Key says the previous government's apprentice scheme listed up to 100,000 apprenticeships a year but many were "phantom trainees" who didn't achieve anything.

We say who's being held accountable? We know the scheme is still being abused as only a few weeks ago one of our members had to contact the ITO and tell them a person wouldn't be attending a scheduled course as he hadn't been an apprentice with his company for more than TWO years. Incidentally they had been told that at least four times.

Were they still collecting money from government for him? We'll never know – but one must suspect they were.

Instead of paying institutions to take on more apprentices and giving money to apprentices why don't they ask the industry questions like:

- Why don't you employ apprentices?
- What would need to happen for you to employ an apprentice?
- What would you expect from an apprentice?
- What could the government do to help you employ and apprentice?
- What incentives are needed?
- Does the ITO system work?

On the subject of ITO has anyone heard from these new guys or have they just taken the apprentice numbers and the million dollars (yes that's \$1,000,000.00) that should be ring fenced for plumbers, gasfitters, Drainlayers and roofers from the old ITO and are now sitting back?

We would be most interested to hear what is happening with this money, our money that was provided for training of our industries. What is it going to be used for? Where is it now? Who is controlling it?

What has to change?



Have you ever thought of the division in our industry – we're not talking about plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying or about industry groups and the Board but about the legitimate, the illegal and the black market.

These are three sectors of the industry that have a huge impact on our daily lives but yet we ignore their impact.

The Legitimate: This is where we would hope most people are, but we understand the issues of being in this category, the costs, the commitment, the supervisory pressures, the reliance on this sector by the Government and the economic pressures from the consumer.

This is the hardest sector to be in and yet what help do we get from the Board and the Government to operate in this sector – NONE. They set the rules, the costs we incur, they discipline us, they can ruin our everyday lives and they have. In this sector we have people trying to do

Are you happy with the level of apprentice qualifications?

Are you happy with all the Board's Policies?

Are you happy with the avenues we have to complain about the Board?

Are you happy with the say you have in your industry?

There are a dozen questions off the cuff and if you answered no to any of them then something needs to be done about it.

The Federation is fighting for answers and wanting to answer your questions.

We need to get answers and results.

As an industry we either pay a little now and make sure all is well or we shut up shop and pay for the time that we want to be legal.

the right thing but they are the ones persecuted the most. All that keeps this sector going is the good will of the people who want to operate within the law but even those people get pushed too far and can create the second sector being the illegal.

The Illegal: It seems to us this group have mostly been forced into a situation where they are prepared to take the risk and operate without the Board's authority.

In this sector there are a large number of people who the system has failed and are partially qualified. It also includes those who are forced out by heavy handed regulation, those that are sick of the pressures imposed on individuals to stay in the legitimate sector.

This sector doesn't have to comply with CPD, pay fees or a lot of the other costs imposed on the legitimate tradespeople. They don't have to pay tax, GST, ACC levies, discipline levies and the list goes on. They charge far less than the legitimate tradespeople and all they do is take a risk of getting a fine which is less than our licensing and discipline costs.

The legitimate trade's people pay for these guys to make money and to take work away from them. In this group there are also those that portray themselves as being plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers who also take the minimal risk of getting caught and they also help form the black market.

The Black Market. This sector consists of all types of people and is anyone who is prepared to operate outside the bounds of the law and can include those authorised by the Board to do plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

This sector is fuelled by the consumer who wants to pay cash and get themselves a good deal and in fact they are the only ones who win. They don't take any risks of getting caught by IRD, or the Board or department of labour – they risk nothing. Even when things go wrong they can still go to the authorities. This sector cost the rest of us by taking work from the legitimate market and by forcing prices down.

The more people that operate in this market the more the rest of us pay. The crazy thing about this sector is that if no one operated in the black market the consumers who feed the market would be forced to go to the legitimate market and there would be more work, more jobs, and demand would force up wages and there would be no risk for the tradespeople.

The Board appear to be targeting the legitimate sector because they are easy targets. The entire system is arse about face and needs correcting. Get people out of the illegal sector by helping them complete their training and by making the legal sector more attractive.

Make punishments for operating in the illegal and black market so harsh that it's not worth the risk. Punish the consumer as well – and herein lies the rub – it would appear the Board have never prosecuted a homeowner for employing someone that was not a licensed plumber (and probably paying them cash).

We know these comments will upset a few because everyone needs to make a living but doing it legally is the way.

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