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IN OTHER NEWS

Update on sector reviews



Last year the Federation suspended it's participation in the Qualifications Review as it felt the process was being rail-roaded by the training sector and as there was only one organisation participating that wasn't involved with training we felt the scheme was being stacked to favour training providers and wasn't in the best interests of the industry.

Obviously as the training providers were running the show this had little effect. The Federation wasn't prepared to endorse a process and outcome it did not agree with. We think what the training providers have forgotten is that it is the trades that have to use the process and if they disagree with it then it won't be used.

Business as Usual



This is the question the Board both asked and answered last week in the same breath:

“What does this mean for you? Until decisions have been made on the Ombudsman's recommendations, it remains business as usual. Relicensing commences soon and payment of all

fees and the disciplinary levy is still required.”

We don't hold much hope if it's business as usual. Does that mean more lies, deceit, poor decisions, more hiding of the truth and hiding of the facts and figures? If it's business as usual we can expect there to be more activities to screw over the industry.

One of the Board's USUAL tactics is to buy time. Look at the recent gazetting of the fees notice as an example. The notice was gazetted prior to Christmas (a favourite time of theirs to do things like this), we believe with the Board's full knowledge that they may be imposing an illegal levy/tax on the industry, as they knew they had to have it in place by 31 March 2013, and if they waited for a decision from the Regulations Review Committee they wouldn't have time to re-consult with the industry.

In saying that the Board will claim they have achieved one of their Business Plan Performance Targets which was “The review of fees and levies is published in the Gazette by 22 December 2012”. It won't matter if it was legal or not – it will only matter that it was done on time.

Business as usual for the Maurice Williamson, Minister of Building and Construction may be allowing the THIRD fees notice that is possibly illegal and burying his head further in the sand.

For the Building and Housing Group it may be hanging their heads in shame for doing nothing.

This review has been underway for about six months and we haven't seen anything sent to the wider industry yet inviting comment.

We see the following information has come from the Skills Organisation (the new ITO) this week.

“For a while now, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has been concerned with the growing complexity of the qualifications system, with a number of duplicate or redundant qualifications on the framework. To fix this, they have proposed sector reviews for all industries.

What are sector reviews? *It's about reviewing everything that's on the qualifications framework and rationalising qualifications across the entire industry. It's also about ensuring that the qualifications available meet the skill requirements of a particular occupation and also form a logical pathway of progression with sensible entry and exit points.*

Plumbing, Gasfitting, Drainlaying, Scaffolding, Rigging, and Industrial Rope Access *The review for these groups was submitted to NZQA on 18 December 2012. With this, seven draft qualifications were submitted for approval covering Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying. From these seven there is one Level 3 certificate that covers all three industries. Each industry additionally has one Level 4 and one Level 5 certificate submitted.*

Conflict of interest



This was reported by One News this week:

“ONE News investigations have uncovered concerns about a possible conflict of interest for the Minister of Building and Construction, Maurice Williamson.

And it is prompting calls from the opposition for Williamson to step aside from any Government decisions over the Mainzeal collapse.

Williamson helps oversee New Zealand's building industry and he has been commenting on sub-contractors being left out of pocket in the Mainzeal collapse”.

Quite frankly this is nothing compared to the conflicts of interest we believe occur with the operation of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. At a meeting three months ago we raised the issue with the Minister about Master Plumber members on the Board being involved in discussions about Continuing Professional Development (CPD) when Master Plumbers is one of the biggest training providers of CPD.

Section 8 of Schedule 1 of the Act states in part “...For the purposes of clauses 9 to 11, a member of the Board is interested in a transaction of, or other matter relating to, the Board only if the member ... (c) is a director, officer, member, or trustee of another party to, or a person who will or may derive a material financial benefit from, the transaction or matter; or...”

No reply or response to our objection has been received yet along with other issues raised at the same meeting that we are waiting for a response on. It was, as we suspected, a big fob off meeting. Even now PGDB member Peter Jackson also sits on the Site Safe Board which is another training provider for points for re-licensing. We consider under Section 8 outlined above, that this is a conflict of interest.

Maybe Mr Williamson should trade in his hard hat, hi-visibility jacket, tie and digger for some continuing professional development training on achieving results. Perhaps he could ask some guys who have a Ute, a cellphone and a dog for some advice – they just might talk common sense.

Nine draft certificates for scaffolding, rigging and industrial rope access were also produced. Each of these industries has Level 3, 4 and 5 certificates”.

So it looks like the recommendations have been submitted but where is the industry input? How many of the people involved in the review are not a training provider? Sure they may have a trade qualification but most are employed as trainers or the organisations they are involved with are training providers.

We see already this week a training provider offering a level three course at just under \$6,000 for the 34 weeks of full time training. Add that on to the close to \$14,000 in apprenticeship fees etc and things aren't cheap. Bear in mind also that there is NO mention of any discount off apprentice fees if the Level 3 course is completed, nor any time off hours served.

Would you advise your youngsters to make the financial commitment to do a course like this (probably ticked up on a student loan) with no assurance of an apprenticeship at the end, nor a discount off the apprenticeship or time off hours served. Bear in mind one day a week will be “free” work experience too to pad it out.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Congratulations to you and everyone else associated with the Federation for the victory regarding the

It's turning toxic



Accountability and improvements are slow and we are getting to a very toxic situation.

At the moment the Federation and those in the industry who support it are maintaining their dignity and are fighting for fairness not only for the industry but also for OUR consumers. Our impression is

that most tradespeople want to give their customers a fair deal at a reasonable price but at every turn additional costs are loaded on us.

We don't think people want to reach a situation where we are like dentists, lawyers, doctors and the like where you don't even spend 30 minutes with them but get a huge invoice. That's what it may come to.

This week one member of the Federation committee went to the dentist and got an account for \$730.00 and he wasn't even in the chair for 30 minutes and only had 4 very small fillings done. He was told \$200.00 for the first filling and then discounted rates for the others.

Imagine the uproar if repairing some failed pipework under a house we charged \$200.00 for the first joint, \$350.00 for a tee, \$600.00 for the first 5 meters of pipe and \$200.00 after that. What about a blocked drain, \$200.00 for the first length of drain rod and \$100.00 there after or \$75 per meter for water blasting.

We all know that if we started to charge like that the black market would grow even more. The government needs to wake up and realise that if the industry gets pushed too far then the situation we have described may just happen and then everyone loses.

We need to stand up for ourselves NOW and make others stop clowning around with our industry. This week we see Peter Diver, of Peter Diver Plumbing, leading by example down in Christchurch. Peter is calling on subbies to boycott and even picket Mainzeal sites where jobs are taken over by other companies who do not pay the existing subcontractor claims.

He said subcontractors just about had to get on their knees and beg for their retention money and if one subcontractor did a poor job, all retentions were withheld till a code of compliance was secured. His company is now run by his son and has about 80 employees.

Peter admits a boycott sounds "a bit draconian"; however, he is sick of receiverships dumping on subcontractors who have few protections in the law. It was too easy for companies to go into receivership and leave subcontractors to deal with the fallout.

He put a notice in *The Press* yesterday calling on subcontractors on Mainzeal sites to a meeting "to instigate a boycott of any jobs taken over that does not pay out for outstanding claims". "If necessary, the jobs will be picketed."

"The government was so quick to bail out the finance companies and the banks, and yet they bury their heads in the sand when it comes to tradesmen"

collecting of the illegal fees.

Persistence and patience always pays off. Keep the foot on the throat!

What shall we do with the money?

What have the Master Plumbers ever done to protect their members as the Federation has?

Dear Editor

You must have a pretty big grin on right now. You guys have done a mighty job and the comment the pen is mightier than the sword comes to mind.

Thanks very much again from me.

Dear Editor

I'd like to elect you as my rep to collect the dosh...(do u want my bank account number?...just kidding)

Great work you Federation Men- I reckon that \$600,000 should be kept by the Federation in a fighting fund bank account to deal those ARSEHOLES another GOOD BOOTING, and keep some for yourselves and good luck to you guys, because if it wasn't for you and all your good work they would still be ripping off the trade and who knows what nasty illegal load of shit they would dump on us next time.

I am so proud of you guys and your legal expertise.

Thanks to the Federation Executive.

"And tradesmen seem to be the last ones to get paid on receiverships and I guarantee 99 per cent of the time they get nothing. It just seems too cruel."

Well done Peter. As an industry we need to start taking action or forever hold our peace. We support what Peter is asking and urge our members to show solidarity.

Mainzeal Collapse

We understand that a number of our members have been affected by the collapse of Mainzeal. While we can't do anything financially to assist them, we can lobby on their behalf to ensure that there are some law changes so this does not happen again.

Peter Diver made some very sensible points in the news article in the Christchurch Press. It doesn't need to be flash, it doesn't need to be complicated, but somewhere in the contractual arrangement there needs to be a compulsion that the client lets the subcontractors know when payment has been made to the main contractor, and then the main contractor needs to verify back to the client that those subcontractors have all been paid before their next progress claim is released.

We would also like to see all retentions going into a fund administered by an independent (could be MOBIE) much like bonds on flats and rental accommodation are. This would ensure that retentions are paid to the rightful people and not used by main contractors immorally.

We are wanting to get a handle on how big this problem is for our members – so if you have been affected then please email us and answer the following questions:

1. If you have been affected by the collapse of Mainzeal – how much are you owed a. On current projects b. In retentions on current projects
2. How much are you owed in retentions on projects that you have completed?
3. What size business are you – how many employees do you have? How many are affected by the loss of the Mainzeal work?

Your answers will remain confidential and the information will be used generically when lobbying. If you have been affected but don't wish to divulge exact figures, even giving us an idea of how you are affected with let us get a handle on just how bad it is for our members – whether business owners, or employees.

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