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IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

Reference the NZQA article last week, it seems that for someone to get qualified they will need to qualify on a pre-trade at level 3 at a cost of \$6,000 and then do an apprenticeship at level 4 with fees around \$14,000 is that correct?

Ed. We are unsure yet because the industry hasn't had any input into the qualifications, that's been the training providers. It will depend if they make doing level 3 a prerequisite before starting on level 4.

If they don't it places into question the worth of the stage 3 pre-trade or will mean level 3 and 4 must be covered as part of the apprenticeship which will mean we will need to have two apprentice pathways.

It seems it could become a very confusing situation. It currently looks like you could spend \$20,000 to get to a stage where you are registered and entitled to work under someone's supervision until or if you become Certifying.

Not a very good incentive -

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)



You must be sick of hearing about CPD but it has a huge influence over our everyday activities. This week saw an example of what the Federation was afraid of - "a provider banning an individual from attendance at CPD as a punishment for differing views." This caused a great deal of stress on the individual to the extent that he has now closed his account with the provider. The provider has since apologised but it looks like the damage has been done.

The Federation has been saying right from the start that our livelihoods are in the hands of suppliers and training providers. They are the judge and jury as to whether you are competent. Remember the problem is NOT with the suppliers who are offering "no charge" courses – they didn't invent the system, but instead are doing what they can to assist us to stay legal. We say "no charge" because while these are "free" to practitioners, they do cost someone – in most cases the supplier or the merchant. We have contacted PDANZ and a number of suppliers to ask if they intend to charge for upskilling as rumours are aplenty in the market place.

So far only two suppliers have responded – here are their replies unedited:

From Aqualine and Spartan:

Aqualine and Spartan will never charge for a CPD Course. That is our policy. Our customers are your members and it is our way of saying thanks for supporting us. We have no issue with others charging a small fee to cover costs, but do have an issue with groups making money out of CPD. That is wrong.

Aqualine will continue to run the Mini Trade Shows and the Aqualine Plumbing Course and now the new Aqualine Gas Course for no charge to the Plumber or Gasfitter. We have courses booked in for Coromandel, Tokoroa, Whakatane and Gisborne. Getting outside the main areas is important.

From Dux Industries:

Dux will continue to offer our current suite of courses for free of charge (we currently have four courses) to all practitioners, end of story.

We feel they have been put in this unenviable situation and in some ways feel for them. In reality the Board have created this situation by setting up a system that essentially requires the practitioner to "buy" points through attending courses and then THEY don't actually deliver any courses themselves, but rely on the suppliers and providers to come up with the "goods". What other industry relies suppliers to deliver upskilling as a means of judging competency? Think of this – if there were no providers to sell us points what would the Board be left with?

\$20,000, five years and you are still not competent in the trade to take responsibility for your own work.

Dear Editor

I am seriously considering not renewing my licence this year for 2 reasons

1. I don't have enough points and probably won't have 40 points by the required date.

2. I looked up the dictionary for the true meaning of the word dictator and get this:

- A person exercising absolute power
- A person who assumes absolute control in a government without right or the free consent of the people
- A person who thinks the regular majesty is subordinated to them.

Does this sound like any one we know? So anybody who hitches their wagon to this mob is putting themselves in a dangerous position especially if it is for financial gain because every dictator eventually gets torn down.

History has proven that. If people are forced to follow a dictatorship by fear, I don't mean fear of their lives like dictators of the past - I mean fear for their livelihood. This is also a very dangerous position to be in, especially in a country known as a democracy.

I would love to see what someone like Campbell Live, would have to say about the situation especially when the only source of revenue these dictators receive is from the very people they are screwing over.

Taking money off people under false pretences and sheer arrogance goes against the grain of any right minded person and to see Maurice Williamson on TV not answering to the

The answer – 7,000 plus trades people who can't licence.

There is no vendetta

Some people feel we have a vendetta against Master Plumbers but it's quite the contrary, we feel they perform a useful "membership" function. In fact we have a number of members in common too!

What we don't support is Master Plumbers trying to impose their will on the entire industry - and the way they go about it. Let's look at a couple of the instances - firstly Master Plumbers supporting the Board in opposing the recommendations of the Regulations Review Committee.

As we recall, they paid for a legal opinion and told everyone they represented over 60% of the industry with their view. In the end they got their way and even gloated that they made history. We don't agree - the historical moment was the recommendation to disallow the regulations.

Currently we have a situation where the decision to disallow was the correct one and the Government, Board and Master Plumbers got it wrong! Master Plumbers have members who had paid fees that are the subject of a refund as well as Federation members and practitioners belonging to neither group. How is the Master Plumbers Executive able to sit in negotiations to resolve the situation when they helped create the problem?

More recently Master Plumbers CEO and a Board Representative gave evidence at a RRC hearing regarding the Offences Fee and stated "right or wrong" the fee should stay. This is even after the Office of the Auditor General stated the fee was illegal. Is that what the grass root members want?

We have spoken to a lot of grass roots Master Plumber members and they know nothing about the above and seem shocked the Master Plumbers Executive is supporting such activities without any type of consultation. Perhaps its time that the grass roots members went back to their executive, or alternatively looked to join the Federation as well as the Master Plumbers and then we can represent them where their Executive is not.

So for us there is no vendetta - only accountability. Master Plumbers have 700 plus members who want membership benefits – the Federation has 1,000 members, including some Master Plumbers, who are wanting accountability and change.

Output Agreement



This week after a bit of "prompting", the Board finally put out last year's Output Agreement on their website. This is for the period 1 July 2012 until March 2013. Count yourself lucky we get to read it for a month before it expires!

The last Output Agreement was from 1 October 2010 until 31 March 2012. The three months in between must be when the

Board sneaks through things they don't want to be accountable for and to leave the Minister a window of opportunity to cop out.

Absolutely outstanding for this open and transparent organisation to post it with just over a month to go. Looking at it we can see why it's been in hiding as it's really just a continuation of last years. In terms of an epic fail

Mainzeal allegations showed the whole country the real meaning of “do as I say, not as I do.”

I also would love to see the funds illegally pilfered by the Board go to the Federation to help with the outstanding job the team are doing on our behalf

Hello Editor.

Keep up the good work!!

Quote from Board news: “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.”

Business as usual!! Sounds just like the Board!!

Dear Editor:

In the Waikato times today, an article informing the public of the hazards of using an unqualified person to carry out plumbing gasfitting and drainage work and informing us that the Board prosecuted 21 people for carrying out work they were not authorised to do, in the last year. What does this work out per prosecution?

Keep up the good work. By the way, are you aware the if you attend a CPD course i.e., surface water, and receive 12 points and you attend the same course 4 times in the one year you still get 48 points, and the only thing you will know about is Surface water, and keep your license to work?

Dear Editor,

Now we have them on the ropes let’s deliver the killer punch. Demand that this Board be replaced immediately for absolute incompetence and deliberate theft of money. Their pathetic attempts to extract money from the

this would have to be an 8/10.

We really do wonder if these documents actually mean anything – look at the 1 October 2010 to 31 March 2012 agreement signed by the Minister on 23 June 2011 and by Mr Bickers on 26 July 2011. It may be an amended version and if it is, it should be marked as such; if not then it simply took nine months to be signed by the Minister.

The latest one, 1 July 2012 to 31 March 2013, was signed by the Minister on 14 August 2012 and by Mr Bickers on 26 September 2012.

Looking at the content - the Board is to review the strategic plan and adopt a new one commencing 1 April 2013 and ending 31 March 2016. Interesting to note the last plan was 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. May as well call it an annual plan and be done with it.

They are to participate in the Electricity and Gas Certificate Review and have success criteria like telling us about it and participating in a monitoring regime about its effectiveness, coordinating with other regulatory agencies to develop and implement a process for monitoring, promoting and reviewing the competence of gasfitters. (Isn’t that what CPD does or are gasfitters having to prove their competence a number of times?)

The Board is to review its operational polices. Six polices were written last year and seven in 2011. This seems to be a bit of a “cop out follow up” task to fill up the page.

The Board is to integrate the Board’s Examinations into the new version for level four national certificates. Thank goodness the Board haven’t achieved this task as the training system is a failure and is letting the industry down.

The next task for the Board is also very interesting. They are to develop a risk-based system to monitor and measure practitioner competence. Doesn’t CPD do this or do we have to prove competence again and if so then what does CPD do apart from make us buy points?

These two success criteria are a real hoot. “The Fees review demonstrates that it has been carried out in accordance with OAG good practice guide – Charging fees for public sector goods and services,” “FAIL”, and “The Board presents proposed Gazette notices to the Minister that reflects registration requirements that: comply with the guiding principles of s32 of the Act – have undergone a rigorous consultation process and have compliance requirements that are commensurate with risk” “FAIL”.

What can you say except what a load of garbage. If you have something else you want to say – write to the Editor – we’d love to hear your views.

More on the Ombudsman’s Report

Over the last couple of weeks we have discussed the Offences Fee and the Ombudsman’s decision and now we move on to the next aspect of his report – that of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The basis of the complaint on 14 July 2014 was that the licensing conditions imposed by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board regarding CPD were illegal. The complaint asked that the scheme be stopped immediately.

It has already been proven that the CPD scheme under the 1976 Act was illegal so the Ombudsman concentrated on the successor to that scheme, being the CPD requirements established in 2010 under the notices then issued by the Board.

PGDF can only be seen as the death-throes of a struggling monster!

The loss of Charity status and the Ombudsman's wonderful decision exposes a totally corrupt regime.

Dear Editor

Very well done to you guys and thank you for all the hard work you have put in - persistence has eventually prevailed.

My vote goes to having that money repaid to the Federation.

A word to our members

When attending a CPD course remember that the facilitator is just doing their job – they are not the ones that designed the system.

A level of professionalism and decorum is required.

By all means ask some questions after the course, but generally these people will not want to get involved in the politics between practitioners and the Board.

Most of them are doing their job – delivering a course say at the merchants so that you can get points to work legally in the industry.

Our advice is that you note the course, the date, the title and then keep notes on whether in fact you learned anything new at all and if the course was helpful or not.

Send these notes through to us and we will compile them for the Office of the Auditor General when they do their next follow up on the PGDB later this year.

In May and June 2010 the notices were the subject of a Regulation Review Committee hearing and as with the Fees Notice, the committee recommended that the CPD Notices be Disallowed. Also as with the Fees Notice, the motion to effect this was defeated by the house. However as the Ombudsman stated the outcome of the parliamentary move to disallow the notices did not determine their validity. In other words just because the government voted against the motions, it didn't make the notice legal.

The committee found there was insufficient consultation and also that the Board did not have adequate regard to the principles governing the exercise of its powers as set out in section 32 of the 2006 Act. The Board disputes this but admitted they failed to record it's considerations of the principles thus not leaving an "audit trail".

The Ombudsman found that the degree of consultation that did occur was unreasonably truncated and that the apparent failure to address the statutory principles means that the decision to make the notices appears to have been made contrary to law.

Given the limited nature of the consultation that did occur and the absence of evidence that the statutory principles were explicitly and carefully addressed before the CPD Notices were made the Ombudsman was of the view the complaint on that score should be upheld.

It should be noted the notice is valid until set aside by a court of competent jurisdiction.

So the Board got it wrong again but in this case the Ombudsman was not taking any action as new notices and consultation had occurred and the Minister had signed off on them. Those new notices are the subject of a new complaint to the Regulations Review Committee.

Its over in a split second



Yes competence is over in a split second.

You see at any time you can make a mistake and through the discipline process or through the Board's monitoring process you can be deemed to be incompetent.

In fact you don't even need to make a mistake.

So in effect the only time you are competent is when you are paying the licensing fee and the Board are sticking the money in their bank. Either side of that snapshot in time you are at risk of being deemed to be incompetent.

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