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IN OTHER NEWS

Dear Editor

I am a plumber, gasfitter and drainlayer of ten years and I would like to say firstly I am a huge fan of the PGDF; I respect you, what you do, and what you are fighting for. I also hold the utmost respect for the way in which you are doing it as I would have definitely bought a 12 gauge to this fiasco to play with by now....

I am a licensed plumber, gasfitter and drainlayer; I hold pass marks in both certifying plumbing and gasfitting. Working in the trades has become MY LIFE over the past 10 years and I pursue the idea of perfection with everything I do from dawn to dusk it defines me as a person.

If a pipe is not straight it is not good enough for me, if a system is not perfectly functional

The biggest load of shit yet from Maurice (and that's saying something!)



This week the Federation received a letter from Maurice Williamson and it was the biggest load of shit we have ever received from him. The letter was in response to the Federation's call for the Board to be fired over their actions with the Discipline Levy and Fees Notice.

In essence he stated that the Board can continue to charge the Offences Fee until such time as it is disallowed by a motion in Parliament or declared ultra vires by a court. (Note this voters – right is not right unless a court says so – don't worry that the Act doesn't allow it).

He added that had the Board delayed gazetting the Fees notice an entire year's income for the Board would have been affected and any reduction or removal of fees and levies income would require the Board to curtail its statutory functions, including (we are getting sick of hearing this because we do it every day without being told) **those that address health and safety outcomes for New Zealanders.**

So Maurice Williamson doesn't appear to give a shit about the rights of the tradespeople, who are also New Zealanders (in case you've forgotten Minister), but the PGDB can just carry on with the legalised theft.

The Minister raves on about it being legal for cross-subsidisation from license fees to registration fees but he's missed the point totally through lack of information or perhaps it's just beyond his capabilities.

He stated:

"I have confidence in the Board and I am also confident that many of the issues involving the interpretation and implementation of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 will be addressed in the review of that Act that will commence shortly. I encourage you to engage constructively in the associated consultation process."

Quite frankly what could be more constructive than to identify problems and ask for it to be removed?

for a consumer it will not be left until satisfactory etc...100% customer satisfaction is my everyday goal no matter what I am doing.

As you can guess I have not bothered to register for the first time as a certifying plumber and gasfitter and I bet you know why...it's too expensive....just plain too expensive when other costs are factored in like the beloved "CPD Bullshit for competence & capital" we are now all subjected to.

I was offered no pay incentives, no benefits even though I sat and passed certifying exams at my own expense in 2012. Upon speaking to other potential employers I was offered even less than I was already earning, not even the luxury of new boots from my past employer in these tough times.

In the end I quit the trades and now work as a network operator where I don't need to hold current PGDB licenses if working outside a consumer boundary and everything under the sun via health and safety is supplied.

This is MY reality as well as many others living under a "PGDB" imposed regime. Few are getting rich at the top in what we all know are very hard times to turn profit while the "norms" just keep on going to work every day while costs explode around them.

We have gone from – “the new Board will make it right, to the Armstrong report will make it right, to the new Act will make it right, to the Office of the Auditor Generals report will make it right, to **THIS** new Board will make it right, to there is another review by the Office of the Auditor General’s office which will see if it’s right and now we have moved on to the review of the Act which should make sure its right.”

It seems the Government doesn't have a clue and doesn't give a shit because it's not their money that's being wasted, it's not their industry that's being ruined and at the end of the day they can blame us and say we are incompetent. How many decades is it going to take to get it right?

This is the third time in two years the Government has backed the Board in implementing bad (and we believe illegal) regulation on the industry purely for the financial survival of the Board. Well if that doesn't tell you the system is screwed up then what does. Its time people pulled their heads out of their arse and made changes not just more add-ons to failed systems.

The Board can play the legalised theft game but that doesn't make it right and the Ombudsman has just confirmed that with his decision last month. Look it's not so much about the money, but that is relevant, it's about the ways the regulations are being implemented and imposed on us.

Honesty and integrity and a sense of what is right is what is required but they are not a Board Function under section 137 of the Act so perhaps that why we don't get them.

The perception is the Board uses the Regulations Review Committee as a delay tactic ably supported by Master Plumbers Executive who is living off what we believe is a past reputation that they represent 60% of the industry, and that's probably what some people want to believe because it suits their purpose.

The perception is the Board are a bunch of hypocrites where they sit in judgement of us for breaches of the Act but here they are doing far worse and yet they still expect us to abide by it all, and look up to them. Well that isn't going to happen. The more the Board push the boundary the more resistance they will get as they are simply an organisation without any clues appointed by a Minister who has no idea.

Mr Williamson appears to be a soft touch for the Board and is getting duped at every turn buy them. The Board are supposedly appointed for their expertise and leadership abilities, well someone got these appointments wrong, or is it that they are following poor leadership and direction?

The Minister has said twice now that's it's a matter of timing. In response to that we say planning and timing is an essential part of running any organisation and if the Board had their shit squared away there wouldn't be a timing issue.

Every day I awake I feel guilty that I am just a "mere plumber" who must pay huge costs to a small group of suit wearing "Mafiosos" on The Terrace while my family deserve a better life than I can possibly give them, while people at the top take the piss with increases on every front.

There are only so many hours in the day, only so much that can be achieved. I push myself to the limit but it is not enough. I dare say the sanctuary of Australia beckons..... I don't understand how nobody other than the PGDF and a few suppliers can't see what is happening to this industry. Everybody seems content as long as their own lives are going ok to look the other way.

With our economy in the toilet and the "Board" as they like to refer to themselves making increases to costs, weaving and deceiving with their all empowering act and all the other shit they are up to that is no good, it makes me wonder where is this all going to end up?

As a non-master plumber member I have calculated my maximum cost to work in three trades @ \$1400 per year not including my first time rego fees for cert plumbing and gasfitting, and eventual \$411 for cert drainlaying exam plus who knows what by that point for first time

For example we believe the Board do their fees reviews and gazetting late in the year for the exact reason that it doesn't give people time to appeal their decisions. They know a judge or the Government won't take action this close to fees time as it will affect their function but one day it may just backfire on them when a large section of the industry may not play their game.

The Minister and the Board seem to have given the constitution of New Zealand "the bird" so they can save face, well we say save face by doing the right thing and resign. Get out of the way so change can be made.

The Minister has given "the bird: to democracy and has again permitted the Board to breach the rights of practitioners and taxpaying New Zealanders. Now he uses the excuse of timing. We believe there is never a good time to breach our rights (he obviously doesn't agree). These laws and the constitution were established for our protection and the Minister has the power to stop this continual abuse of power.

(A comment from the man with the Ute, the cellphone and the dog: Where I come from right is right and wrong is wrong. If the law says its so, then why aren't our elected representatives – and those who came in on the coat tails of MMP as list MP's – sticking up for the small guy, the taxpayers and voters of NZ – why aren't they calling for heads to roll? If we can't rely on our elected representatives to ensure that the laws of the land are adhered to then they don't belong in office – and they should be ashamed for themselves).

For other sectors in the construction industry note that Mr Bickers has stated he wants to see all the construction industry treated the same - so why is our industry so different to the others - is it because they want the template imposed on us to be imposed on everyone. Do they want all industries to be self funded and have the same CPD scheme and fees structure as us?

We have seen this before - plumbers and drainlayers sat back and watched it happen to gasfitters - and now look what's happening.

Industries are skilling themselves to a life of heavy handed regulation in the name of "protecting the health and safety of the public". Its real ambulance at the bottom of the cliff mentality from the government and its only creating work for lawyers and bureaucrats.

So what are our options:

- The industry can sit back and do nothing, accepting what it is being imposed on it by the Government, the Board and its cronies and bitch and moan forever and a day, or
- The industry could accept the systems with open arms and prepare for a subsistence existence while taking the burden and responsibility off the government. No matter what the

rego as cert drainlayer.

Under this "Board" regime at some point it's not going to be worth while rolling out of bed every single @#*^ day for any of us...do you see where I am going with this? At the current rate license fees plus levies etc etc etc + CPD will probably be \$4k a year....

Its difficult enough rolling around in dirt under houses where dead cats may or may not lay unburied, unblocking drains, putting up with people not paying accounts etc as well as putting up with these useless meat sacks that think their own human shit doesn't at all stink, where as in reality it stinks just like the next persons....

I've never written in before but I thought I would reaffirm the general feeling of the industry for you that I've had a gutsful. Something has to give; most of my former friends who were part of either of our three trades are in Oz "cracking it."

"I don't mind getting rammed up the ass every now and again as that's just life and I am just a placid, quiet, high achieving guy anyway, but at some point I have realised my ass is getting a little red and sore from the repeated penetration, if not double penetration from the "Board", all mighty, all powerful "Board" who we dare not contest!! As a wage earner I only have so much to give".

industry does we will always be seen as "tradespeople" and our income will be capped as such, or

- The industry can consolidate and fight for change away from the "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff" syndrome to real training from the bottom up, and systems which are necessary and acceptable. Fight for an open and transparent system voted for and run by the industry.

We vote for the third option and here's a quick five point action plan to get the ball rolling as the government's plan hasn't worked and it's been in place for over a decade.

1. The existing Board is replaced immediately and new members appointed with the six trades people being nominated BY the industry, with restrictions on the numbers of people from representative organisations. Performance counselling to be conducted of the CEO and Secretariat and a purge carried out if necessary.

2. Immediate suspension of the CPD scheme and release of all relevant information pertaining to fees and levies.

3. Settle on an interpretation of the Act with the industry to prevent the future issues.

4. Immediate review of qualifications and requirements for registration and licensing.

5. Immediate establishment of a complaints process where general complaints can be dealt with.

We believe too much time and money has been spent on bureaucracy and not enough on meaningful action. Egos have ruled the day, not common sense, so someone needs to take action before we get further down this road to nowhere that we are on.

We can learn from the past as we have gone from a successful industry prior to the Routhan era to the complete load of shit we have now with the Bickers Board.

Is it about money or power and influence?

People have been asking us about the new ITO, The Skills Organisation.

From what we have read "The Skills Organisation" is the trading name for Skills Consulting Limited which is a limited liability company owned by The Skills Organisation Incorporated.

The Skills Organisation Incorporated is an Incorporated Society and has members not shareholders. It's members and votes held by each member are as follows :

Ambulance NZ 5,500

Why does going to work every day need to be such an expense, Board imposed CPD for profit is f@#! bullshit and I refuse to be a part of it end of story. I earn the equivalent working on a network now anyway. Suck on that PGDB.... I'm about two price increases from going to Auz forever.

I am behind you 100%, your an inspiration to every pipe I install or repair, you really are.

Dear Editor

Common sense must prevail at some point. CPD as it is now is not protecting the health and safety of New Zealanders. I employ a number of practitioners and I have always kept records of the CPD they attend.

Just recently I have added one more question to the list I give them when they return from a course – that question is “did you learn anything new?” I am shocked to see that 95% of them have answered “no” to this question. This tells me that the money I am paying out is wasted, and it also tells me that the course content is either low or repetitive.

How is this assisting the health and safety of the public? I like the PGDF's idea of “matters necessary to” – and one glaring example has been the introduction of the new regulations for gas. I can't understand why the PGDB are not requiring every gasfitter in NZ to attend either in

Electrical Contractors Assoc of NZ 5,500

Electro Technology Association 4,320

NZ Security Association 4,140

Real Estate Institute of NZ 5,500

Telecommunication Users Assoc of NZ 5,500

NZ Association of Credit Unions 5,500

Master Plumbers Association 5,500

Roofing Association of NZ 5,500

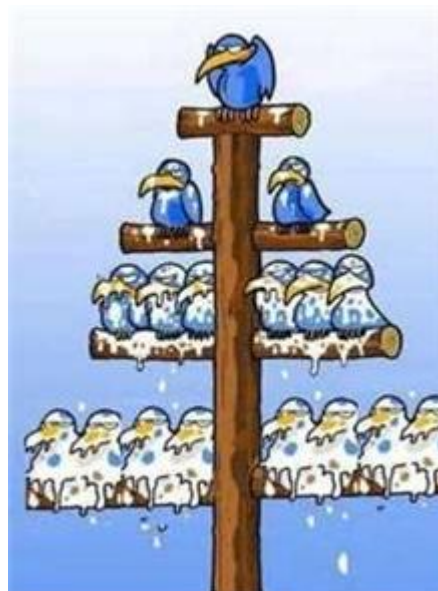
NZEPMU (Union) 5,500

Total 52,460

It would appear Master Plumbers have purchased their influence votes and it seems reading the rules of the Incorporated Society that the industry doesn't really have a say but we would love to be corrected on that one.

So what say will the tradespeople who are not Master Plumbers Members have with the operations of the Skills Organisation with regard to training - probably none except for “consultation”?

To all our Supporters



it's the only thing that ever has.

Have you ever noticed how it is ALWAYS the tradespeople who miss out, or cop the blame, or have to do extra? Well the Federation is heartily sick of it happening in our industry and are determined more than ever to put it right. It is clearly the Board and Government that are imposing the shit on us to and both can be changed! Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed

We know everyone believes the old saying that “shit flows down hill”, well the Federation has been upskilling and we know we can push that shit back to where it came from. Every time the Board and government play their stupid games it just makes us more determined and if it means we have to personally speak with every trades person in New Zealand

person, or perhaps on line, a course about the new regs.

Mind you – that’s probably too common sense an answer for them. After all some of their decisions just scream “moron.”



We hear that recent changes to Skills Maintenance for Licensed Building Practitioners have people concerned.

Isn't it amazing how the two schemes under the control of the same Minister, same government group and same chairman of the Boards are having issues! We'll keep you informed.

then we will.

If the Board won't work "constructively" with the industry then we will make the Federation such a force to be reckoned with that we can just ignore them. Do us all a favour and get this issue out to as many trades people you can and invite them to join the Federation at <http://www.pgdf.co.nz/sign-up>, in fact send it to everyone you know including your Local Member of Parliament so that people can see what we put up with.

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