



Fellow Practitioner Issue 147 Dated 28 March 2013

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## IN OTHER NEWS

### SKILLS ORGANISATION – A FEW MONTHS IN...

We are now more than a few months in to the apprenticeship training scheme run by The Skills Organisation.

It seemed timely to sit back and reflect whether we are better or worse off than we were before they took over the PGDRITO.

Those of our members who are “consumers” of this scheme will be in a good place to judge – we have had some feedback and it is mixed it would be fair to say.

Amongst the gripes are

### Update on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill

As we reported last week the Government Administration Committee was given an extension of two weeks to review the Amendment Bill. They called for those who gave evidence to make a further submission based on what was said at the hearing and the submissions the Committee had received.

What effect did the two week extension have? – Well it meant that the Board will get past the end of the month licensing period with the existing gazette notice meaning that we as an industry will pay the unlawful fees and levy and the Board can continue on, wasting our money with their lack of direction and bullying tactics.

For the Government Administration Committee – it gives them a longer period of time to search for the truth about the Board and the Minister.

This week the Federation put in a further submission which concentrated on our views around what the intent was of the Board at the time they placed the Gazette Notice, and did they knowingly take the actions that they did. We believe, based on the actions and the knowledge we could reasonably expect them to have, – then yes they did.

This is despicable and it is largely this sort of behaviour that has caused complaint after complaint to be laid against them with various agencies.

We also gave opinion as to the function of discipline and prosecuting of non registered persons where it seems to us the functions have developed into roles at the expense of other functions, as nearly 50% of the Board’s funds are spent on two out of 18 functions.

We noted at the Hearing last week that the Registrar of the

these:

- National Certificates are far too slow to come out after completion of final block courses
- Problems with reporting unit standards (to be fair we don't know if this is a Skills problem, or a polytechnic problem)
- Lack of communication with employers – Skills appear to be equally as poor at this as the ITO was
- People out of the industry still being scheduled for courses i.e. they have left the employer and the employer still receives letters informing them they are on a block course (that begs the question – are Skills still claiming money for them?)

On the plus side:

- We understand the cost of books and additional courses like Working at Heights and Confined Spaces has been bought back into the one off cost (well done!!)
- They are working on bringing costs back to manageable levels by using economies of scale
- They are looking at different methods of delivery
- They are wanting to get industry feedback
- They are paying trainee

Board stated the matters outlined within the OAG report have been dealt with - we totally disagree with this assertion. We further believe this is yet again the Board relying on its official position to get others to believe its status. We are confident the OAG follow up scheduled this year will paint a different picture.

The Federation also submitted comment on the handing on of costs to the consumer, explaining that this was only the case if the employer paid the fees.

In addition we explained that we felt the Amendment Bill will create more victims. As it stands people categorize the person who has the work done by an unregistered person as being a victim. But as the industry is paying for prosecutions then they also become victims in that they are paying for actions which they have absolutely no control.

So this yet again brings to light the issue of the consumer to be prosecuted under the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act for employing a non registered person. The Electrical Workers Registration Board states it is up to the homeowner to ensure the person doing work in their home is licensed. It is a subtle shift in responsibility.

One issue overlooked is the possible conflicts of interest. When the original fee of \$266.00 was set the Board had two contractors working for them specifically for undertaking work around fees and levies, and the acting CEO role.

Both went on to be appointed to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and both were on the Board when decisions were made regarding the Offences Fee.

We attempted to explain the Amendment Bill has done irreversible damage to the credibility of the Minister and the Board and will do nothing for the health and safety of the public as that activity is done on a daily voluntary basis by the industry.

How can this Board ever sit in judgement over a tradesperson when they have broken the law themselves, whether through mistake or purposeful act, and then to have laws changed to say they are innocent of such activity?

We included in our submission that this Board and Minister will never be in a position to govern this industry again and achieve results. Their actions were wrong and their time is up.

licence fees of \$45  
(again, well done!)

So what does our report  
card read – well I think  
we can give them:

Communication D

Effort C+ (with room to  
move)

Potential B (but don't  
wait too long to deliver)  
We want to hear from  
you – the apprentices  
and employers out there  
– what has your  
experience been of  
SKILLS to date?

Let us know and we will  
print your feedback in an  
upcoming newsletter.

#### Joke of the Week

The Minister of Building  
and Construction and a  
member of the Plumbers  
Gasfitters and  
Drainlayers Board go into  
a bakery.

The Minister steals 3  
pastries and puts them in  
his pocket. He says to the  
Board Member, "See how  
good I am? The owner  
didn't see anything!"

The Board Member says  
to the Minister, "I am  
going to show you there  
is nobody better than a  
Board Member at  
stealing."

He goes to the owner  
and says, "Give me a  
pastry and I will show  
you a magic trick..."

Intrigued, the owner  
accepts and gives him a

This Amendment Bill, if passed, will simply add to the  
animosity which is growing daily.

#### What Flip Flop Williamson said this week

He just keeps on contradicting himself where on one hand he  
is attempting to pass retrospective laws to cover the unlawful  
taking of money by a Board which he appointed and on the  
other hand he's talking about holding people accountable.

Mr Williamson had this to say about the CTV Building in  
Christchurch.

*"It has to be... that someone is held to account," Williamson  
said.*

*"I would have thought something that gives (authorities) the  
power to instigate something like criminal manslaughter, to  
corporate manslaughter. That's happened before with a  
number of small incidents, like cool store fires and other things,  
so I wouldn't rule out giving them some of those powers. "*

*Those powers would not be retrospective, however, so it would  
not help in the case of the CTV collapse.*

*But it would be "just ghastly" to move on without anyone  
being held to account.*

*"You walk down a 737 aisle in the morning and see 115 people  
sitting there and you think 'wow'. And that's how many people  
died... that building was built illegally, it didn't meet all the  
specs of the day, it didn't meet code."*

[http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/rebuilding-  
christchurch/8474797/Corporate-manslaughter-law-change-  
weighed](http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/rebuilding-christchurch/8474797/Corporate-manslaughter-law-change-weighed)

We say try walking down a 737 aisle and see 115 people sitting  
there and think 'wow' that's how many people I'm passing a  
law to steal from, money that was taken from unlawfully, it  
didn't meet all the guidelines and legislation of the day, and  
then do it another 61 times and think 'wow' - I'm an idiot!.  
(Comment from the guy with the ute, the dog and the  
cellphone – "you ain't wrong there mate!).

#### Turn that anger to action and laughter

Sometimes we get so engrossed in what we are doing we let

pastry.

The Board Member swallows it and asks for another one.

The owner gives him another one.

Then the Board Member asks for another one and swallows it just the same.

The owner is starting to wonder where the magic trick is and says, "What did you do with the pastry? Are you trying to fool me?"

The Board member answers "Look in the Ministers pocket."

### Happy Easter

Have a good break everyone because when we are back we could be straight into contacting every plumber, gasfitter and drainlayer in New Zealand to sign up for a \$2 Million class action against the Board.

that energy turn to anger, but as time goes on you start to look at the situation and the people and treat them as if they are a big joke. Here's this week's big joke just so you can chill out over Easter.

Meet the Pillage People.....



.....and their latest recruit



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