



Fellow Practitioner Issue 157 Dated 7 June 2013

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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor



Due to the number of replies we picked out the best from each subject from last week.

Dear Editor

I am one of these so called "Cowboys" that Flip Flop and the Board go on about.

I, like you, think there is a big difference in people who are being prosecuted and disciplined.

I find it quite offensive that I am referred to as a "Cowboy" when I pleaded guilty to an offence to save money.

I wasn't guilty, but in the Board's eyes you are "guilty until proven innocent." They even tell you that an early guilty plea will be cheaper than defending the case.

They have no credibility as a disciplinary body.

Ed: Agree totally. Look at all the issues in the Paul Gee case and

Some Facts



Did you know the Board advised the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment that the costs covered by the current \$86 offences fee is made up of:

- Salaries (including corporate support) 274,000
- External legal support 70,000
- 17.2% share general overheads 162,000
- 14.3% share Board honoraria 28,000
- 17.4% share of other Board costs 19,000
- Total \$553,000

Did you know the Board, who have unlawfully taken money from us, have the power to pay themselves an honorarium? Section 147 of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 states:

"The Board may pay to members of the Board, to members of any committee appointed by the Board, and to investigators, out of the funds of the Board, the remuneration (by way of fees, salary, or otherwise) and allowances and expenses as the Board from time to time determines"

Did you know an honorarium is a payment given for **professional services** that are rendered nominally without charge? So are we being charged for something that is supposedly free?

This could be part of the problem - there is no passion for the industry - but a passion to line the pockets of those providing a so called **"professional service"**.

Did you know the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment told the Government Administration Committee hearing that the advantages of the validation of the discipline levy and offences fee as part of the Amendment Bill were that:

- *The Board cannot be required, by registered persons, to refund the disciplinary levy and offences fee collected by the Board to date.*
- *Enables the Board to continue to carry out all its functions.*
- *Financially viable.*
- *Levy cost is able to be passed onto consumers using plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying services.*
- *No additional compliance costs imposed on the Board or practitioners.*
- *Provides certainty for the Board and the industry.*

Did you know when supplying financial information to the Ministry about

no-one has been held accountable for the failure at the Board's end.

Dear Editor

Regarding Political Diseases, we are at fault here in that as a public we let the people in positions of authority get away with what they like. We need to participate more and have our say. Keep up the good work.

Dear Editor

Regarding "It makes you sick protecting their own" I think this is happening everywhere and it's not just protecting their own but getting jobs for them as well.

Ed: Agreed and it doesn't seem to be getting any better.

Dear Editor

Congratulations Fellow Practitioner. Congratulations doesn't really seem to say enough for what the Federation has been doing for the industry.

All I want to say is that in the last couple of years you have fought more for us and taught us more about the issues in our industry than any other group has ever done.

From me and my workers thanks, and keep it up, you have our support.

Ed: Many thanks. The Federation is introducing a new concept to the way in which industries are regulated and that is one of accountability. No more bitching and moaning over a beer but "in their face" action to defend ourselves.

Letter to the Editor.

I wish the Federation to clarify some thing for me, I have been a Plumber since leaving school, 35 years ago; I am a fully qualified registered Plumber and Certifying Drainlayer. This

the Amendment Bill the Board just didn't have a clue:

"The Board has advised the Ministry that information regarding the costs of prosecuting non-registered persons over this period is not readily available in a usable form. However, the total amount payable to one of the Board's prosecutors over this period was approximately \$465,000. Note that some of the prosecutor's work would have been in relation to registered persons and the figure does not include the costs of staff time spent carrying out this work or any overheads. In addition, prosecution work was also carried out by another prosecutor but he also did work other than prosecution work, and it would take some time to extract those amounts"

What sort of mumbo jumbo is that? Are we paying professional salaries and honorarium for substandard work? (A comment from the man with the Ute, the cellphone and the dog – If I told customer's of mine this sort of crap they would refuse to pay me – and rightly so.

What are these bunch of overpaid administrators playing at? Why should they get away with a litany of bullshit – and who is meant to hold them to account?")

Did you know the Board spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a gas certification computer system which will now only be used as a historical records data base? Our money wasted again, but this time by the Ministry.

The Board fought against the new gas certification scheme being imposed but were over ruled by the Ministry. Perhaps what they should be doing now is coming up with ways to use the existing scheme to the advantage of the industry. If they won't explore the options of using the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on the computer scheme then we are happy to.

Did you know the Federation extended an olive branch to Master Plumbers to meet, but yet again no response from them? Let the results of the Industrial Exclusion be upon their heads.

Blame Someone Else

Already we have seen the Board Chairman Alan Bickers pointing the finger at Wal Gordon, blaming him for the investigation into the Board's status as a Registered Charity.

We have Heard Flip Flop Williamson blaming a "handful of malcontents" for the problems as all they do is go to every meeting complaining. (And if you are reading this then feel free to count yourself amongst this handful of malcontents.)

Flip Flop has already stated the Amendment Bill is required because the previous Government got the wording wrong.

All this blame apportioning going on, but what are any of them delivering? Flip flop has been in charge of the Board for about 5 years and nothing has changed for the good, in fact we have watched a steady demise in

year I have chosen to not relicence for the following reasons:

1. I do not agree with the current CPD requirements, as a tradesman does not suddenly become incompetent because he has not attended a two hour course on fitting sink traps.

2. I am disgusted an incompetent inept Board and Minister can decide we are not competent because we do not attend a class presented by a totally unqualified person, who then decides if we are able to work and earn a living in our chosen profession in the future.

3. I have applied for a current licence and the Board have refused to issue it, stating I have not attended the relevant CPD courses. I have attended the courses and have offered the board proof with a receipt for attendance signed by the course presenter. The Board have ignored my evidence and failed to reply to my questioning of their refusal.

I can list a whole lot of other reasons, but that is not my point, my point is just because I do not have a current licence does not now make me a COWBOY or incompetent - unlicensed tradesman are not COWBOYS.

The COWBOYS are the untrained, unregistered, people working in our trade.

If any other tradesman or Board member refers to me as a COWBOY after 35 years in the trade, fully qualified and registered, we will have to discuss the topic in the carpark.

If a doctor whom has been struck off for whatever reason drives past a road accident, stops and uses their skill to save a life.

Or if the same doctor is in the situation with a women about to

standards, delivery and let's face it – honesty and transparency.

Two years down the track and the so called “New Board” is now old and has achieved nothing except to get itself deeper into trouble by defending that which is blatantly wrong and at times illegal. They can't even communicate with the wider industry and it appears they have had to install security measures to protect their office and staff (from what we have to ask ourselves – and WHY?) More costs paid for by the practitioners of New Zealand.

A lot of talk – endless empty talk, and the regulation of the industry is still failing. It seems the Board are more worried about covering overheads than being fair to the industry. They need to wake up and realise forced compliance will never be achieved.

The blame game and exclusion is only going to get worse - so let's do something about it. Read “No more getting screwed over” – the article follows after Industrial Exclusion.

Industrial Exclusion



This subject sparked a lot of interest and people want to know more so we have attempted to answer your questions but first a small recap on what we were talking about last week:

Excluding people or organisations because they have different ideas is termed

“Industrial Exclusion” and is the weapon of choice by bureaucrats wanting to suppress the opinions of those that don't side with them. It is an abuse of power and position, and takes away basic rights of freedom of speech and opinion. It sets an industry on track towards becoming inwards looking, where a single line of thought is dominant.

Question: Can you give me a layman's description of being inward looking?

Response: an inward-looking person or group is more interested in themselves than in other people. Here are a few words that come to mind; blinkered, closed, cut off, isolated, limited, narrow, narrow-minded, petty, and prejudiced.

Question: Isn't this just called competition when you take out your opposition to your advantage?

Response: It would be if we were in trade competition but we aren't. The issues we outlined last week are not about trade competition they are about actions that take away rights or restrict development that does not follow a certain line of thought.

Question: What happens if Industrial Exclusion continues?

Response: The industry becomes more divided than it is now. Organisations start to rely on their historical reputations as they do now. The blame game begins as it is now. The organisations being excluded adapt and go into

give birth miles from any help again uses his skill to deliver the child safely – will the doctor be prosecuted for working in their trade. NO they will be hailed a hero and given their licence back.

If my neighbour has a burst pipe in the middle of the night I will repair it for them, notify the Board, and see them in court. I am not a COWBOY because I do not have a current licence, unregistered untrained are the COWBOYS.

Ed: Hi reader, there is a lot there to clarify but this is a prime example of CPD affecting a person's right to work.

If you can prove you have done the course then there shouldn't be any problem with the awarding of the points. Are your points being withheld for any reason?

If they are then it is even more proof that it is about purchasing points not the training or upskilling. It is also proof that the suppliers of the training hold all the aces and can control our future.

Dear Editor

Have you seen the pages and pages and pages of drivel regarding the new Certification scheme that have spewed forth from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment?

I think they got their name because they spent a lot of time dreaming up the most complicated system they could for sparkies and gasfitters to certify work – to ensure they needed to employ a lot more people in their Ministry to sort it out.

Bloody hell, the system we have at the moment looks positively delightful compared to this elephant load of dung.

You need a PhD just to work the

competition with others in order to hold or gain ground in the fight for what is right. Dissent in the industry sets in and regulation is ignored as it is now. As you can see we are well into this process.

Question: Can Industrial Exclusion be maintained.

Response: Yes it can, but those doing the excluding, including the Government, create their own monster and will continually feed it with their incompetence.

No More Getting Screwed Over



We hear a lot of talk about actions taken and achievements, but in reality they are just administrative achievements – yes we have a policy for A,B,C.

Who really cares about these administrative achievements if the Board doesn't implement them lawfully, fairly and if the policies don't adhere to the law in content?

The way some people go on and you would think that life for us only began when they got into their position of power. We did have lives before Flip Flop Williamson and the Board and we need to get our lives back.

The battles the Federation have been fighting have been on a scale not seen before in our industry and probably a lot of other industries as well, and all we wanted was for the Board and Minister to comply with the law of New Zealand, so our industry would get fairness and equality. What we expected in our fight was logical responses but all we have seen is more bureaucracy and actions to screw us over.

There has been a lot of arse covering by the Board and the Minister – it all has some smell of the Novapay debacle about it – watch out for the investigation where the Minister is exonerated and the "officials" get the blame – which may, if an investigation were ever launched – be partially right. The Officials at DBH have been watching this train wreck of a Board from the warmth of their Wellington offices – shame on them.

We believed honesty and democracy would see us through but were wrong. The political scene is more rotten than a 10 day old carcass left lying in the full sun on a back road, and we are sick of what's being served up to us. There are a lot of hard working practical people out there that feel the same way as us but don't know how to effect the change needed.

The Federation has tried the bureaucratic system and has been shafted by it. The Federation has kept its word to its members with everything it has done. The Federation said there would be no fees and it would survive on donations and that's exactly what it has done. When it has said it would protest - it has. When it has taken on the unlawful activities it has proved its cases and now it is saying enough is enough!

If the powers that be won't help or change the system for the betterment of our industry and others, then we will get in a position where we can affect change for all. The Federation doesn't want to align itself with people who

system of flow charts and paperwork out.

If anyone in Government thought this was going to save customer's money – they were having a wet dream.

Our firm charges around \$140 for a gas certificate, but now with a Safety Certificate, a Compliance Certificate and making our own certificates as well as logging on to the High Risk Data base then I can see costs of \$200 looming.

Who was the idiot that decided this was a good idea?

Had they been dropped on their head at birth?

Donations

Don't forget we operate on donations so if you wish to help out and invest in the future of the industry - make a donation. Every little bit counts so if you want to make a donation you can either send a cheque made out to the: Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation,

or Make a direct deposit at any National Bank, deposit on line through internet banking or set up a month direct credit.

Account: National Bank 06
0773 0319398 00

Cheques can be posted to:
Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation, 3
Jupiter Grove, Trentham,
Upper Hutt 5018

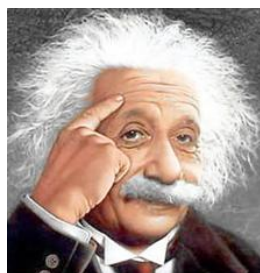
do not want to make the changes needed to make our lives and the lives of a lot of the public better.

The battle needs to be taken to Parliament and not by way of petition, but to the very core – the seats of Parliament. For 18 months now some Federation members have been discussing the idea of launching a political party to work in conjunction with the Federation so the Federation can achieve its aims and the common New Zealander can have a say.

Perhaps now is the time for a movement to stop the common New Zealander getting screwed over every which way. To do this we initially need 500 paid up members to form a political party. A minimal fee is required by law.

We want your feedback on this and want to know how many people would be prepared to pay \$5.00 to join a political party who will stick to the values of the Federation (fairness and equality), and fight for change. We want to know if any of you would actively participate in the party and would possibly even run in your electorate.

Don't belittle yourself and say "I couldn't do that". Stand up and make a commitment because it's a team effort and as a team we can make the changes needed and leave a good legacy for our families. We need to be proud of who we are and take the fight to the people suppressing us.



This statement of Albert Einstein says a lot about what we hold dear and that is, our degree of independence that we are all in this battle for.

"If I would be a young man again and had to decide how to make my living, I would not try to become a scientist or scholar or teacher.

I would rather choose to be a plumber in the hope to find that modest degree of independence still available under present circumstances." -Albert Einstein, The Reporter, 18 November 1954

Let's fight for OUR independence, fight for OUR industry and fight for those other practical people out there that can't fight for themselves. We know it's a big ask but what will happen if we all leave it for someone else to do?

We are not going to get screwed over any more. We need to know how much support is out there for change. Send an email to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz and say 'YES' I support the action.

Wal will collate the responses and we will go from there. Think hard on this because options are running out. We effect change or continue to fight for our existence. If you think the situation is getting better - then do nothing. If you think it is getting worse - show your interest in spending \$5.00 to take the fight to Parliament.

The Federation is not going away no matter what.

