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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**Letters to the Editor**



**Dear Editor**

Last week one of my workers received notification of his drainlayers course. That was great news as he's been waiting for some time however there was also bad news, the course was to start Monday of this week.

**Question of the Week**



**Question:** I am sick of funding organisations I don't see any return for. I'm talking about the "The Skills Organisation" (the new ITO), and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. Why isn't anything being achieved by either organisation for the good of the industry, and why don't they listen to the industry?

**Response:** That's a very good question and no matter who you talk to you will get a different answer. If you

talked to the organisations, Skills would claim they are new and need some time to find their feet in our industries, and if you speak to the Board they would say they are not there for the industry, but are there to protect the health and safety of the public.

No matter what they say, we as an industry are going backwards and they are failing both the industry and the public. We believe it's about money and organisational survival. They don't seem to realise that every time they impose a cost on us they effectively give everyone a pay decrease, but we don't see any drop in the salaries for the Board or Skills. In fact the Board's Discipline Levy and Prosecutions Fee actually collect money for a 5% general increase every year! I don't know how you feel about that, but we are pretty annoyed – most people in our industry haven't seen anywhere near that sort of increase year on year.

The biggest reason we are going nowhere is that the old ITO and the Board ignored issues for over a decade without any opposition from the so called "voice of the industry". Now they are being held accountable by the Federation they don't have the answers and are using Industrial Exclusion to defend themselves. It is all simply a charade. The mess has been caused in part by a commonality of people on the governance bodies of these organisations. No challenges seem to have been laid because you are not going to criticise yourself are you? No matter what, we as tradespeople still protect the public as a matter of conscience.

Do these idiots at Skills think we just sit around on our arses waiting for them to send us a letter?

I think it is absolutely pathetic that we get three working days written notice of a course. Has anyone else had this issue?

**Ed:** I have had the same experience. I think with this change of ITO we may have gone from the frying pan into the fire. Nothing appears to have changed, in fact it seems to have gotten worse as this new lot seemed to be more organised in inflicting their chaos.

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**Hi Editor:**

I am in favour of setting up a political party, as I see it is the only way we will sort out this problem with the Board, I am also in favour of not paying our licensing fees next year or at least withholding fees until they get the message.

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**Dear Editor**

We support the concept of a political party as it would make a welcome change; someone going into Parliament with a good idea.....last fella was Guy Fawkes.

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**Dear Editor:**

With regard to the third reading I have heard that the house has a full agenda so the Bill may not be of importance (so much for the urgency, insolvent spin portrayed by the Minister).

I for one hope that the Bill does pass as it will be the first time in world history that a small group of people (Plumbers,

## Did You Know?

The Government says they have implemented an appropriate funding model for the Board and in particular the Prosecutions Fee, which involves them changing the law so they can levy us - but it may interest you to know that the National Government can find enough money to pay themselves \$532,324.00, excluding GST, for accommodation allowances for a 12 month period. The entire Government Executive accommodation allowances totaled \$614,815.00.

The same Government Executive spent \$3,383,660.00 on Cabinet approved International Travel. The combination of the two perks could have funded the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for 12 months!!! Is this how you want to see YOUR TAXES USED?

Flip Flop's spend for the last 12 months was \$53,834.00 (\$1,035.26 weekly) excluding GST on overseas travel, and he received \$29,918.00 (\$575.35 weekly), excluding GST, in accommodation allowance. That's the equivalent to the minimum wage in allowances every week.

It's not hard to understand why the Board had no reservations about a Christmas party in Melbourne at practitioners' expense a few years ago and now they are changing a law to make all the activities like that legal. If the Government want to make retrospective laws then they need to know what they are legalising.

## Speaking of Wages

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment have on their website that Licensed Plumbers starting out earn between \$35,000 and \$45,000 a year and then with two to three years experience they may earn between \$50,000 and \$60,000. The Average income is estimated to be \$49,400 (\$23.75 per hour).

Enz.org state the average salary in the private sector is \$25.42 per hour (\$52,873 annually) and in the Public Sector it is \$35.24 per hour (\$73,299 annually). So after four years in the industry and starting at the top of the scale of \$45,000 a licensed tradesperson is \$7,000 below the average of the private sector and \$28,299 below the average in the public sector.

On average tradespeople in our industry get \$3,473 less than the private sector average and \$23,899 less than the public sector average.

It doesn't figure that we do the work and protect the public and contribute to productivity in New Zealand and all the public sector appears to do is make our lives difficult and expensive. It's like the TV programme YES MINISTER come to life!

The practical people, us the trade's people take all the risks, work in the crap weather and wear our bodies out over the years, whereas the greatest risk to the Bureaucrats is a paper cut or a blister on

Gasfitters and Drainlayers) simply going about their business will be held financially liable for the prosecution of every citizen who may breach a Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying regulation, it's an unheard load of bullshit.

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**Dear Editor**

Did you see Christchurch's Mayor is telling Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson to back off over the time the council's taking to approve building consents?

Who the hell is Williamson to talk about the time to take actions?

He's the useless mongrel who slows everything down. Don't tell him to back off tell him to bugger off.

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**Dear Editor**

We have noticed a change in the tone of the Fellow Practitioner in that there seems to be more criticism of the Government rather than the Board. Why is that?

**Ed:** We were wondering how long it would take for someone to ask is question.

The answer is very simple; the Board have put themselves in a situation where they are nothing.

Nothing is achieved and they rely on the Government. They are not an independent Board.

their arse from sitting too long. Oh sorry - they may lose an eye if they fall asleep and stab themselves in said eye with their pencil.

It's time for our industry to look at its worth, the long term cost to us and factor that into our charge out rates.

## Government Comparisons

We are continuously getting compared to other industries, such as lawyers, dentists, doctors, nurses, architects, engineers etc, for fees and levies and the manner in which we are regulated but what the Board and Government don't tell you are these differences:

### Lawyers

Pay for solicitors vary depending on their experience, the size of the law firm they work in, and the region they work in.

- Graduate solicitors usually earn between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year.
- Solicitors with one to three years' experience usually earn between \$45,000 and \$95,000.
- Senior solicitors with at least five years' experience usually earn between \$90,000 and \$175,000.

### Dentists

- Dentists with one to three years' experience usually earn \$65,000-\$80,000 per year.
- Experienced dentists usually earn \$80,000-\$150,000 per year  
Doctors
- Trainee general practitioners usually earn \$70,000-\$175,000 per year
- Experienced general practitioners usually earn \$112,000-\$206,000 per year

### Nurses

Pay for registered nurses vary depending on experience, duties and responsibilities.

- New graduate nurses earn about \$47,000 a year.
- Those with three to five years' experience can earn between \$54,000 and \$64,000.
- Senior nurses with more responsibilities can earn from \$67,000 to \$110,000 per year

### Architects

The Government cops the flack now as they are the ones pulling the strings. They appoint the puppet board and are the puppet masters. It's that simple.

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**Dear Editor**

Maurice Williamson seems to make a lot of off the cuff statements that are just a load of bullshit.

I bet his butthole is jealous of all the crap that comes out of his mouth. *(Comment from the guy with the Ute, the dog and cellphone – love it! Laughed so hard I dropped the cellphone on the dog's head!)*

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**Dear Editor**

I have been reading your updates for some time, good on you for what you are trying to achieve.

A particular annoyance to me is the Employment workers under supervision class. I am not sure if you are aware, but if you hold an EWUS exemption, you are able to own your own plumbing business, operate the same, advertise in the Yellow pages, yet do not have to appear on the Public register, do not have to undertake CPD points, and daresay, will not be subject to the proposed audit system which is being proposed.

There are several of these characters operating in my area, they are laughing at the legitimate tradesman, yet there is nothing we can

- Architects with one to three years' experience usually earn \$40,000-\$60,000 per year
- Registered architects with more than three years' experience usually earn \$80,000-\$100,000 per year

**Engineers**

- Graduate civil engineers earn \$45,000-\$60,000 per year
- Senior civil engineers who work as team leaders or managers earn \$85,000-\$220,000 per year

You may be interested to know that we don't fall into the category of professionals - but those above do.

If the Government wants equality in regulation then they must expect equality in wages. It's time for changes in the way we think as no longer will we take wage decreases due to regulation imposed on us. The costs must be handed on. If construction costs go up then that's the Government's fault in part due to the underhanded regulation they are supporting.

**It's Shocking**



Last week we discussed the spin the Board put on its statistics so we thought we would give you some facts just to keep the air nice and clear.

These figures show how serious the miss-management by the Board and attitude of the Minister has impacted upon our trades.

The following shows the NZ population in 2003 and compares with the population in 2013.

**Drainlayers**

- In 2003; 4,258 Drainlayers serviced 4,000,000 people, this equates to 1 Drainlayer per 939 people.
- In 2013; 1,808 Drainlayers service 4,468,000 people, this equates to 1 Drainlayer per 2,471 people.

**Gasfitters**

- In 2003; 2,129 Gasfitters serviced 4,000,000 people, this equates to 1 Gasfitter per 1878 people.
- In 2013; 1,426 Gasfitters service 4,468,000 people, this equates to 1 Gasfitter per 3,133 people.

**Plumbers**

do about it.

Even though they are supposed to be under the supervision of a certifying plumber, we all know this is a joke.

I have contacted the Board, but all you get from one of their overpaid lawyers is \"oh, it's the law\". What a joke. It makes you wonder why as Licensed and Certifying Plumber/Gasfitter/ Drainlayers we bother to submit to the regime, when it appears you do not really have to.

I would be interested in your opinion of the above,

**ED:** It's not a very good situation and it seems to us the Board go out for the "easy kills" targeting the legitimate trade's people and only deal with the others when it is all dropped on their lap.

**Bureaucrats**

The government is sending five of its experts to Christchurch to help the council work through building consents.

The experts will come from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and they will have the authority to make changes as required. More bureaucrats, just what Christchurch needed for its rebuild.

**Hamsters**



- In 2003; 5,094 Plumbers serviced 4,000,000 people, this equates to 1 Plumber per 785 people.

- In 2013; 2,845 Plumbers service 4,468,000 people, this equates to 1 Plumber per 1,570 people.

**The following table shows the comparison of tradespeople licensed on 1 May 2012 and 1 May 2013**

1 May 2012	Registered Persons	License Issued	No License	1 May 2013	Registered Persons	Gain	License Issued	No License	Overall Loss
Certifying Plumber	5962	2457	3505		6175	213	2112	4063	558
Certifying Gasfitter	2561	1018	1543		2683	122	1052	1631	88
Certifying Drainlayer	6835	2379	4456		6952	117	1735	5217	761
Licensed Plumber	2885	900	1985		3214	329	733	2481	496
Licensed Gasfitter	2181	407	1774		2319	138	374	1945	171
Licensed Drainlayer	145	83	62		234	89	73	161	99
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>20569</b>	<b>7244</b>	<b>13325</b>		<b>21577</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>6079</b>	<b>15498</b>	<b>2173</b>

**The following table shows the comparison of people licensed in 2003 compared to 2013.**

2003	Licenses Issued	2013	Licenses Issued	Reduction over 10 years
Certifying Plumber	4002		2112	1890
Certifying Gasfitter	1341		1052	289
Certifying Drainlayer	4258		1808	2450
Licensed Plumber	1092		733	359
Licensed Gasfitter	788		374	414
Licensed Drainlayer	N/A in 2003		73 Added to Certifying above	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11481</b>		<b>6079</b>	<b>5402</b>

It would be reasonable to assume on the figures above that there could be the same or more tradespeople working WITHOUT a license as those that are working WITH ONE. That does not matter individually as it is the qualification (Registration) that is the respected and necessary point. A license is only a revenue gathering tool nothing more.

There is however a situation created by the Board that is worth consideration and that is the Health and Safety of the Public is "NOT" at risk as the "Registered tradesperson" has proved competence and is qualified.

However imposing costs, CPD, audits, prosecution levies etc is excluding people and forcing them to operate without a license and raises the following points.

- This person will not operate with a consent or permit,
- There will be no Council records of drainage plans.
- There will be no record of Gas installations.

Have you ever looked at someone and seen that the wheels were turning but the hamster was dead.

#### Our thanks

We want to thank Plumbers NZ for their continued help with the sponsoring of the Federations website and the Plumbers Forum.

Visit their website at:

[www.plumbers.co.nz](http://www.plumbers.co.nz)

#### Where's the equality?

You go to a Doctor and they take a best guess at what is wrong with you and you may need to go back two or three times and even then it's still a best guess.

Do they get held accountable for getting it wrong the first two times?

No way, but we as tradespeople are expected by the customer to get it right first time and if we don't it's off to the Board for prosecution.

So who is the professional and should get paid the most?

It's all about perceptions and it's time for those perceptions to change.

- Last but not least, none of these un-licensed (BUT registered) tradespeople can take on an apprentice. Health and Safety is now a MAJOR issue, the issue is the Health and Safety of the Tradespeople who as a result of total incompetence by the Board and Minister are working longer hours, under increased pressure and undue costs to provide their services to the public.

There are tens of millions of dollars being spent on "training" and we as an industry are going backwards. The public of New Zealand and the industry are paying money to the Government who in turn are spending it on "training" and then saying how well they are doing while at the same time screwing the industry down so hard tradespeople are leaving to work either illegally, or to enter another industry altogether.

So what would you say to a young person wanting to enter our industry? Would you want your son or daughter working as a tradesperson under the regime at the moment?

It isn't hard to put this right, if the Government will back off from the Amendment Bill and make the Board enter discussions around the illegally gained money and payment back of same, and then engage with industry in a constructive way – we could move forward.

At the moment the Board have a siege mentality and are hell bent on circling the wagons. Flip Flop's in the lead wagon waving his shotgun and baying for blood, perhaps he should look a bit closer inside the circle instead of outside it. This Board have lost the respect and confidence of the industry they regulate, and the Minister behind whose apron they tremble has become a joke within the trades he supposedly oversees.

#### Campbell Live

On Wednesday this week Campbell Live reported on the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry. Here's a link to that evenings show. Get your feedback to us for next week issue of the Fellow Practitioner.

[www.3news.co.nz/The-politics-of-plumbing/tabid/367/articleID/302062/Default.aspx](http://www.3news.co.nz/The-politics-of-plumbing/tabid/367/articleID/302062/Default.aspx)