



Fellow Practitioner Special Edition Dated 8 July 2013

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IN OTHER NEWS

It's not just about money

This Bill is about MORE than the payment of money, it's about unlawful activities, and it is about the trust New Zealanders place in the Government and Parliamentary systems.

If passed, this Bill will place more power in the hands of a Board which the Government has admitted have acted unlawfully – a Board that have CONTINUALLY got it wrong, and a Board that has a dysfunctional relationship with a large percentage of the industry it regulates.

We are an industry that is not opposed to fair and transparent discipline of registered persons and we are not opposed to the prosecution of non registered persons, but we are opposed to becoming second class citizens, slaves to the system.

Maurice Williamson has been heard to lay the blame on the previous Government but we

Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill Update



No doubt the National Party, Board and Master Plumbers will be celebrating the win over the Federation by getting the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill through the Committee Stage of Parliament on Thursday 4 July 2013.

While the Americans were celebrating Independence Day, the New Zealand public witnessed democracy at its absolute worst. We witnessed the unlawful taking of close to \$2,000,000, and the Government's answer to this, which is now a step closer to being made legal, effectively arse covering the incompetence of a government appointed Board, the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

So what does passing the Committee Stage mean? Basically it's all a done deal and the final reading will see the Bill passed by the Government. Then it's off to the Governor General for his signature and Royal Assent.

The Bill achieves absolutely nothing apart from supporting Flip Flop Williamson's statement that the Ombudsman got it wrong and that nothing would be paid to the industry.

In saying that, it did prove a number of things. On the positive side it proved the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation was RIGHT as the Government had to change a law of the country to get its hollow win over the industry. Well done to all those involved in fighting the Government for our rights and for all the backing from you the supporters.

On the negative side it proved:

- The Board, led by a Justice of the Peace, and supported by a gaggle of lawyers can't interpret legislation but yet they sit in judgement of those that can.

believe the fault lies squarely with him in that he has not listened to the industry.

He had the opportunity to correct the situation but failed to do so.

He had the opportunity to negotiate with the industry as recommended by the Ombudsman but he chose to exclude a sector of the industry by changing the law.

Democracy at its worst with an act of Industrial Exclusion.

The Bill not only seeks to validate fees taken illegally from the plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers of New Zealand but also imparts MORE power to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board to levy the industry "as it sees fit" unfettered.

Historically they have not used their power well, so why would you give them more?

This Amendment Bill is nothing more than "Industrial Exclusion" where the rights and opinions of a section of the industry are being excluded for the benefit of others.

The Government attempted to do this in 2010 when the Regulations Review Committee recommended the disallowance of regulations pertaining to fees implemented by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

- That other regulations imposed by the Board are questionable due to their lack of ability to interpret legislation. The Continuing Professional Development scheme is a case in point.

- The Board is not independent but reliant totally on the backing of the government, and hides behind the apron of the Minister of Building and Construction

- The legal firm that provided the Board with a legal opinion joins the group that got it wrong, and it is very unlikely they will be held accountable.

- The opinion and recommendations of the Regulations Review Committee means nothing. The Public could quite rightly ask why we have them, if at the stroke of a pen, the government ignores them. They are a waste of taxpayers' money, and we should be asking for a refund for the cost of their meetings as their decisions have been proven worthless.

- Those politicians can vote one way in the Select Committee and walk out the door and vote the opposite in the House. No moral standing what so ever. Flip flop is a name that could rightly be assigned to a number of politicians.

- That the Select Committees are subject to Government interference and manipulation, where the rights of the public can be interfered with and squashed.

- The opinion and recommendations of the Ombudsman's Office mean nothing, so why do we as tax payers fund the millions of dollars to fund them?

- The effectiveness of the Office of the Auditor General is questionable as they didn't pick up on this issue and others complained about.

- That effectiveness of checking the financials of the Board by the Office of the Auditor General is now nonexistent as the government have put into law that the spending of the fees collected are deemed to be legal.

- That \$56,450.755 in general wage increases annually, \$30,000 in bad debts and collection annually, \$64,575 annually in rent, \$20,5000 in recruitment and training annually, \$5,000 fees review annually, \$15,000 infringement notice project annually, \$504,665 for administrative staff (not lawyers or investigators) annually and the list goes on, are now all deemed to be costs arising out of investigations.

- That there is NO leadership or governance in the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying industry.

- There is not industry representation on the Board.

- The Building and Housing Group are an ineffective group that are

The Government got it wrong then and created the situation we are now faced with.

If passed, constitutional rights are being removed, and excluding individuals from their right to democracy will leave an industry divided.

This Bill will achieve nothing but cover for an incompetent Board and the actions of the Minister who appointed them and has not held them accountable.

Forced compliance will NOT be achieved and this Board and Minister will never be in a position to govern this industry again and achieve positive results.

How's this for a news paper heading?

Government changes the law to allow Government appointed Charity Board to impose prosecutions tax.

It may seem like a farfetched story that a Registered Charity is given the power to tax citizens of New Zealand but that's what is happening.

Approximately 7100 trades' people who are forced to pay fees to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, a Registered Charity, are now being taxed so this "Registered Charity" can prosecute unregistered people who elect to do sanity plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying.

Yes 7100 trades people will be paying whatever money is needed to

not supporting anything.

- That for all the highly paid people with negotiation skills and dispute resolution qualifications employed by the Government and Board, they are incapable of sitting at a table with the industry to resolve the issues. They represent a total systemic failure.

- Democracy is a new concept to the government.

- That those of us who voted National last election got it wrong!

We could go on all day about what this Bill has proved but the big question is WHAT NOW?

A Huge Wedge



A huge Wedge has now been driven into the industry dividing it. On one side you have the government backed and appointed Board who are not independent, capable or credible; you have the self proclaimed "voice of the industry", Master Plumbers, who also falsely claim to represent 60% of the industry, but have a declining membership currently numbering around 700; and you also have the Building and Housing Group as support for the Minister, and obviously you have Flip Flop Williamson for now.

In the middle you have a yet unaffiliated group of tradespeople numbering around 5,400. The silent majority which the Board claims, because silence is agreement to them.

On the other side of the wedge you have the thousand plus supporters of the Federation who are simply fighting for fairness and equality in the regulations and legislation imposed on the industry.

The Federation simply want to:

- Make the Board and Government ACCOUNTABLE
- Increase Industry Participation
- Tackle Excessive Expenditure
- Ensure Better Decisions
- Ensure Past Issues Are Addressed
- Strengthen the Industry
- Ensure Relevance in Training

police the population of New Zealand. What's this country coming to when the Government changes the laws of the country to allow registered charities to impose taxes?

How does a Registration Board appointed by the Government, controlled by the government and forcibly funded by an industry become a Registered Charity?

What's next will the government ask charities such as rescue helicopter organizations to tax people making donations for the prosecution of people flying helicopters without a pilot's licence?

The Government is also passing a retrospective law to say nearly \$2 Million that the Charity collected illegally was collected and spent legally.

Legitimate Charities struggle to get donations now without the Government disguising their enforcement Boards as charities. So called Democracy in New Zealand is dead.

This country needs to go back to a practical approach to issues where truth and integrity play a role.

- Make Your Opinion Count

We have the perception the dictatorship of the Minister flows down to his friend Alan Bickers, and on to the voiceless people on the Board. Some of those people have strategically placed themselves, backed by their employer membership organisation, on other Boards where they also have an influence, which is affecting the workers in the industry.

Those that are not in Flip Flop Williamson's "In Group" are being treated as second class citizens without any rights to voice their opinions, slaves to those in the positions of authority and influence. History has shown people only stand for a limited time before they retaliate.

Has that time arrived? Give us your thoughts and ideas.

***From the guy with the Ute, the cellphone and the dog** – The time has arrived for me. I've watched this debacle and am ashamed to have voted National in the last election. Up until Thursday I still had some lingering faith in "the system", but that has now dissolved.*

I watched Mr Sabine and his like yelling across the House, a different man to the one that sat at the Regulation Review Committee hearing. How can you say one thing in one room and walk down the corridor and completely change your stance? How? I don't understand.

I operate in a world where what a man says, he means, and you can count on his word being his bond. I operate in a world where people are generally honest and can look you in the eye when they tell you something. Just where does a New Zealander go to get justice?

Politicians are meant to be there to protect New Zealanders', to ensure that democracy is enacted, but I didn't see any sign of that last week. I am at breaking point and think that affirmative action is the only option left. Withholding licence fees and hitting the Board in the pocket seems to be our only option.

We need to show this Board and this Government that they have squeezed us too long – and we have had enough. We need to get a trust account set up so that we can pay our licensing fees in to it come 1 April 2014, so that we can show Flip Flop and his little band of men that it isn't about not wanting to pay, it IS about not trusting them to spend our money wisely.

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