



## Fellow Practitioner Issue 175 Dated 4 October 2013

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GASFITTERS AND  
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### IN OTHER NEWS

#### The Industry Training and Apprenticeships Amendment Bill



Yes it's starting again!  
Apparently a new  
apprenticeship scheme will be  
in place by January next year.

It will be called New Zealand  
Apprenticeships and will  
replace the Modern  
Apprentices and other  
apprenticeship-type training.

It seems the government has  
realised that during the 10  
years to 2010, government  
funding for industry training  
organisations (ITOs) almost  
trebled, but wasn't matched  
with sufficient accountability.

The Government claims the  
new scheme will focus ITOs on

### From the Federation Chairman

IF YOU ARE TIRED  
OF STARTING OVER,  
STOP GIVING UP.

given up we have all started again.

About 12 months ago I read "If you are tired of starting over, stop giving up," and that pretty well sums up what kept the Federation Committee going over the last 12 months. So many times we have heard the phrase - "its new legislation it will take a while," or "it's a new Board give them a chance". Every time the industry has

I want to thank the Federation Executive Committee and the newly formed Federation Industry Board for having the tenacity not to give up. For standing their ground and making sure the Government, Minister and Board are held to account. It may sometimes seem like we are not getting anywhere but that is generally due to questionable tactics by the Government, Minister and the Board. Eventually they will be held accountable by public opinion and pay the price for their arrogance.

My thanks goes to everyone who supports the Federation, but especially those on the Executive Committee for their efforts keeping the Federation going forward and helping us achieve our goals around getting fairness and equality in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Regulations and Legislation. They have spoken up where others won't and all for no return to them personally – it's all been for the industry.

The Prime Minister should hang his head in shame as last week he addressed the United Nations and made some very profound statements. It would have been an excellent speech if the government was practicing what he preached. In our opinion the actions of his Minister of Building and Construction and the PGD Board, is the exact behaviour the Prime Minister criticised the UN for.

He talked about finding solutions, about **discussions becoming so arcane they are sometimes quite removed from the issues they claim to be addressing**. He spoke of the failure to find solutions and that the gap between **aspiration and delivery is all too apparent and a means to hold those responsible to account**.

Mr Key spoke of New Zealand having a **robust and transparent system of government** and of situations where **as long the problem is left unresolved there can be no assured peace**.

He reminded everyone that **sound governance arrangements and**

two core responsibilities: setting skill-standards for their industries, and arranging training.

It also clarifies the functions and powers of NZQA in relation to ITOs, and strengthens the quality assurance framework for ITOs ensuring it is consistent with the framework for other tertiary education organisations.

They seem to think the changes will boost system performance for employers and trainees, increase the profile and quality of apprenticeships, and build greater links between government, industry training organisations, and the industries they serve.

It may work if they listen to the industries over qualifications and get industries on board. If they don't it will be just a change in wrapping.

#### Letters to the Editor

##### Dear Editor

Your article titled Fact or Fiction on 20 September 2013 highlighted a number of issues which I feel should be complained about.

The Memorandum accounts seem to show the Board are not following correct accounting procedures and have wrongly allocated funds to areas where they can spend it as they see fit.

If they can't get the simple things right how can we trust them. Have they put a FALSE Annual Report before parliament?

**ED** Yes we agree with you that a complaint should be made but who do we make it to?

We can't complain to the Board as

**transparency of process** were vital virtues. He went on that there has been **deep resistance to efforts to make things better** and that it needed to change and that some have become **hostage to their own traditions** and **to the interests of the most powerful**.

He covered the subject that there now seems to be a practice whereby **actions can be blocked through veto** and there appears to be **privileged access to information** and action can be stopped if it does **not suit their collective purposes**. Such behaviours damage the reputation and credibility of the wider Organisation and **must be challenged**.

He spoke of New Zealand not advocating revolution but is asserting the Council can and **must do better in the way it conducts its business** and that is the approach New Zealand will bring to the Security Council if they are elected next October.

These two quotes were of particular interest:

- "At the top of that list was you have to be engaged, to listen to the concerns of others, and to have a view and a voice if you are to be relevant"
- "Sometimes, you have to speak up and shine a light on what is going on or not going on even when that may be inconvenient to others"

Sometimes, you have to speak up and shine a light on what is going on or not going on even when that may be inconvenient to others - and isn't that what the Federation been doing and we get referred to as malcontents and worse, and get treated like absolute garbage. The speech could have quite easily been referring to our situation and what the government should do about it, but haven't.

Look at the Government veto of the recommendations of the Regulations Review Committee (RRC) and the manner in which they have prevented the RRC from reporting on the latest complaints. Look at how the Government veto the recommendations of the Ombudsman and change the law so that which was unlawful becomes lawful.

It really does show the hypocritical way the Government, Minister of Building and Construction and Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board operate. They talk it up on the world stage but in reality there is no substance to what they are doing within New Zealand. If the Government was to do the things in our industry that they say they will do in the UN then New Zealand would be a far better place for us to work.

The distance between the PGDB and its regulation of the industry is widening and is approaching a point of no return - to a place where voluntary compliance will never be achieved. A point where there is no advantage in participating in the regulated industry. A point where the public are put at risk due to lack of industry experience and what is the industry doing to create this situation - nothing at all, it is all a situation created by the Minister and the Board.

It is their actions and closed organisation feeding off the industry that is the problem. Have a look at what they have done this year to achieve their

their General Complaints Policy doesn't cover general complaints.

Talking to the Minister is a total waste of breath as he will no doubt claim it is a "mistake in wording" and knows nothing of accountability.

The Ombudsman's recommendations are ignored so that really leaves us with the Office of the Auditor General.

They audited the financials back in June 2013 and gave an opinion they fairly reflect the Board's financial position and that they comply with generally accepted accounting practice so we think it is fair to say they won't criticise themselves.

The Federation has added the actions of the Board to its ever expanding list of issues for the Auditor General's review if it ever starts.

#### Dear Editor

Your Fact or Fiction article shows a bleak picture where fewer and fewer trades people are paying for increases in costs in some areas.

I see expenditure on wages is increasing steadily. I haven't had a wage increase in years and my costs keep going up. Salaries look like they have more than doubled in less than eight years.

How can Williamson claim the Board are doing a good job?

**ED** A very good question. Well we believe he comes out with statements like that because he doesn't want to know what the truth is. It's like they say in the movies "he can't handle the truth."

We think he believes what he is being told because it is convenient and because he despises the Federation being right when his

charitable purpose. More time is spent inventing ways to justify their existence and structure than anything else. They choose discipline as a means of control.

The annual report shows that 0.61% of authorised trade's people in the industry were the subject of complaints last financial year but yet 100% are deemed incompetent because they don't buy "POINTS" in the Board's continuing professional development scheme.

Perhaps the Board should be looking at the positive that there are no problems with 99.39% of the industry - but they don't. They employ four of five lawyers on staff and have one lawyer and a justice of the peace on the Board who appear to be used to protect the decisions and positions of the Board and senior management - even when wrong.

Look at the Minister re-appointing two Board members without giving anyone else the opportunity to effect change. Was that because they are doing such an excellent job? Or was it because the Minister was afraid no one would apply to go on a Board which is under fire for their performance? Perhaps no one wants to be associated with such a failure or perhaps the Minister can't take the risk of free thinkers getting on the Board challenging what they are doing and exposing their incompetence.

Some people tell us we are wasting our time and are not achieving anything but we need to look not only at what we are fighting against from an historical point of view but also what actions we are preventing. When you look at the blatant issues the Board has gone ahead with in its arrogant manner and imagine where we would be if the Federation hadn't been formed. Would the self proclaimed voice of the industry have stepped forward? We doubt it - it appears they have their own internal problems keeping them busy.

Prevention is better than cure so we will keep on fighting for what we believe is right. All those people supporting the Federation have a vision of a better industry where we can do what we do best without interference from outside influences.

You, the 1070 Federation members, have formed an organisation which I believe will achieve results with or without the help of other industry groups. Federation membership is the foundation of the future and we need more members so please help protect our industry by recruiting more members so our voice is louder with better balance and common sense than others attempting to get numbers for financial survival and position.

The following financial statement will show you are getting value for money.

### Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation Inc Financial Statements

<b>Income</b>	<b>2013</b>
Donations	\$16,818.62
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$16,818.62</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Newsletter and Website Hosting	\$ 7,791.15

high paid appointees are wrong.

**Dear Editor**

I read the other day that some plonker has asked for a lot of trade vehicles to be taken off the Road because they are unsafe and that ACC has deemed a vehicle to be a work place.

Do you know anything about this?

**Ed:** Yes we saw the same article and yes a vehicle is deemed to be a workplace where all reasonable steps are to be taken to protect the driver and passengers.

This is another situation where common sense should be applied such as having a cage to prevent items from the back coming through to the driving compartment, having a fire extinguisher etc.

Whoever the instigator of the article was wants airbags and all sorts of safety but who is going to pay for it?

They are possibly a car sales person who has fallen on quiet times and wants to sell a heap of trade vehicles.

We would say do what you can to protect yourself and your passengers and forget about these other people trying to spend your money.

Bank Fees	\$ 89.93
Legal Fees	\$ 969.57
Postage	\$ 334.48
Travel (Shuttle for Protesting)	\$ 347.48
Tax Paid	\$ 1,704.86
Total Expenses	\$11,237.47
Total Income	\$16,818.62
Less total Expenses	- \$11,237.47
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$ 5,581.15</b>

#### **ASSETS**

Cash in bank – cheque account	\$ 4,582.90
Current Year’s Surplus	\$ 5,581.15
Petty Cash	\$ 120.00
Lap Top	\$ 400.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,734.05</b>

#### **LIABILITIES**

Nil

**Total Funds** **\$10,734.05**

Yes the Federation has done what it said it would do and has kept costs to a minimum without imposing fees on its members. We want to thank everyone who has made donations and would encourage others to do the same to give us greater resources so we can achieve more on your behalf. A direct credit of \$5.00 or \$10.00 per month would make a huge difference to what we can achieve.

You will see as good citizens of New Zealand we are not afraid to pay tax but here is an interesting point for you - if we deduct our tax paid from our operating expenditure it gives us a total annual expenditure of \$9,532.61 – did you know the expenditure for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board equates to \$66,931.98 weekly or \$9,535.51 **DAILY!**

Yes the Federation has achieved more for an entire year on \$2.90 less than the **DAILY** expenditure of the Board. Federation **ANNUAL** expenditure \$9,532.61 – Board’s **DAILY** expenditure \$9,535.51. It really does make you wonder where the rest of our money is being squandered. We have no lawyers or JP’s on our Executive, and yet we managed to point out the illegalities that the Board were working under – and all for a lot less expenditure than the Board. Really makes you think doesn’t it?

There is no incentive for the CEO and Board to do what is right as they are not held to account by the Minister. The Board could certainly learn a lot from the Federation about saving money but still communicating and achieving goals.

The time is now for all of us to step up and take control of our own industry. Be part of it and help the Federation. **Do it now not later.**

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Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers  
Federation 3 Jupiter Grove  
Trentham Upper Hutt 5018 Ph (04)  
5277977 Mob 0276564811 Fax (04)  
5277978 [information@pgdf.co.nz](mailto:information@pgdf.co.nz)