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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**The Primary Act is Missing?**

The Board have been going to great lengths to ensure their policies and legislation pertaining to the industry is on the Board's website for the public and practitioners to read.

We notice the Board seem to have missed one bit of Legislation off their Website – that being the Charities Act.

This is a bit unusual as the PGD Act is down as the Board's rules, so we can only presume the Charities Act is the Primary Act that the Board is bound to adhere to.

We often wonder how the Board pays for the Charitable status, as being a charity is not one of the Board's functions as detailed in the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

There will be more on

**Delegations to the Registrar/CEO**



A couple of weeks ago we mentioned the delegations given to the Registrar/CEO and we voiced our concerns at the breadth and scope of these.

As a matter of interest we saw this reported in the Sunday Star Times on 27 October 2013, by Peter Kennedy and thought it was very relevant.

**CEO's take over**

*Most New Zealanders regard Kaipara as a coastal resort in the Far North, sparsely populated, and certainly not a place where tens of millions of dollars would be spent on a wastewater system. The fact that this occurred without the key stakeholders – ratepayers – having a say, is deplorable.*

*But Kaipara is not an isolated case. Since the local government reforms of the early 2000s, we have seen a deteriorating lack of accountability within our local council chambers as the CEOs and their staff have taken control of much of the administration. Unelected officials now determine much of the way our local councils are run.*

*We saw this displayed at both Hamilton and Christchurch by one CEO who filled both roles at different times. Here in Wellington we have a new CEO who is calling for the local council to raise the level of debt, while the outcome of any amalgamation talks are still under discussion.*

*Other territorial authorities involved are "worried as hell" at the debt-loading Wellington City Council already carries. In Auckland, concerns are being raised at the salary the CEO of the super city is being paid; similar concerns are being voiced elsewhere as these new "mandarins" seem to want wondrous salaries without any accountability.*

*Rodney Hide and the National Party claimed the super-city would reignite Auckland. Voter turnout in the local body elections was abysmal. What the people want is a real say, a real connection, in how their cities and communities are run.*

How familiar is that scenario to our situation, except we don't

this at a later date.

## Plumbers Forum

There is always discussion on a number of points on the Plumbers Forum. Get on there and have a look at people's opinions.

We have included a link to this comment made as a result of last week's Fellow Practitioner.

*I think the Federation are a bunch of idiots!*

*This stuff about plumbers not being able to read is a joke. If you cant bloody read and write, you really shouldn't be plumbing.*

*You ARE a public health and safety risk. If you cant read or write or are dyslexic you cant keep up with changes in manufacturers instructions or health and safety instructions.*

*Why are you guys trying to water down the intelligence levels of plumbers by advocating the dumbing down of exams, the removal of the certifying level and people being allowed to have documents read to them in an exam?*

*Would you want a lawyer or a doctor who couldn't read? Why are plumbers any different?*

*I thought the Federations stupidity was highlighted in the Campbell Live show where you said plumbers would be charging lawyers rates*

have a CEO taking over from a duly elected Board, but from a Board imposed on us. A non representative Board imposing the will of the Government and NEITHER are being held accountable.

It's now nearly three years since this so called "New Board" started to operate under the Chairmanship of Mr Allan Bickers. At what stage do we see improvement? The last time the industry was this divided was 50 years ago, and this resulted in people with foresight taking action within the industry.

Yes the Board have been dealing with historical issues, but at the same time they have been creating their own.

## Is it another part truth?

Remember there were allegations that Board Members had taken their wives to Melbourne for a Christmas jaunt a few years ago? In July 2013 Peter Jackson, in his capacity as deputy Chair of the Board, stated in the Info Brief;

*"The allegation that members of the Board used funds to pay for a Christmas holiday in Australia was puzzling and mischievous. The only travel we can identify that they may have been referring to was in fact a series of meetings in Australia nine years ago when members of the Board and staff travelled to Australia to progress the Trans-Tasman training package that was proposed at the time"*

All very well but is it the full truth? Was the Board squeaky clean? This is what the minutes from the Boards meeting in June 2013 recorded with regard to the issue;

*"..... allegations that Board members, along with their wives, had in 2004 gone to Melbourne for a Christmas party is untrue. There were a number of trips to Melbourne in 2004 but these were all in relation to exploring the possibility of a Trans-Tasman training package. The Board supported the ITO, Master Plumbers and a number of NZ's training providers in attending these meetings."*

Looks like the part where "The Board supported the ITO, Master Plumbers and a number of NZ's training providers in attending these meetings" wasn't relevant when he wrote for the Info Brief.

What was the support and what did it cost us and why provide support to organisations who charge the industry for their services? They were, and still are, out to make money from the industry so why did we pay to support their participation?

And the Board wonders why historical issues keep becoming relevant? Perhaps if they told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth it wouldn't happen.

just because of a \$300 yearly licensing fee, but this article in your newsletter trumps that.

<http://www.plumbers.co>

[.nz/forum](#)

This chap got some comments left for him to consider.

But good on him for stepping up and saying what he thinks. We don't begrudge him that right, as it is what we do every week.

We also commend the people who responded to him for their restraint.

### Double Standards

We may have mentioned before that the Board accommodates and caters for people attending discipline hearings for the prosecution, but everything for the defence is paid for by the defence, as well as meals at the hearing.

This was highlighted this year at a hearing in the Board's office where the defence was told they were not catered for.

The Board, support staff, legal advisor, lawyers, investigator and the complainant all lined up for food, while the accused and his representative were told they were not allowed food at lunch time from the trough paid for by all practitioners.

Now reading through the Board's minutes we notice the

### Read the fine print



Did you notice in the Board's Annual Report that the Independent Auditor's Report on page 52 DIDN'T include ALL the pages of the financial statements?

It only covered from page 32-49.

The two pages at the end, being pages 50 and 51, covering Memorandum Accounts and Income and Expenditure with overheads incorporated, were NOT covered by the audit.

This got us wondering why this would be so and what impact it had on the accuracy and truthfulness of the financial statements. Because of our previous concerns about the fees and levies we went looking for answers by way of an Official Information Act request.

In the June 2013 minutes of the Board's Meeting it recorded:

*The Chief Executive advised that Kelly Rushton and Gregory McDonald from Audit New Zealand would be joining the meeting at 12 noon. He explained that Audit NZ had indicated their opinion would be silent on the last two pages of the Annual Report which relate to the Memorandum Accounts and overheads. As these figures had been allocated in accordance with the fees review model which had not been audited by Audit NZ, they have advised their management report is likely to state that the costs have been allocated in accordance with the model.*

"Silent on those two pages" - so the fees review model had not been audited which is very strange, as all our fees and levies are based on that model. Where is the industry's protection?

Later in the minutes it was reported;

*Mr Rushton explained that in the management report Audit NZ have stated they are unable to provide full assurance on the costs allocation assumptions of the Board as part of its fees review as they had not audited that model. However, they have stated that they have reviewed the calculations and have found these to be in line with the methodology described therein.*

The Federation has continually questioned the validity of the cost allocation and now to find that it has not been audited is suspicious, given that the Board have already shown under a Official Information Act request that there are no documents detailing how the percentages of staff time is accurately allocated.

They have basically allocated some percentages based on conversations with staff by the then Acting CEO.

Now we are expected to believe an unaudited part of the

following list of people were catered for:

- Representatives from Energy Safety.
- Nick Hill from BOINZ
- John Sickels and Eddie Eeles from the Electrical Workers Registration Board.
- Minister Phil Heatley and award recipients.
- Debbie Chin and Derek Baxter from Standards NZ
- Minister Maurice Williamson, Fiona Gavriel and Ray Gault of Master Plumbers. (Must have been a strategy meeting!)

It looks like practitioners are not worthy of food bought from their fees.

Perhaps the Board could take a leaf out of the book that the new Mayor of Christchurch has been following – and make everyone bring their own cut lunch to save wasting ratepayers money!!

financials, which is the basis of the setting of the fees and levies that we pay. It would be very easy to surmise that if a proper allocation of time survey was done now it would conveniently match that which the Board have stated in their so called “*Sophisticated model*”

How is this open and transparent? The fees and levies are already in question and some have had to be legalised by the Government retrospectively.

This appears to be another act of bad faith from the Board where they don't have fact to back their actions. We also question the actions of Audit NZ.

And then to make it even worse, the Registrar/CEO was tasked to cover the Board's arse.

The same minutes reported: “*the Chief Executive should write to the Minister providing a substantive explanation of the surplus result.*”

Yes they were so concerned about the excessive surplus they had taken from us, after the Minister kicked up merry hell that the Board would be insolvent if the Amendment Bill wasn't passed, that they had to explain.

It seems to us that this Board and CEO can't be trusted. We'd also love to see a copy of the letter of substantive explanation of the surplus result. Perhaps they could put it in an upcoming Info Brief.

There has been so much bullshit spun and so many unlawful activities, both past and present, that we can't respect or believe anything that comes from this organisation which is fully funded from practitioners.

We continue to protect the public and their property and fund an organisation that is non-representative of the industry and is a wasteful pit for our hard earned money.

Just where does the Minister sit in all this? Is he content at the level of “auditing” that is going on in an organisation that he has had to bail out politically already this year?

Is he willing to see his reputation on the line over this? C'mon Minister – share with us the explanation the Board gave you about how it ended up with nearly a million dollar surplus, when only months before you were saying they would be virtually insolvent if they were forced to pay practitioners money that they gained illegally from them?

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