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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Back in April 2013 I emailed you:

Sure is heating up in Parliament, and thanks for a very informative newsletter yesterday, ....

I informed my MP Chris Tremain, asked him also if he could organise another meeting with Williamson, also I questioned him about Williamson's statement that if the Board didn't perform, he would sack them all.....

Here is Chris Tremains response

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*Thanks for your email.*

*I will not be arranging any further meetings in Napier on this issue.*

*A decision has been made. It is time for the industry to move forward.*

It's Letter to the Editor Week.

This week we have had a LOT of letters to the editor so we have devoted this entire week's edition to – "Letters to the Editor". Thanks you all for showing an interest!!

Should we wait?



**Dear Editor:** Last week you detailed the Federation was planning protest action against the Board at licensing time this year. Why take action now at this busy time of the year – why not wait and see what a new Board Chairperson does?

**Ed:** Yes we could wait, but isn't that what we did last time when Master

Plumbers said "give the new Board a chance" and put a time period of 6 months on it. After the six months passed and there was still a lack of performance – nothing happened – and nothing has happened since.

We feel that nothing will be achieved by waiting, but that doesn't mean we won't sit down and negotiate our way through the issues - but it is all dependent on others agreeing to sit around the table with us. Its okay if they disagree with us as we can't force them to be right, but what they do need to do is talk. The industrial exclusion that is taking place was implemented by the Board's CEO and does nothing but show the level of competence of those concerned, and an unwillingness to engage with a large pocket of industry. Besides a new Board Chair does nothing to guarantee that change will take place – they are but one voice in 10.

Perhaps the Board should realise they have absolutely nothing that we need and they are nothing without our support.

"PAY NO FEE TO THE PGDB"



**Dear Editor:** Hi, can I purchase a PGDF sticker for my van?

Also when we get close to the end of March can you supply me some form of big bold info sheet that I can personally deliver to each of the plumbing merchants

Kind regards,

Chris Tremain

MP for Napier

\*\*\*\*\*

Interesting enough you replied to me:

*"Tell him to clear his office as elections are only next year".*

Well that's exactly what is happening. He is clearing out his office as he has decided not to run in the next election.

Keep up the good work.

**Ed:**

Thanks for the update.

Perhaps these people know something that we don't because that's two people closely associated with the industry that have pulled the plug, the other being Allan Bickers.

Perhaps we should thank him for being instrumental in the development of the Federation as the meeting in Napier helped the industry a lot and will continue to do so in the future.

His comment: *"A decision has been made. It is time for the industry to move forward."*

It's a very interesting comment so what did the industry move forward to?

A CPD scheme which is utter garbage and not supported by the industry, a prosecution fee which is not supported by the industry, licensing fees which are questionable, less licensed people in the industry, less trades people per head of population, and don't forget the Board unlawfully taking a couple

here in Taupo to plant on their counters to help support the "Don't pay your fees to PGDB"?

Then I will canvas the plumbing/ drain laying and gas fitters in my area as to why they shouldn't pay their fees to the PGDB, and what they SHOULD do.

**Ed:** Now this is the spirit we like to see. You can have the stickers for free as can anyone else that wants to spread the word. We love the logo of "PAY NO FEES TO THE PGDB" as it certainly has a ring to it! Your statement and actions are showing the dissention that is setting in throughout the country. We all need to get together and harness that dissention so we are unified in our direction.

For your information this week a proposal document was sent to the Federation's Industry Board for their thoughts on the protest action. The next step will be to flick it off to the lawyers for confirmation that it is legally correct.

The Federation reiterates it is not against fair and equitable regulation but IS against what we have now. This is not an industry failure but a failure of the Government and the Statutory Board it appointed.

### Direction of the industry

**Dear Editor:** Everyone seems to be heading in different directions. You have the Board doing their thing and imposing everything on the industry, you have the Building and Housing Group doing nothing except advising the Minister who is also doing nothing, you have Master Plumbers looking after their own affairs and trying to force on the industry the same as they force on their members, and of course you have the Federation who is fighting everyone to get what is fair for the industry. What I want to know is who is choosing the direction of the industry?

**Ed:** Contributor you have summed it up very well and have asked a very interesting question. If you look around New Zealand the majority of Board's provide governance for those who are part of the organisation.

What we have is a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board who are not representative of the industry and that seems contrary to the intent of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act, where we have two plumbers, two gasfitters and two drainlayers required to be on the Board. You would have thought they were there to represent the industry in the way two other Board members are appointed to represent the interests of the consumers.

The manner in which the Minister and Board have interpreted the Act is that everyone on the Board is there to represent the consumer. The Board themselves have denied any governance role which leaves an industry with an excess of 7,000 trades people without governance.

The Board's industrial exclusion of the Federation and their siding with the diminishing Master Plumbers Society does nothing for the

of million dollars from the industry and requiring the Government to bail them out.

It's like we have been saying, these people come and go and nothing changes.

#### Dear Editor

I read in the paper this week that the Hays Quarterly Hotspots list of skills in demand, shows there is a shortage of Plumbers, Carpenters, Scaffolders, Registered Drain Layers, Machine Operators across the country.

They said the demand and supply ratio remains firmly in favour of candidates, with an ongoing shortage of these tradespeople.

After reading that I get the impression we are heading to a real skills shortage in our industry which is good for the workers but not that good for the industry. Any thoughts?

#### Ed:

Yes we saw the article on the Hays report.

The interesting thing about these reports is that they are based on the legitimate job market and the trouble businesses are having securing staff.

This trouble is generally brought about by lack of skills and experience and the rate we are losing experienced people from the legitimate workforce is causing real concern.

I know we have been going on about the trade's people per head population ratio, but it proves the systems aren't working.

purpose of the Board. They seem to forget that they can still achieve the purposes of the Board by getting the support of, and working WITH the industry.

So in answer to your question – no one is choosing the direction of the industry which poses the question “Why do we have a Board, perhaps it should just be a licensing authority?”

The Federation is generally concerned the about the factoring of the industry, and the lack of cohesive training which is also doing a huge amount of harm to the industry.

#### The world of user pays.



**Dear Editor:** I remember Flip Flop Williamson saying in Napier that we live in a world of user pays. What do we actually pay for in our fees, because I don't see any advantage to me and certainly don't see value for money?

The situation in the industry now highlights the fact that the practical knowledge and skills of the tradesperson is now dominated by a group of people playing with the laws as they see fit, and they themselves are wrong to the detriment of everyone else. Do we need to call for the abandonment of the Board?

There is and never was confusion in the industry, the problem is the Board and inspectors believing they can play God with the business of tradespeople. No wonder the black market and persons that refuse to fund the Board is growing.

It seems to me I am paying for five lawyers, 15 or so other staff and a CEO who gets close to quarter of a million dollars a year for nothing. I don't use their service as they have nothing I want. What do you say on this issue?

**Ed:** We agree wholeheartedly with you. This follows on from our comments above to do with industry direction. We are sure no one would mind paying a fair price for a justified and reasonably costed service, but as you say we don't get any service.

We pay licensing fees to protect the public when the fees do nothing to contribute to their protection. We pay a prosecutions levy to prosecute members of the public for putting themselves and others at risk. We pay for someone to assess courses free of charge so the course writers can charge the industry to attend the courses, and the list goes on.

It would seem to us that we pay close to four million dollars annually just for the right to work and then there are the additional costs incurred for Continuing Professional Development to prove we are

competent to buy the points so we can work.

For example if you have 700 people to every authorised plumber and over a period of time that increases to 2100 people to every authorised plumber you would expect the plumber to be 200% busier but that's not the case as most we speak to say they are only surviving.

That indicates that 1400 people are either doing the work themselves, or getting it done on the black market by non authorised plumbers.

So we would say that "yes", in the legitimate job market there is a shortage of authorised, experienced, qualified people but in the black market we believe there is an abundance of them.

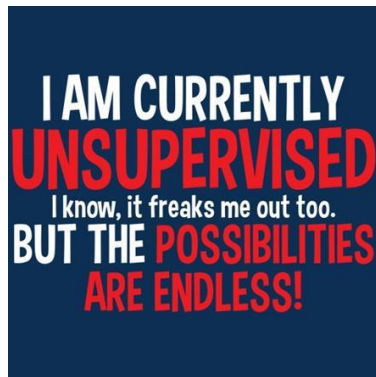
But there is another spin to the situation and that is with so much work being done in the black-market there is less for the legitimate businesses and they have to lay off staff and what do those staff do, well whatever they have to do to survive!

We need the legitimate trade to be attractive for people to remain in it not a pressure cooker that it is now.

#### Thought of the Week

**"If you lie to me once, it will make me question everything else you say."**

#### Supervision



**Dear Editor,** The Board make a big deal about supervision but I don't really see a problem. Everyone should be responsible for their actions and held accountable accordingly. It is probably a new concept for the Board - being held accountable.

I've enclosed some photos which prove I don't need supervision.



**Ed:** Well you look competent to us but the mixing of the scone dough looks a bit risky!

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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)