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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I want to congratulate the Board on the January issues of the Info Brief.

It was just as interesting as previous issues and it was a welcome relief not to get reminded about CPD Points and licensing.

Ed:

We know what you mean writer.

For those that don't read the Info Brief there was no January issue!

Dear Editor

The PGDB, in my opinion, have used the legislation as a sledge

The Industry Knows Best



knows what is best for it. Neither of these statements came to fruition.

We don't know how long the government intends to ignore the wishes of the industry, and we say "government" because it is a "government" appointed Board who have long since lost their status as an Independent Statutory Board. There is NO real industry representation on the Board and it appears their will and ideas override the needs of the industry.

Mere words by industry organisations are no longer enough to effect change and the longer the existing situation goes on, the more the industry will be divided and the longer it will take to regain unification.

We are fighting against an organisation that is making issues complex, and we are arguing with people who don't exist as there is no accountability. This licensing period we WILL be taking action.

More than a Decade in the Making



him to this claim to fame?

The Federation likes to do its research to keep well informed and

Over three years ago a past Chairman stated he wanted the Board to regain its reputation, and about the same time it was elections. The Prime Minister John Key stated at a meeting in Upper Hutt the Government would listen to the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry as the industry

In 2009 a controversial fertility doctor claimed to have cloned 14 human embryos and transferred 11 of them into the wombs of four women who had been prepared to give birth to cloned babies - but did the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry beat

hammer to crack a walnut.

Why should they be allowed to remain known as the PGDB when the only activity the Industry should be funding is the cost of Registration?

Any other activity that the Board pursues such as prosecuting unlicensed practitioners should be at the cost of the law breakers.

An agreement between the Industry and the training providers should be the means of setting the criteria for not only licensing but also Industry Standards, not a group of PGDB employed lawyers.

I also in my opinion, I believe that the Board has become more than a licensing body by using legislation which is flawed to impose its opinion re quality control of our Industry

Most of the Board's involvement is far more than licensing, and they believe that their primary role is to protect the health and safety of consumers of our services.

Perhaps a name change would be more appropriate for their purpose - which should be funded by others rather than the Industry.

We must be the only Industry that has to answer to four different groups, namely the Ministry of Building and Housing, the PGDB, The Local Authority who signs off our work, and finally the consumer who must be satisfied with our services or we will not be paid.

Ed:

You have stated some very valuable points about the direction of the dictatorship

during a recent research project a concerning pattern appeared that can easily affect the progression of the industry.

We looked at individuals who hold influential positions on Boards and training and qualification committees that have a direct impact on our daily lives. We compared their appointments and came up with the top five.

Counting down in number four position is John Leen with two past or present directorships, one organisational membership, and two committee memberships that are the same as the other top five individuals.

At third equal are Mark Whitehead and John De Bernardo with four past or present directorships, one Board membership, one organisational membership, and two committee memberships that are the same as the other top five individuals.

In the second position is PGD Board Member John Simmiss with ten past or present directorships, one Board membership and one organisational membership the same as the other top five.

And at number one is PGD Board Member Peter Jackson with eight past or present directorships, one Board membership, one organisational membership, and two committee memberships that are the same as the other top five individuals.

Of the five people:

- Five are Master Plumbers Association members.
- Four were members of the NZQA (TroQ) Governance group.
- Four are members of the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Qualifications Lead Group.
- Four are, or were, members of the NZPM Group Board.
- Three were on part of the failed ITO regime.
- Three are, or were, Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board members.

Does the cloning or grooming of individuals assist or hinder the industry? The Federation takes its hat off to anyone and everyone who steps up to have their say and makes the time commitment, but we believe they must provide fairness and equality to the industry in each of the positions they hold.

Are there conflicts of interests or the perception of conflicts of influencing decisions on other Boards? Here is a simple example - a number of the PGD Board are members of the Master Plumbers who are one of the largest providers of Continuing Professional Development to the industry. For Master Plumbers the provision of training is a revenue and membership tool. Should those members be involved in decisions over training that affect the entire industry?

imposed on us as an industry.

Yes we seem to have gone from a governance board to licensing and quality authority such as M.O.B.I.E.S Weights and Measures Group.

The six people appointed under the Act for their trade and industry skills seem to be the silent majority on the Board.

The theory that there is an advantage of being part of a regulated industry is now questionable as there is no even playing field.

Those who abide the law pay and those that don't play.

Dear Editor

A very thoughtful and informative newsletter last week.

The departure of the Chairperson is a classic example of how these bureaucrats work.

They obtain the position on exaggerated credentials then carry out a whole lot of changes which press the people who employed them, and then when the results come into question they move on to destroy the next environment that employs them.

Meantime they are never finally held to account. I think they have in mind to use this audit system that is proposed to force malcontents into line - you wait and see!

Anyway we must all keep smiling and enjoy our daily business contacts and keep them happy,

This is what the schedule one of the Act says:

8 Meaning of interested •

(1) For the purposes of clauses 9 to 11, a member of the Board is interested in a transaction of, or other matter relating to, the Board only if the member—

(a) is a party to, or will or may derive a material financial benefit from, the transaction or matter; or

(b) has a material financial interest in another party to the transaction or a person to whom the matter relates; or

(c) is a director, officer, member, or trustee of another party to, or a person who will or may derive a material financial benefit from, the transaction or matter; or

(d) is the parent, child, spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner of another party to, or a person who will or may derive a material financial benefit from, the transaction or matter; or

(e) is otherwise directly or indirectly materially interested in the transaction or matter.

(2) However, a member of the Board is not interested in a transaction or other matter merely because he or she is a member of the Board.

A lot of questions that need answering we think, and don't forget about the other cloning the industry has put up with for the last three years - being the Board's Chairperson being an ex council CEO and the Board's current CEO having the same council CEO background.

The Exclusion Tactics

We all know one of the tactics used by the Board is exclusion and we have had many a discussion about where that tactic comes from. We see it in government appointed Boards, local councils and the government itself. It's almost as if when people get into positions of power they say - *"I'm here, so thanks for helping me get here, now piss off"*.

When the Federation was trying to get political help during the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill fight we saw a lot of activity we didn't like - and at times were utterly disgusted!

This disgust even dated back to when the Government voted against the recommendations of the Regulations Review Committee. Three members of the committee recommended the disallowance of the regulations to the House of Representatives and then went into the House and voted the party line against their own recommendations. Go figure. How do these people look at themselves in the mirror of a morning? How do they justify their two faced attitudes? It's just not

otherwise if we rollover into the Board's pit of goo, there is no hope for the future.

Ed:

Yes accountability is a problem and will there ever be accountability when the top of the heap actually appoints those who need to be held accountable. Do you question your own decisions?

Dear Editor

Very interesting reading that an Oamaru tradesman is in Oamaru court for drain laying and I didn't know.

What a load of shit after reading the report and findings I'm sure the Board could spend their time and OUR money doing better things.

About 3 years ago now a home owner in Oamaru who was building his own house was reported to the Board. He got a plumber to take out the permit, do the floor slab and then the owner piped out the house himself.

Then he wanted to get it inspected so rang around for a plumber to do a press test and oh yes he put a few notes under this guys nose and he did the test but not the person who took out the permit.

The inspector arrived and said a plumber didn't do this pipe out and the owner put his hand up "oh it was me" so the inspector put a stop to the site.

cricket to coin a phrase. We wouldn't get away with this sort of behaviour in our line of work.

During our battles in Parliament we have had a number of Members of the House speak on our behalf, and one of them was Brendan Horan who has endured the same exclusion as we have. He hasn't given up and has stayed the course of being an independent MP after being excluded by New Zealand First and the other political parties.

Like us, he is fighting for what he believes in and sure, there have been accusations against him, but that's just another one of the political tactics.

Since the start of the Federation we have encouraged people to have their say on all issues and we have taken the majority's views into each battle so we have been inclusive not exclusive.

During the last 12 months the Federation asked supporters if they were interested in a political party to help fight for fairness and equality and had a great response. We have been watching the political scene to gauge who can assist us in our plight and have endured the flip flopping.

It looks very much like we will end up with another coalition all towing their party lines pushing for what they think rather than what the voters actually want.

Sounds very similar to our situation in the Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry where a few are dictating to the majority, based on their appointments to positions of authority.

Well authority is only any good if people follow by choice. All around the world people are now opposing that authority, getting a voice and fighting for their rights.

The Federation and the way it operates introduced a new way for the industry to have a voice representing many, not just a few. A voice where an apprentice could stand shoulder to shoulder with a certifier and their voice was valued just as much. Exclusion tactics will now only prolong the inevitable - a point where the industry will take control of its own destiny.

Coalitions can work but unfortunately the Federation hasn't been able to form one with Master Plumbers because of its "party line," so have had to go it alone in much the same way as the independents in Parliament.

We have endured the exclusion, being referred to as a "couple of plumbers", the "disaffected few" and don't forget "a group of malcontents". We had had threats of legal action; we have been excluded from industry work groups and for those that have stepped forward into the light, they have had to continually watch our backs for fear of Board retribution.

The Federation is on the road to the greater good for the industry.

He wanted to take him to court but our council said “no we don’t want to go there” so the inspector asked a plumber to take it to the Board to get him in court so it was and they spent time and OUR money to get him to court.

They came to Oamaru and had a meeting with the inspector and it was all cut and dry, BUT no it was all too hard as “he said this” and “she said that” and it all fell over and he didn’t go to court, so another load of shit .

Keep up the good work

Ed:

Thanks for the story and it never ceases to amaze us what goes on out there that doesn’t get discussed.

Dear Editor

I take offence to one of your comments about our industry NOT being attractive.

I feel I am quite a handsome bastard and the odd girl or two have commented on that fact.

All jokes aside I tend to agree with you.

If we don’t feel happy in the industry or good about the way we are regulated then how can we sell the industry to those contemplating joining us?

I particularly like your proposal for the training.

Let trainers do the training, tradesmen do the confirmation of skills, bosses do the bossing

There is not a road map or manual, but it’s a simple decision for those in the industry, take action now and force change, or tolerate the existing situation.

This is the same landscape leading into this year’s election. Some are of the view the situation needs to change, and after enduring the political system over the last three years trying to get fairness and equity for the industry, a lot of us at the coal face are desperately looking for change.

A way for us all to have our say may be on the horizon. More to follow next week.

Situations Vacant

Member Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

The Minister for Building and Construction is seeking expressions of interest from people wishing to be considered for appointment as member of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Applications are invited from persons who can bring the following skills:

- high level strategic thinking capabilities
- governance experience in a Board environment
- commitment to promoting public interest and safety
- the desire to promote broad industry objectives
- an understanding of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

The Board’s statutory functions include registering plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, ensuring the competence of registered plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers and exercising disciplinary powers.

The Board is a body corporate with perpetual succession. Remuneration is in line with the State Services Commission guidelines with Members receiving \$430 per day.

For further information please contact Richard Stubbings, Senior Advisor - Governance, phone 04 901 8415 or email richard.stubbings@mbie.govt.nz.

Applications close 5pm, 14 February 2014. An Application and Role Description is available via <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/boards>

C’mon people – step forward!!

around and apprentices do as they are told and suck up what they are being taught.

Ed:

Thanks for your comments.

There is a lot of work to be done in the industry just to get us back to where we were a decade ago and the sooner we get started the better for all.

Fed Up with Skills NZ?

Are you an apprentice or employer in the Wellington area? Are you waiting to send an apprentice on the first block course of their career? Have you been waiting a long time? If so we want to hear from you. It would appear that there is a “blockage” in the pathway to apprentices in Wellington attending Weltec for their first course.

All the material we have seen indicates that Skills NZ will try to get apprentices on a block course within the first three months of sign up. This is so that numeracy and literacy can be checked – and if necessary additional support might need to be put in place. Additionally the time indicated to complete the National Certificate in Plumbing and Gasfitting (or Plumbing and Drainlaying) is four years – so if an apprentice isn’t getting on a block course initially for seven, eight, nine or more months – how will they complete within the four year period indicated? Will the employer need to release them in quite short bursts? Is this what we signed up for?

It seems ludicrous that Government is paying “reboot” money to apprentices and employers to generate more apprenticeships when our ITO Skills NZ can’t even schedule initial block courses in a reasonable time. What message is this sending? Wouldn’t this money be better spent making sure the training regime was efficient?

It isn’t good enough. Someone has dropped the ball and they should be held accountable. If you are experiencing this issue with yourself or your apprentice – please tell us – we want to publish your story and we also want to let the Minister of Tertiary Education know that he needs to be holding these ITO’s accountable. Our new ITO don’t seem to be any improvement on the old one – there are just more people to deal with. Apprentices and employers who are having to wait more than four months for an initial block course are getting a **RAW DEAL**.

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