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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**Letter to the Editor**

**Dear Editor**

It must take nerve for the Board members to continually attend meetings that don't achieve anything and screw with people's lives and still hold their hands out for pay.

**Ed:**

Perhaps they are not in touch with reality and believe they are doing a good job.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dear Editor**

FYI, A chick called Linda called me on behalf of PGDB to do a survey on me and other tradesmen. She couldn't do the interview to a cell phone which would take 10 minutes unless it was at my expense. I said that I could save time and money by giving her some info in a nutshell...that the board was run by a bunch of arseholes. She sniggered and thanked me for my time.

**It Just Gets Better!!**



The longer the unresolved issues in our industry go on, the more information bubbles to the surface that places into question the credibility of organisations

and their purpose.

Last week we asked for your feedback on training and here is the top letter to the editor.

**Dear Editor:**

Training in our industry has turned to shit and is non-existent. I look at our company and we do less training and have less OSH meetings now than we ever did, and why? Because we are spending time doing courses to get CPD points so we can license.

Before the introduction of CPD, we did training on subjects that we needed to make the business more profitable and employees safer, but now it's just about buying points. We can't do both.

The training in our industry has been on the decline for over ten years and when the previous ITO dumped training in preference to assessments, they were trying to pass on the responsibility of training to tradespeople so the ITO could keep their costs down.

This new outfit, the Skills Organisation, doesn't seem to be any better. It just seems it is more layers of people taking money that should be paid directly into training.

This ITO seems like a total waste of money. I liken them to the charities where only 10 cents on the dollar of donated money actually gets to the people the money was donated for.

Keep up the effort and take the fight to them as you have more support out here than you may think.

**Ed:**

Thanks for your perspective. Well you don't have to "liken" The Skills Organisation to a charity, as like the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, they are in fact a REGISTERED CHARITY! Yes this organisation that gets grants/payments and donations in excess of \$20 million annually is a registered charity!

Their "charitable purpose" is under the sectors of education, training and research. Their activities include – "provides advice, information, advocacy, sponsors and undertakes research." The

**Ed:** beneficiaries are the general public.

Well that certainly summed up what a lot think.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dear Editor**

On the subject of our PGDB chairman, Mr Alan Bickers resignation, I was at the Napier meeting when Maurice (flip flop) Williamson told us of the qualities of the then newly appointed PGDB Chairman Mr Alan Bickers.

He told the industry group gathered there that Mr Bickers was appointed because of his history of disputes resolution skills, and then listed his other impressive sounding qualifications, a Blah Blah Blah of former board appointments and directorships.

After reading this last issue of the Fellow Practitioner it appears all our PGD Board members are of the same ilk, they just hop from one board to another, being appointed by their mates who have in turn been appointed by other mates in the board appointments club.

They are mostly as badly suited to their allotted appointment tasks as the qualified plumbers sitting on our current Board are to plumbing.

I say this - as in my opinion any person that leaves his chosen trade to do something else, was probably a failure at their chosen trade.

I am in no doubt what so ever Mr Alan Bickers will resurface in a few months, appointed by a

It's amazing how these organisations can take millions of dollars from the trainees and employers and get given even more from the government and achieve nothing for the industry.

It seems to us that more emphasis is put on playing "the numbers game" to make the government look good than in providing sustainable, realistic, necessary training for the industry.

We really don't see how the public benefit by having their health and safety endangered by poor quality training and systems.

For your information Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are recognised by the Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary Education) under the Industry Training Act 1992. They are established by particular industries and are responsible for:

- setting national skill standards for their industry
- providing information and advice to trainees and their employers
- arranging for the delivery of on and off-job training (including developing training packages for employers)
- arranging for the assessment of trainees and
- arranging the monitoring of quality training.

So that is their responsibilities, but are they being effective - what choices do we have as an industry if our training providers are letting us down - and is the government checking to see if it's money well spent??

Have you stopped recently to ask who the training providers are? We know the polytechnics are contracted to assess not instruct, we know the PGD Board just set rules to line others pockets, we know Skills attempt to facilitate assessments so who are the trainers? – the 7,000 plus registered and licensed practitioners are totally responsible – the buck stops with you!

Yes 7,000 plus instructors training how they see fit, as they see fit and whatever they see fit for their business and apprentice. There is no core training, there is no continuity in training and there is no training plan. There are assessment plans but you get to the end of your time served as an apprentice and you are abandoned. Find your own pathway to get from licensed to certifier or stay as a licensed practitioner who must forever and a day be supervised (a qualified apprentice).

Our industry deserves better and so do our apprentices! The taxpayer deserves value for money as do we. Here is part of the Skills Organisation return to the Charities Commission in 2012:

- Number of paid full time people in an average week - 96.
- Number of paid hours worked in total by all employees in an average week - 3840

**Financial Performance Statement for the year ended 31/12/2012**

- Gross Income Government grants / contracts - \$17,346,396
- Income from service provision / trading operations \$

board appointments club member to another Government Board, and a pat on the back from flip flop Maurice Williamson.

Mr Alan Bickers came to our PGD Board, did not resolve a single issue, left all the bullying and high handed talk to his side kick the Registrar (Maxmillian Pedersen). Spent his days sat in his industry supplied air conditioned office, eating his supplied lunch, talking on his supplied mobile, then going home on an industry supplied ludicrous \$250,000 + a year.

He came and went in this industry and on its Board barely noticed, achieved absolutely nothing, resolved nothing, and left us with the impression he was a self serving pompous aloof snob, as ill fitted to the job as a road sweeper armed with a tooth brush.

I for one am glad he has gone, but despair at the thought of who the next totally inadequate, unsuited, under qualified appointments club member will get his job, appointed by the ill informed appointments club member the Minister - flip flop Maurice Williamson.

I sincerely hope whoever is next appointed does not come and go as un noticed as Mr Bickers like a fart in a thunder storm, a complete waste of industry funds, time, and future progress, Good riddance Mr Bickers.

Paul Luxton

3,046,905  
Membership fees \$ 35,960  
Other investment income \$ 354,904

*Total Gross Income \$20,784,165*

### **Expenditure**

Salaries and wages \$ 8,252,200 (Average wage of \$85,960)  
Depreciation \$ 630,406  
Cost of service provision (excl. salaries and wages)  
\$11,583,037

*Total Expenditure \$20,465,643*

Net Surplus / Deficit for the year \$ 318,522

### **General accumulated funds \$ 6,065,654**

Looking at that these figures, it appears 51.20% of the Government grants / contracts goes to wages and depreciation. The remaining 48.80% goes to running cots such as rental, power, travel, vehicles, other staff costs and of course payment of contractors, such as polytechnics etc.

You would have to ask if the tax payer, which includes us, is getting value for money for the \$17 million donation to this charity.

We know they have only been the ITO for our industry for a bit over a year but there has been no change. We still have the same issues and with the qualifications review recommendations that have been made it doesn't look like it is likely to change soon.

So, those of you who are apprentices or train apprentices – what do you think of the current ITO – Skills? Are you happy with their performance? Do you think you are getting value for money?

Already we have heard of a few Wellington apprentices who have had to wait too long for their first block courses. Is this a country wide problem, or is it confined to Wellington?

Just how long is too long to wait? In our view 3 – 4 months is a reasonable time to get into the job and have a bit of an understanding of what it involves. At this stage you want to get the health and safety information embedded in, and the opportunity to do the Working at Heights and Confined Spaces so that these are useful to both the apprentice and employer. Also if you are completing a four year apprenticeship, then you want to actually complete it in four years and too long waiting for the first block course could affect this.

It's not like we are talking huge numbers here – it is well known that a small minority of industry take on apprentices. We need to demand a Rolls Royce apprenticeship system – we deserve it, we pay for it, and the amalgamating of the ITO's was meant to deliver it. Economies of scale they kept telling us – well all these economies of scale aren't doing us any favours!

We have never asked for anything extra



Since the start of the Federation we have never asked for anything extra.

All we have done is asked for accountability, fairness, equality, for people to act in a legal manner and for value for money and effort.

We challenge any politician to take on our cause and help us fight for our industry.

We challenge the Minister of Building and Construction to meet with us and prove what is being imposed on us is fair and equitable.

We challenge government departments to sit with us and convince us what they are doing is right.

We challenge the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board to make a decision whether they are an Independent Statutory Board with a governance role or a consumer protection organisation dealing with licensing.

For the industry - we want to help you wake up, to wake others up, to know you have rights, to think for yourselves, to protect your rights and those of the industry and to resist anything that is not fair and equitable.

It is time for change.

## Another Perspective



As part of the Federation's quest to keep you informed we sent out invitations to industry stakeholders for their perspectives. Here is the article submitted from Gary Woodhouse, General Manager, Mico.

### **CHALLENGES OF A ROCK STAR ECONOMY**

*The last 5 years have been a tough time for all businesses and we are now hearing about a new phenomenon – New Zealand's "Rock Star Economy". It's encouraging to hear the government and analysts talk about the greatly improved economic environment but what does it mean and how do we all take advantage of it? Over the last 5 years many businesses have made adjustments to cope with the challenging economic times including decreased investment in training and development, not replacing people who leave or have made reductions to staffing levels.*

#### **Challenge Number One – Where do we find quality staff to meet this new demand?**

*Invest in your people now. Train and upskill them today. Let your people know how important they are to your business and what opportunities the future may hold. When was the last time you reviewed everyone's performance? A performance review is not a pay review. It can be an opportunity to review past performance, discuss expectations and agree on a plan for future performance. Don't look at your competitors as your talent pool. Decide if you need extra staff to meet demand and start training now for the future, in doing so you directly increase the people and skills available to service this growing economy.*

#### **Challenge Number Two – How do we cope with the demand?**

*When larger projects come on stream along with increased level of enquiries and demand for services, we face more challenges.*

*The Global Financial Crisis forced everyone into short term focus and unfortunately some of these habits will take a while to change. The short term hangover resulted in a "win jobs at all cost" mentality and drove value from our industry. Growing demand for goods and services creates an opportunity for some value to return. Look at projects and services required and decide what value you bring to these jobs and where the opportunity lies for increased profitability.*

#### **Challenge Number Three – How do I get more time in my day?**

*One thing no one can change is every day has 24 hours and every week has 7 days. There are times we are all **Busy being Busy** and wonder why we never seem to get ahead.*

*Working longer hours is not the long term solution. Decide what matters most to your customers and your business and prioritise*

## Pay No Fees to the PGDB



The Federation's action plan has been sent out for legal opinion to ensure we are within the law and can continue to work in our industry until issues are resolved.

The action has been simplified for maximum affect for little effort.

Watch this space for exciting developments. Industry will finally be able to do something to show the Board that we have had enough of their antics!

### Donations

Don't forget to make a donation send a cheque made out to the:

Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation,

or make a direct deposit at any National Bank,

or deposit on line through internet banking or set up a month direct credit.

Account: National Bank  
06 0773 0319398 00

Cheques can be posted to: Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation, 3 Jupiter Grove, Trentham, Upper Hutt 5018

*what is essential and what is critical versus what is nice to do. Review and stop the nice to do or comfort work and see if anyone notices. We can all justify why we do certain things, however if growing our business and taking advantage of an improved environment is to happen we must make best use of our time and that means making some changes. Communicate any major changes or changes you think people won't understand. Taking your team though your planned changes will help understanding and get better buy in from the start.*

### What's happening at Mico?

*At Mico we have the same challenges as our customers and we have recently made changes to improve our business with the ultimate goal of improving service to all customers. We recently moved our Pipelines business to Humes and we are now a true Plumbing and Bathroom merchant. This change provided challenges, to ensure we had enough people for a new look business with increased demand. We investigated how we manage this demand to meet customer's expectations and found the best way was through strong people, robust planning and improved time management. We review regularly how we are performing and we are prepared to make changes as necessary to stay in front and be the Plumbing Merchant of choice for our customers.*

*The next 12 to 36 months will bring different challenges as the Plumbing Industry plays our part in the "Rock Star Economy" but one thing is guaranteed – we will look back over this period knowing more than we do today.*

Thanks to Gary for submitting this article. As always we invite comment and feedback on submitter's articles. It is always good to view things from a different perspective – and we congratulate Mico's on their recent changes and wish them well as we move towards what we are all hoping will be a stronger economy!

### Is this Correct?



Peter Jackson (Chair)



Graham Hardie (Deputy Chair)

Who is the new Chairman of the Board? This is what the Boards website shows at the moment but it may be incorrect. We contacted the Board to get confirmation of who was voted in as the new Chairman at its meeting on Tuesday and

were told an announcement would be made. Don't you love secrets!

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