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IN OTHER NEWS

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

On Competence Reviews Plumbing and Gasfitting and Drainage

Are the Board losing their marbles? The review is insane in its set up. They will crucify the trade.

There will be only a very few that can handle this regime, I put it to you the trade will be destroyed and the board will have to back track to a sensible monitoring approach.

This set up is just like a **gun to our heads.**

We are not robots so I do not subscribe to the Board's view.

Who do they think they are in prescribing a dictatorial approach?

It is looking more to a god like board.

I have been in the trade for 48 years and adapted to subtle changes in the industry over these years. The Board is using

Master Plumbers First and Second



Peter Jackson
(Chairman)

Graham Hardie
(Deputy Chairman)

The media release is out announcing the new Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. Master Plumber's Executive must be elated to not only have three people on the Board, but to have two of them in the top positions of control.

MEDIA RELEASE | New Board Chairman Announced 13 Feb 2014 (Thu) - 15 Mar 2014 (Sat)

The Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (PGDB) today announced the appointment of its new chairman, effective immediately.

The Board's Chief Executive, Max Pedersen, said upon a unanimous decision taken at a board meeting yesterday Peter Jackson, Director of h2o design ltd (Queenstown) has been appointed Chairman of the Board.

Peter replaces Alan Bickers as Chairman of the PGDB, and joins Graham Hardie owner of River City Gas and NZ Gas Group (Wanganui) appointed as the new Deputy Chairman. Craig O'Connell, owner/director of the management consulting firm, Recruitment & Performance Consulting Ltd (Wellington) was re-elected Chairman of the Board's Audit & Risk Committee.

Commenting on his new role, Chairman Peter Jackson said: "It is a true honour for me to be appointed as the new Chairman of the Board. The past three years have been one of repairing the reputation of the Board and ensuring the Act, which is to ensure the Health and Safety of New Zealanders, is paramount and is upheld by the industry. I am looking forward to continue to work alongside the Board, the Chief Executive and his staff who have worked diligently during the past three years in achieving positive growth in this direction".

It will be interesting to see what historical issue created over the last three years will be addressed first, and what reaction the industry will have to the appointments. Membership of Master Plumbers and affiliations with other training providers will obviously raise a number of questions regarding conflicts of interest. These issues were raised at a meeting last year with the Minister of Building and Construction, but were ignored.

The Federation believes there will be a change in methodology used by the Board towards the industry, and in particular those who openly challenge the Board and the Secretariat management.

sledge hammer tactics.

As I work as a sole trader I am not happy that the Board can hold your living to ransom with these proposed brainless ideas. They have no people skills in dealing with the trade.

I am going to pressure others to rally against these proposals, advocating downing tools and striking, so as to wake the Board up and also Minister of Building and Construction.

Years back how many have tripped up and if they have they have put things right at their own expense, but for one or two idiots in the trade who could be forced out through normal channels.

Health and Safety to the public – there seems to be a multi tiered set up on this.

Who do you believe?

- There is ACC
- Building and Innovation
- Other agencies
- P.G.D.B.

Our trades are over policed. No one will be able to make a decision for themselves in the future for fear of persecution be it spot fines or court procedure; the powers to be want us to do in other trades people. Is it now a police state that we are dealing with?

Further to all of the above how organised is the Federation with holding our annual fee this coming licensing year and possible outcomes

So obviously the Minister has confidence in Mr Jackson as he did appoint him in September 2010 and again in 2013. He had this to say in 2010:

Mr Williamson says he is confident that the new members have the governance skills and experience required to address challenges facing the sector.

"I am mindful of the Office of the Auditor-General's report and the need to enhance the Board's strategic capability.

"The new members will enhance the Board's ability to rebuild confidence and lift sector performance. I expect the Board to ensure the sector is governed by a regulatory regime that is open, accountable, reasonable and fair."

It doesn't look like the Minister followed through to ensure the above had been done and remember, the Minister will claim he has no influence over who the Board vote as chairperson.

All of this wheeling and dealing would be tolerable as long as something was achieved for the industry, not just lining the pockets of those feeding off the workers in the industry.

Now that we have two members of an employer association in the top two positions on the Board, supported by a third Board member, it really makes you wonder how the dynamics of how the Board interacts with "non Master Plumber" members will go.

Who is responsible?



Big happy rainbows over his electorate may have been Maurice Williamson's highlight of the year but he certainly didn't do our industry any favours, and it was very much a "who cares" attitude towards the plight of plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.

Perhaps the Minister should read the State Services Commission "Board Appointment and Induction Guidelines" (highlight has been entered for emphasis).

Governance principles and practices

*Statutory Crown entities undertake a broad range of executive government functions (such as **regulatory**, advisory, and purchasing). Some entities exercise coercive powers, including powers to inspect, **approve licences, and impose charges**; others deliver public services in health, education, housing, or transport.*

*Governance in the State sector is about achieving desired results and achieving them in **the right way**. It is not a static situation, but includes the processes by which organisations are **directed, controlled and held to account**; their stewardship, openness, programme delivery and leadership. It includes such 'generic' corporate governance imperatives as **ethical conduct, integrity in reporting and disclosure**, and risk management. But there are additional elements that reflect the ethos of public service and the*

for those protesting?

Ed:

Thanks for your views writer and we totally agree.

The Federation is progressing well with its planned protest action and is at the legal advice stage. There will be more information in the next couple of weeks.

The Federation is taking a stance of doing what it can and assisting members of the industry but taking the action and doing something is up to individuals. We can help lead the way but can't do everything.

Dear Editor

With regard to training – why do we have an industry training organisation that doesn't provide any training?

Shouldn't they be called the "Assessment and Facilitation Hub"?

If they only arrange attendance at assessments then what's their worth to the industry?

Ed:

Some very good questions which we would love to hear the answers to from the Government.

We believe the so called training in its current form is no use to the industry long term.

Now this is not entirely the ITO's fault but also the qualification regime implemented by the Board.

impact that State Services have on individuals, business and communities in New Zealand.

Good governance in the Crown environment includes:

- **clarifying and understanding** the respective powers and responsibilities of Ministers, boards, management and employees

- **having, and following effective and well-understood accountability processes**

- **working in collaboration** with other public entities, where practicable

- **modelling acceptable behaviours**

- **probity (uprightness/honesty)** in the management of public funds and disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.

Performance failure or the abuse of powers arising from inadequate governance structures and arrangements can have serious consequences, such as:

- **loss of credibility and trust** from communities, business and Parliament

- **a reduced ability to carry out policies or deliver services, because the focus of management is diverted from positive achievement onto the need to 'fight fires'.**

How familiar are the consequences of performance failure and/or the abuse of power? A huge amount of money would have been put into the research for these guidelines by the State Services Commission - just for them to be ignored.

Sure they are only guidelines, but it is clear the intent of the guidelines and that of the Government is that governance and operations are carried out in the right way with ethical conduct, integrity, openness and leadership that is accountable.

So who are the guidelines for? This is what the State Services Commission states:

"These guidelines are for everyone undertaking a government board appointment process.

They are designed to assist departments, other State Services agencies, Ministers and their offices with making effective appointments to the boards of a wide range of agencies and bodies"

We believe the Minister, Maurice Williamson is failing in his responsibilities as detailed above to ensure the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Board appointments are effective.

For more than a decade the reputation of the Board has been on the decline, as has its performance. The Minister has relied on the support of the Master Plumbers Executive and its claim of being the "voice of the industry".

We have a situation where yet again we are getting pushed into a corner where others are making money out of us and there is no advantage to the industry.

It seems to be a concerted effort to concentrate on level 3 and 4 training to help the government reach its targets but in doing so there are a lot of other issues being created in the industry such as supervision issues, responsibility for work and people dropping out of the industry.

We received a number of letters to the editor on the subject but in essence most wanted to know why training in our industry has become so confusing and difficult - and that's not difficult in content, but difficult in process.

Perhaps Albert Einstein was right when he said *"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough"*.

We seem to have a lot of people telling us what we need but not much listening is taking place.

Some people in positions on training Boards and Committees have openly stated they don't want too many certifiers and are happy if people opt out at licensing level.

Obviously these people are looking at the issues from an employer's perspective but the Federation is of the opinion the individual/trainee is the priority.

Our efforts should be to

The Minister seems to hold the Master Plumbers Society in high regard and obviously the "working constructively with," and the back room meetings, have paid off for Master Plumbers Executive. We feel sorry for the Master Plumbers grass root members who get tarred with the same brush as their Executive.

Never have there been so many complaints about the actions of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, and never have so many been proved to be correct. We feel this performance failure and abuse of power is having serious consequences on our industry and is affecting its performance, and the Governments goal of achieving a 20% increase in productivity.

There is no doubt the manner in which Board appointments are being made, the manner in which the Board is being operated and the accountability of the Board, is an epic failure. This is proved by the loss of credibility and trust of the Board by the industry, and the reduced ability to carry out policies or deliver services, because the focus of management has diverted from positive achievement onto the need to 'fight fires'.

A simple question is "why does an industry Board require a legal section bigger than most law firms" - a simple answer is - to cover management and Board actions and fight fires.

We don't believe rainbows will correct the situation, we believe the Government has put the Board in the too hard basket and that now they don't want to admit they have got the entire situation wrong which is prolonging the problem.

Simply talking and listening to the industry could get the problems resolved very quickly, or has the time come for a new era in the industry where we do away with the Board and get something that is functional?

PGDB Annual Fundraiser is Next Month



It's only about six weeks until the Board's annual fundraiser, being licensing time for those who wish to continue to support their failed performance. Some of you will have received the Boards reminder informing you the online licensing service is now available. We ask you

not to rush into licensing but to think carefully about alternatives.

We have mentioned over the last few weeks about "paying no fees to the PGDB", and have sent our thoughts out for legal opinion but as with any protest action there is risk and that risk will be dependent on the reaction and actions of the Board.

We are fully aware most people would prefer to do nothing and tolerate what is being dished out to us as an industry but are those people happy with what is happening?

The protest action being planned is your chance to support those who have put their names, reputations and careers on the line to fight for a better industry where we get treated in a fair and

get them well training right through to where they are responsible for their own work not this stupid system of having a stop point at licensing where they can't do their job unless supervised.

The issues do beg the question - *"Does the industry need an ITO or should it take the steps of developing its own Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying center to ensure quality and consistency in training and development?"*

Is this an easy task - **No** - but what are our options, do we keep going in this downward spiral until there is no balanced experience in the industry or do we stand up for ourselves and do something about it?

Educationalists don't always know best.

Smile Awhile

If a lawyer and an IRD agent were both drowning, and you could only save one of them, would you

A. go to lunch or

B. read the paper

What do you have when a lawyer is buried up to his neck in sand?

A shortage of sand.

equitable manner.

It is your chance to fight for yourself and your rights.

We are expected to pay for the Board and in the real world we expect competence and honesty from them. We expect those tradespeople on the Board to be our industry voice, but alas the situation is not so. We are forced to fight for ourselves and when we do that, those who should be helping us oppose our actions.

Get around the smoko table and discuss the up and coming licensing and protest action and make a decision for yourself but remember this, that those of us that have already made the decision to protest have families and commitments too, and will not be doing, or asking you to do, anything that will grossly jeopardise our futures.

If you are happy for your fees are being paid to accredit CPD courses run by private enterprise, making money off your attendance at their courses so you can get points to say you are competent, then do nothing.

It's decision time and time for action. We note the Board has opened up ready for on line licensing this year and that they are encouraging you to make payment now. We ask that you don't do this – and at least consider the protest action we are proposing. More to follow over the next couple of weeks as timing is imperative.

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