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IN OTHER NEWS

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor

I have a simple question. What would a union do if their members were treated in the way we are with regard to fees etc?

Ed:

A good question and we can only speculate as to what would happen but the threat of strike action which affects the pockets of the employer would be on the cards.

There would normally be negotiation first and if one party wouldn't budge it would progress from there.

When the Federation was formed we initially looked at forming a union but because we are employees as well as employers it wasn't permitted - hence the Federation.

In saying that though there is nothing to stop us from taking

Nothing has Changed



Last week saw a very interesting issue of the PGDB "Info Brief" where the new Chairman, Mr Peter Jackson, outlined his views which were followed up by an article about what the Board isn't.

The article highlighted "**Advocacy and representation sit within the role of the industry membership organisations, such as Master Plumbers**" (Only a week in the job and already the Board is advocating for Master Plumbers)!!

Let's face it - the Board have absolutely no governance role whatsoever and they are totally a consumer protection board, so why are we funding them, as the industry needs will always be second to the needs of the public - so let the public pay for them. Do criminals pay for the police? Do retailers alone pay for the Commerce Commission?

We stand to be corrected, but it would appear the Board is simply saying "we will regulate and enforce in the interests of the health and safety of the public", which is fine if that's the way they want to interpret the Act.

Governance has been mentioned - so what is it? Governance is generally the role of a Board. Boards exist to ensure organisations are well run, and well governed so that shareholder or stakeholder value can be maximised and no corruption or dishonesty goes on.

Governance is about:

- ensuring there is accountability and oversight of an organisation's operations
- having a defined vision for the future of the organisation
- making good decisions with a clear view of the big picture
- identifying opportunities
- identifying risks and implementing strategies to manage them.

So perhaps the PGD Board doesn't have a governance role as we haven't seen any of the behaviours listed above from them. The Institute of Directors, of which the Board Chair is an accredited member, states on their website: "**Good governance is about good performance, reputation, sustainability and durability.**"

the same actions as a union and in fact we would have more power as we don't have to follow any rules if we strike as an industry.

But that action would affect business owners, but sometimes sacrifices need to be made to progress.

Dear Editor

I'm not paying my fees to the Board until they do what they've been told to do by judgement (Auditor General report). If I was to pay I could be party to their disobedience by funding them.

If there was a way, we could temporarily donate our fees to the Federation until the matters are resolved, and the Federation could use the interest.

Is the Federation a registered charity yet?

Ed:

No the Federation hasn't joined the hoards of organisations that are bringing legitimate Registered Charities into disrepute. It is an issue we are still exploring.

We are in the final stages of planning to Pay No Fees to the PGDB. The next couple of weeks we will have the information to you.

Dear Editor

I haven't been paying any fees now for the last few years and I'm not paying them any fees this year or next or the year

We don't see any of that in the Board so it would seem the Board is saying they will regulate, and the industry must fend for themselves and can advocate for change. So if governance is left up to the industry groups then the Board needs to communicate with them. Mr Jackson said this in the Info Brief:

"Constructive criticism which enhances a business is always welcome, however criticism that is destructive and is personalised, in my opinion does nothing to improve the organisation. For this reason I am looking forward to meeting with those who have been so critical of the Board in a constructive way and ensuring the negativity ceases."

So by advocating for change and disagreeing with the Board we are branded as destructive and negative. All the Federation has ever asked for is fairness and equality and we have not got it. The Board don't even comply with legal and legislative responsibilities.

We would welcome meetings with Mr Jackson, or indeed any of the Board, to discuss issues, but even as recent as November 2013 the Federation requested a meeting with the Board to discuss the qualifications regime and that has this week been scheduled for May 2014! They are so busy we have to wait 6 months to see them. We are betting Master Plumbers don't have to wait 6 months for a scheduled meeting.

Six months to get to speak with the Board is simply laughable and of course we know the CEO cut off regular meetings with the Federation because we were identifying too many issues that were wrong which resulted in complaints to the Regulations Review Committee, Office of the Auditor General and Ombudsman. Remember the Board has a general complaints policy that doesn't accept general complaints so what options are left for the industry if the Board won't listen?

Mr Jackson mentioned negativity, but we call it representing our sector of the industry. If the Board wants to change the so called "negativity" they need to LISTEN to the industry, not just the "self proclaimed voice of the industry" Master Plumbers. Especially when this "voice" represents less and less plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers every day due to dramatic fee increases. The Prime Minister has said "the industry knows what is best for it," and although we cringe when we say it, he is right.

Mr Jackson also mentioned "*criticism that is destructive and is personalised*". What about a tradesperson who makes a mistake, it gets personalised and the poor bugger is named and shamed in media releases and it continues for three years on the Board's website, but now the Board whinge that a group that oppose their actions, who they won't meet with, it is not constructive and its personalised.

No one that we know in the industry have unlawfully taken nearly \$2 million and got away with it. If the Board names and shames trades' people then they deserve to be named and shamed as well for their short comings as, after all, they are getting paid to do a job and if they fail at it they should be held accountable.

after that.

As far as paying them forever and getting absolutely nothing, while they treat themselves and their overstaffed offices to piss ups in Melbourne, well #*!# the +@!*^#*!.

A previous writer was correct when he said we should all boycott them - don't pay the pricks a cent - they are just bloodsuckers.

I believe it's now obvious the whole thing (the board) is a crooked sham and a charade with no interest in helping the industry and in my opinion are a bunch of self serving arseholes whose only intent is using the money provided by OUR FEES to keep attacking this industry and paying spin doctors and lawyers with OUR MONEY to BULLSHIT the government and the public.

The latest appointment of two Master Plumbers members to the two top jobs on the PGDB with a third master plumber already on the PGDB - is this BULLSHIT or what?

Have they at last come clean and are now admitting that the Master Plumbers has in fact been running this Board all the time, knee capping small businesses with expensive compliance costs and practices.

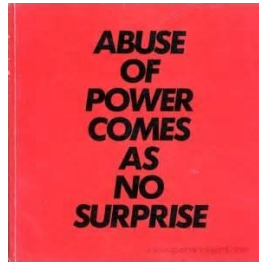
Enough is enough of this GANG OF ROBBING +@!*^#*!. If this wasn't so serious and criminal it would be hilarious.

We have all got to get angry and pissed off enough for all of us to say NO MORE OF OUR HARD EARNED MONEY is getting paid to this Board and they still owe us \$700,000 of our money illegally stolen from us.

Sorry about the swearing.

In law, a statutory board is an “autonomous government agency established by an act of Parliament that specified the purpose, rights, and powers of the body”. For the last decade we have endured Boards that have made every attempt to extend those powers and it continues today - see “Another Abuse of Power”.

Another Abuse of Power



This email was sent by the Board to people who responded to the consultation on Competency Reviews:

Subject: Proposal to prescribe participation in competence reviews as a standard term and condition of a licence, by way of Gazette notices.

Hi,

Thank you for taking the time to make a submission on this important issue. Your input was valued by the Board.

Following consideration of the submissions received, the Board has decided to proceed to seek approval from the Minister for Building and Construction to publish its proposed Gazette notices to make participation in competence reviews as a standard term and condition of all practicing licences.

However, the Board will not be going ahead with its proposed random competence review programme that would have involved 150 tradespeople being reviewed each year. They were not satisfied that there was sufficient buy in from the industry to make this programme a success.

More information will be published in the next Info Brief published 20 February 2014.

In response to the above email this letter was sent by the Federation to the Minister of Building and Construction and for information to the Prime Minister's Office.

Dear Mr Williamson

Please take note of the attached email.

Yet again we find ourselves in the position of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board legislating themselves power to impose their will on the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry against the wishes of the industry. So called consultation was a waste of resources as the views of the industry have been disregarded with regard to terms and conditions.

We urge you to refuse to support this action by the Board as we are rapidly approaching a situation where the terms and conditions of licensing will be more imposing than the primary legislation they support being the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

We are not going to tolerate any more from this Plumbers Gasfitters

Ed:

No apology necessary writer – we know this is a very emotional issue that we have endured over a decade of decadence at our expense. Thanks for taking the time to write.

Did You Notice

Did you notice there wasn't a ministerial thanks to Allan Bickers for his efforts as Chairman of the Board – we wonder why?

Did you notice the Board's article on Ask for the Card in the Info Brief where they mentioned about people asking for artwork etc for their vehicle?



This is the van prior to the Board doing a digital computer mock-up on it to entice us to promote the scheme.

Were they trying to mislead us into believing someone had actually sign written their van in that manner?

Left hand drive and foreign plates.

Probably would have had more impact if a real vehicle that had been sign written in NZ had been used.

While on the subject of the Ask for the Card promotion. Did you know about four years ago \$250,000 was allowed for a

and Drainlayers Board who are inappropriately named as they are NOT representative of the industry and are simply a consumer protection agency paid for by the industry.

You have referred to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation as a bunch of malcontents who whinge at every meeting but perhaps your criticisms are directed at the wrong people as we appear to be the only ones actively seeking improvements in the industry.

The Federation has requested meetings with nearly everyone in positions of authority to assist with getting change and have been stonewalled. Last November a meeting was requested with the Board and a reply this week has indicated they are unable to meet until May this year – 6 months to get a meeting with the so called industry Board.

In-action seems to be the prime tactic and even issues discussed at our last meeting with you still haven't been addressed. A failure of the industry to support the Board is a failure of the Board and you can be assured the Master Plumbers Society is not the voice of the industry or representative of a large proportion of the industry. Their membership is frustrated with their lack of action hence their reduction in membership.

Minister, times are changing as are the tolerance levels of people being regulated inappropriately. Attempts to shut out people trying to affect change such as the Federation will only cause people to turn their backs on the regulatory environment and will put the public at risk. Such is the extent of arrogance in regulating our industry that the Federation has been forced to seek legal advice and is advising its members and others in the industry to take protest action this licensing period.

The appointment of two Master Plumbers members to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board is seen as the Board becoming an extension of a failing society – an old boys' network that is helping to destroy and divide the industry. They are using their positions to influence others to blindly follow their thinking.

From our perspective time is up and if harsh action needs to be taken then it will be. And yes you can take us for our word that we will follow through with what we say as unlike the Board and Master Plumbers we are true to our word and cause.

We are more than happy to meet with you to seek improvements and like you we eagerly await the outcome of the limited Auditor General's report and the current investigations by the RRC and the Ombudsman into the legality of continuing professional development (CPD). Obviously we don't like seeing public money wasted on investigations and reports when they are ignored but it is one of the few tools available to us. There is still a barrage of complaints to go and every time the Board acts we will be there to scrutinise their work.

Obviously the only other action open to us if change can't be affected is total rejection of the regulatory environment which for you means a lot of unlicensed people working in the industry or a

consumer awareness
campaign in the
Board's budget for
calculating our fees?

There will be more on
this next week along
with other money that
has been continually
taken from us.

**Still only the tip of the
iceberg.**

A large number of
people in the industry
will be undecided what
to do this licensing
period.

We say pay no fees to
the PGDB.

Look out in next
week's issue for the
first lot of information
about paying no fees.

We will be doing it
legally but with
anything there is risk.

**Don't rush in to
making a decision
about fees as we need
your help in this
protest action.**

shortage of training people in the industry.

*The Board is nothing without the support of the industry so listen to
the industry before there is nothing to regulate.*

Open Invitation

If Mr Jackson is true to his word then the Federation is more than
happy to meet with him and other representatives of the Board to
discuss issues and a **start point** for a working relationship.

May we suggest meeting within two weeks to avoid industrial action
planned for March this year? We do not want to see a situation arise
where practitioners feel the only option left is to follow the example
of 8.4% of licensed practitioners last year and that is turn their back
on the regulation of the industry.

Our point of contact is Wal Gordon, telephone 0276564811 or email
wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz to arrange a meeting.

If we want change we must fight for it.



It is obvious our needs come second to those of the Board so we
need to fight for our rights. Now is the time we all need to step up.
The Industry needs you to spread the word and increase the
strength of the industry.

Take the time to forward the newsletter to as many random
tradespeople whose emails you can locate, for example the
suppliers web sites and others that list tradespeople. To those who
may receive the newsletter a number of times please accept that
this is part of the awareness campaign of the feeling in the industry
to current issues.

You are receiving this email as a member of PGDF or
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