



Fellow Practitioner Issue 198 Dated 21 March 2014

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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

My complaint is about the Board's lack of communication and I don't just mean about what they are saying, but also about how they get the information to us.

If it wasn't for the Federation's "Fellow Practitioner" being posted to me each week I wouldn't have a bloody clue what's going on.

I don't have a computer so am not on the Board's electronic mailing list, and it appears if you aren't on that list you get nothing.

The Board should be sending me hard copies of all communications sent electronically. They are pathetic.

Ed:

We agree with you totally and the numbers out there that don't have computers is greater than a lot of people think.

The Federation posts to 50 people on a weekly basis. That's 4.6% of our membership that receives hard copies of our communications.

Last year the Board issued authorisations to 9322 people, so based on those figures you could

NOT JUST A FAILURE BUT AN EPIC FAILURE



There has been talk by some supporters of the Federation that the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board should be renamed as it doesn't really reflect their claim that they are a

consumer protection board, not an industry board.

One supporter came up with EFBAS (Epic Failure Board and Secretariat) and we tend to agree. A couple of times now we have seen the Board gloat about the results of the satisfaction survey, but we would expect no less than excellent results for administrative tasks. It's not that long ago that the Board operated with a Registrar and five to six staff.

Then along came a person with a misguided vision and all sorts of issues started that continue today, including the creation of the position of CEO (formerly just used to be the Registrar). How did the Board end up with a CEO on nearly quarter of a million dollars a year? Well the conspiracy theory is that a certain Chairman of the Board heard from a Minister that the Board was to be sacked, and went about creating a CEO's position. It's widely believed that he ultimately stepped into the position side stepping being sacked.

The Board the CEO was reporting was sacked, but we feel they may have been the scapegoats for historical issues and the work of the newly appointed CEO at the time. The Government appointed a well know lawyer on to the Board, and again it was rumoured that she had one major job to do, and that was move on the CEO. Once the CEO was eventually "moved on" there was an acting CEO appointed who was also involved in controversy surrounding the setting of fees and who was later appointed to the Board, then enter stage left - the current CEO.

So what is the value of these people? Last year's salaries expenditure was \$1,358,231.00 up from \$813,402.00 in 2008 - a \$544,829.00 increase over 5 years!!!

In 2008 one person was paid over \$100,000.00 being \$190,000.00 – in 2013 we had FOUR people getting over \$100,000.00 being about \$110,000.00, \$140,000.00, \$150,000.00 and \$230,000.00. So where are the improvements from this \$630,000.00 spent on four people? The impression is an environment has been created where people are simply protecting high paying jobs at our expense. Compare these salaries to what you take home each week or fortnight, and what level of responsibility and accountability you have. It doesn't seem fair does it?

estimate that there are possibly 430 people out there that the Board are not reaching with their communication.

Then of course there are also those who, as a protest, have taken themselves off the Board's electronic mailing list. Yet another example of the Board's failure to communicate with the industry.

Dear Editor

I read in the news paper that 187 Teachers are under investigation for offenses and inappropriate behaviour that range from sexual misconduct (31) violence (18) drugs and alcohol (38) one has just started a seven year prison term.

We also know that they are issued with a THREE year practicing certificate which costs \$220.80, these amounts to \$73.60 per year.

Can you make the connections?

Ed:

Thank you for your example, yes we can see the connections and we are sure every other Plumber Gasfitter and Drainlayer will also.

You would probably find the teachers only days are when they do their CPD so they don't have that cost either.

Federation Membership

We are now approaching 1,100 people on our membership list and we say membership list because everyone on

Nearly every time the Board or CEO talks about their performance there is mention of historical issues. For four years now we have been told that the issues in the Office of the Auditor General's report have been addressed or nearly addressed. How long does it take for improvement with all the extra resources being thrown at the Board and Secretariat?

What happened to all the achievements the "New Board" was to bring? The "New Board" that is now over three years old have created their own legacy of historical events. We as an industry seem to be funding FAILURE after FAILURE after FAILURE.

There have been complaints to the Regulations Review Committee (RRC) which were upheld but voted against by the Government to allow time for the incompetence to right itself, but that tactic failed as they went on to again get it totally wrong and ended up before the RRC.

There have been complaints to the Ombudsman which have been upheld and resulted in the Government again stepping in to cover the FAILURES of the Board by implementing retrospective laws to cover the unlawful taking on money, which in our opinion, continues today.

There has been the failure of CPD where the first consultation was rejected and then the second was rejected but the Board took the view that silence from the industry was a "yes", and Master Plumbers was backing them, so they implemented their suggestion. They failed to read the industry mood where silence was the start of the industry turning its back on the Board's regulation.

There have been privacy issues, there have been staff issues in the employment tribunal but the biggest failure has been the failure to communicate effectively with the industry. We say dictating isn't communication and the Board was told in the Office of the Auditor General's report that they needed to win the trust and respect of the industry.

How can they do that when they are continually trying to screw the industry? We have to ask if it's governance failure or management failure. The Board are ultimately responsible but they get their information and recommendations from the Secretariat, so who's taking responsibility – we believe no one. You see, if you don't have to make the money to fund your failures, or if you don't get fired for your failures, you don't care about your failures, and if you get paid well for wasting time to make your failures then failures become the norm and of no consequence.

Writing reports and media releases to put a spin on the failures to make them look like success is becoming common place. Whatever happened to learning from mistakes?

The Board doesn't seem to be holding the Secretariat accountable; perhaps they live in fear of the CEO and the Legal division? The Minister, Maurice Williamson claims the Board is held accountable through his accountability agreement – our impression is there is no accountability. It appears doing nothing to correct the situation is about protection of reputation and jobs.

the list has put their name forward for it – there are no boosting numbers to give a false impression.

This month alone we have had 16 individuals join. That's one for each working day up to publication.

Thanks to all the new members and thanks to all the old members who have been behind us pushing us on.

For all those making donations on a regular basis or in other ways we thank you. We say in other ways in that a pensioner who the Federation helped out regularly drops in a box of printing paper.

All donations help, even the small ones.

When you are in a situation like the Federation where you are fighting and bringing up issues about others you can get a bit down with the negativity, but this week there was a ray of sunshine which floored us.

Kevin Dare and his crew from COMAG Limited in Matamata made our largest individual contribution yet.

They donated the equivalent of a year's membership fees (to another organisation) to the Federation saying the donation was

“to carry on the fight

Why doesn't it appear the CEO cares? The impression is it's just another high paid job and he has five lawyers to cover his back and it would take too much for the Board to fire him. He knows it's easy for everyone to blame the industry.

You would expect that someone would stand up and take responsibility for the failures but no, they continue on planning more failures such as competency reviews becoming a term and condition of licensing. Why doesn't the Government take action, because after all it's one of their Ministers who is failing to get the situation under control?

It would appear the review of qualifications is heading down the same track where the industry isn't getting listened to, only the views of a few in a failing industry organisation. There seems to be a common denominator here. The new draft qualifications will come out for wider industry comment soon. Make sure you take the time to invest in the future of your industry – read the quals and provide feedback either through the Federation or directly to SKILLS. Watch this space!

Why more reports instead of action? We believe the Board and Government have simply run out of ideas so they get reports written to give themselves more time hoping someone, somewhere, sometime will come up with a solution. So in the meantime the Government keep quiet, as does the Minister, as does the Board he appointed, and so does the CEO and secretariat.

They are simply trying to use the legislation to instil fear into the industry and silence because they don't know what to say or do. They use the media to divert attention onto the skills and qualifications of tradespeople.

They attack our credibility so the public will just dismiss us as a bunch of tradespeople whilst costing the industry \$16,437,265.00 in funding for four years - an estimated \$98,623,590.00 in turnover in four years just to fund the Board! Then you have an estimated \$28 Million annually in real costs of CPD. So on average the cost to the industry is \$52,655,897.00 annually before we can even pick up our tools to make money to feed our families.

We know the Board will be relying on tradespeople that can't be bothered to protest or don't want to draw attention to themselves. This is all that will keep the licensing numbers up as there is no other incentive to license.

Its silence that got the industry into this situation so if people don't speak up then they can expect more of the same. For those that do they are leading by example and trying to make change. Recently we were told by the Board Chairman that “advocacy and representation sits within the role of industry membership organisations” - so isn't that what the Federation is doing but the Board have FAILED to communicate with the Federation.

We know that plumbers would sooner pay out \$700.00 a year and do CPD than sit down for 30 minutes reading and the Board knows that – that why they get away with so much shit. We have had a number contact us and say they can't be bothered and just aren't

**for all Plumbers
Gasfitters and
Drainlayers”.**

We thank Kevin and his crew and all other companies, individuals and suppliers who donate for the good of the industry.

You have our word the money is used wisely on the fight – and not one cent is spent on perks.

going to license. The Federation has supplied a legal option to get the same point across.

So will the “Pay No Fess to the PGDB” protest be a success, well it already is. Numbers don’t matter as it is the Board’s FAILURE that people even contemplate taking such action with no attempt by the Government or Board to intervene.

Last year licensing numbers were down 8.4% - this year people are protesting in a legal manner and there will still be those who decide not to license at all.

How much FAILURE does it take before there is action?

Is the Office of the Auditor General going to state it as it is or are they going to be politically correct? It’s a bigger mystery than the missing Malaysian aircraft where there are more questions than answers!

TO FAIL OR NOT TO FAIL THAT IS THE QUESTION?

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