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IN OTHER NEWS

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I read this on the internet last week:

The Earthquake Recovery Minister has no tolerance for fraud in the Canterbury rebuild.

Gerry Brownlee says the Earthquake Commission (EQC) has a full mandate to prosecute anyone claiming for work they have not done.

And he does not want a few bad eggs to ruin the reputation of all contractors involved in the rebuild.

"There are so many very good contractors out there doing the work, and they don't need to have their name besmirched by the cowboys.

"The whole effort around the EQR office has been to keep that cowboy factor out." Isn't he one of the politicians who voted to legalise the unlawful taking of our money?

A Good Spin



The introduction last week to the Board's "Info Brief" read quite well and was showing a positive spin on the environment we currently work in. It seems Mr Jackson feels very confident that licensing is on target and the industry is enthusiastic about the Board's activities, including "Ask for the Card".

What can we say - Mr Jackson is trying to keep the Board's small following motivated and excited about the Board's activities. For the rest of us we want fairness, equality

and of course accountability.

It seems the issues with the Board have been going through phases such as surprise, disbelief, anger, and now the "they are a joke" phase. We sit shaking our heads in wonderment about when things will get better under the Board's dictatorial regulation. Now that the joke stage has been reached and backs are being turned on the regulation of the industry we wonder what the future will hold? It will be a tough road back to fair regulation and an industry that is confident in the regulating Board.

We know there will always be people who will follow the Board and Master Plumbers blindly, and who don't care who leaves the industry, as it means more work for them, but what will that do for the rest of the industry and the consumer?

We wonder what will happen to the industry when all the experience has left, when all the old skills have gone, when there are no trades people experienced enough to train apprentices in all that they need to know.

Is the Board being treated like a joke the final stage of the downfall of the industry? What are your thoughts? Please let us know.

Final consultation on Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying qualifications

The following is from The Skills Organisation and although the Federation withdrew from the early stages of the review after voicing concerns regarding the representation in the stakeholder groups and the direction of the process, the Federation agreed to get this information and link out to members so everyone can provide feedback. This is probably the most important review in recent years and what we agree to is what we will be stuck with for at least a decade.

The Federation can't emphasise enough about taking part and giving feedback either to us or direct to The Skills Organisation. One point to remember is the delivery method of the training is important and has a

What a bunch of hypocrites!

Ed:

No tolerance for Fraud but unlawful taking of money to meet the needs of the Government is fine. Yes we agree with your opinion that they are hypocrites and they still expect us to follow the leadership of the Government and its agencies without question.

Dear Editor

Hey I think the idea of making a protest by applying for a waiver on licence fees could have merit however before I commit to that, I had been wondering about just not paying my fees at all and just see how long I could go before the local council realised I had not relicensed.

After all I am still a registered plumber the only difference is I will have not paid and it is my choice each year whether I relicense or not. Especially as I am 65 next year and won't be able to afford to pay their exorbitant fees any way.

If the Board did make enquiries as to why I had not relicensed I would then have the opportunity to say how pissed off I am.

I feel so powerless at the moment and am eager to get some power back.

For exampleI could not believe the other day when I was asked by a school to take on a young guy for the "Gateway programme" The lad had to pay \$45.00 to the Plumbers Board for a limited licence so he could have 40 hours work experience to see if plumbing was the trade for him. What a rip off. That is money grabbing in my mind.

And yesterday I had to go to Christchurch to do a Drainlayers Course 6 CPD points run by Marley at the Polytech. It took 8 hours out of my time from the time I finished work travelled

huge relevance on what can be achieved by this qualification. For example if the current supervisory and training roles are used then will you as a tradesman with an apprentice be able to deliver all that is stipulated in the qualification? An example would be can you train your apprentice in fire sprinkler installation or solar heating?

This is what The Skills Organisation have to say:

The stakeholder groups working with The Skills Organisation as qualification developer have completed work on the suite of qualifications to replace existing qualifications for Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying.

Some changes have been made following consultation with industry in late 2013, and with input at both governance and expert levels, and close co-operation with the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

There are seven qualifications being circulated final consultation, before being sent to NZQA for their consideration and publication, and to the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for their formal consideration.

- *New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying (Level 3)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing (Level 4)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Gasfitting (Level 4)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Drainlaying (Level 4)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing (Level 5)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Gasfitting (Level 5)*
- *New Zealand Certificate in Drainlaying (Level 5)*

Copies of each qualification can be found at <http://skills.org.nz/latest-news-4/latest-news/#s6312>.

The qualifications are designed to provide a clear career pathway, from the optional, introductory Level 3 qualification which covers all three trades, through the Level 4 qualifications, to the new Level 5 qualifications for each of Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying. These Level 5 qualifications provide a learning and assessment pathway to Certifying licences.

One key change in Level 4 trade qualifications is the inclusion of the PGD Board examination into the qualifications. This embedding will mean that the Board's requirements for competency will be met within the qualification rather than being additional to and after it.

This is the final opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and suggest any changes that they think are required prior to the submission to list the new qualifications.

Please review the qualifications, indicate whether you support them and provide any comments in writing to

Sally Evers Qualifications Adviser sallye@skills.org.nz.

Comments to be received by Friday 11 April

Kind regards

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from home to CHCH and back and attended the course.

The course was interesting however 50% of the time I felt was spent on antidotes and promoting Marley products.

Next year I am 65 and had hoped to slow down a little rather than just stop completely. I love the trade and just want to do things legally. However with the Board's fees being so expensive it just won't be cost effective.

Keep up the good work.

Ed:

Yes your circumstances are becoming the norm and the Board just continues to put barriers in the way of people who have a passion for the industry and want to support their communities.

Good luck in whichever path you choose to take and although the Federation has put forward a legal way to protest we can fully understand people taking other options.

Pushing for change

The Federation has been pushing for change and has bought a new perspective to the industry and a new way of doing things. A system of accountability all the time for those imposing their will on us and a system where you can have your say all year round.

We have been trying to get help from politicians and we get paid lip service under the current system because they have an attitude of "we are voted in - now do as we say for the next three years".

Those who took a risk and supported the Federation have now grown in numbers to around to 1100. People who were sick of not being listened to and sick of decisions being

557) Email: kharenh@skills.org.nz

Where's my bloody invoice?



Dear Editor: Hi all. I must be making a protest every year as I seldom remember to pay my registration fees on time. Particularly since I no longer receive any kind of an invoice from the Board.

I am expected to simply remember to pay it on time. Yes I do get an email reminder but as with just about every business I deal with I pay on invoice as it's just the way of the world even if it's an email invoice.

I may just see if my customers will just pay without an invoice, should be interesting!

Therefore I guess we have a legitimate excuse for not paying, "sorry, I never received your invoice, you must have poor systems, surprising though as I seem to be giving you plenty of money to have good systems." Cheers.

ED: Writer you seem to forget the Board doesn't have to conform to regular practices because if they get it wrong the Government with change the law so that what they do is legal.

Perhaps you don't get an invoice because 50% of the invoice would be tax. You have the GST component and of course a levy is a form of tax and we have the discipline and prosecution levy too, and how bad would that look having a registered charity fleecing people with such a heavy tax rate?

Who's waiting on whom?

Have you ever thought about timing of reports etc? At the moment we are waiting on reports from the Ombudsman, from the Regulations Review Committee (RRC) and from the Office of the Auditor General.

We have been waiting for months for all of them, but perhaps it's a planned move to release them after the industry has paid their fees. This action would be like last time where the Government gave the Board time to get through another licensing period so they wouldn't be insolvent. How many licensing periods do we have to go through in this way?

We believe the delays place into question the credibility of the organisations and reeks of political interference. It's a bit like the 2013 review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, apparently it has begun but we haven't seen any evidence of what's happening or been invited to comment of changes needed. It's more than likely we will get consultation of what the government and Board feel are necessary and have to like it or lump it.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor. This December I will have completed 44 years in the gas

made without any input from the people who are affected.

Last year we had over a hundred and fifty supporters who were interested in setting up a political party to help make change.

This week we read of an attempt by Brendon Horan to set up a new political party which operates in a very similar manner to the Federation where you have your say all year around.

Brendan was very vocal in support of the Federation and the industry during the Amendment Bill saga where the Government made legal the Boards unlawful activities.

All change must start somewhere and the Federation is a case in point so those that were interested last year in political change may want to visit;

www.nzindependent.org.nz

It may not be worded the way the Federation would say things (very little is), but the concept is good and could change the political landscape into something the Federation holds dear - being fairness and equality.

We wish Brendan all the best in his endeavours and thank him for the support he gives us and for everyone else maybe we can all be part of something new.

industry in many roles; these have included domestic and commercial installation work as well as having a fair bit of hands on with Industrial gas fired equipment which included maintaining 30 meter long biscuit baking ovens.

In the early years of Natural Gas arriving in New Zealand I spent several years as a gas inspector for one of the local gas suppliers, during that time I met many interesting and very capable gasfitters, towards the end of my career I became the Audit manager for the then Plumbers, Gas & Drainlayers Board. Those years were the very best of time in the Industry and I enjoyed a good relationship with the trade, there were the odd times when I had to slap a few hands, but generally things ran very smoothly.

Because of the very unpleasant environment today I feel I can no longer continue to renew my licence. I am appalled at the way the administration is performing (if you can call it that), the fear-based tactics that are currently employed do nothing to inspire any confidence in our trade and have only served to generate suspicion and mistrust as well as slowly but surely destroying it as well.

I admire the way the Federation is standing up to the bullies and will never forget the assistance I was given when I was investigated for supposedly carrying out a dangerous installation in a glasshouse, it was a very stressful situation and the backing I received from the Federation and its members certainly helped save my sanity.

Keep up the great work; just keep in mind the Latin Proverb "*Nil Barstardo Carborundum*" Which loosely translated means "Don't let the bastards grind you down!"

Mac McIvor

Ed: More and more we hear of people leaving the industry – people with experience who have touched the lives of many by providing good service, training and advice. People, who have been mentors, people who have been in positions where they have gained the respect of others through knowledge and not demanded respect because of position.

Mac is one of those people who has put most of their working career into the industry and is know by many, particularly those in the Wellington and Waiarapa regions. We want to thank Mac and all others in similar situations as Mac, for the dedication and leadership they have displayed in moving the industry forward. We can understand their disappointment in seeing the regulation of the industry in its current state and hope we can follow their example and get the industry back to a place where we are all comfortable.

All the best in your retirement Mac.

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