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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I have been reading the comments left on the Plumbers Forum and must say I am stunned by some of the letters about yours truly.

I never set out to be anyone special in the industry, I just did my job to the best of my ability, I used to catch the odd one or two before they fell and as far as I was concerned that's what I was there to do.

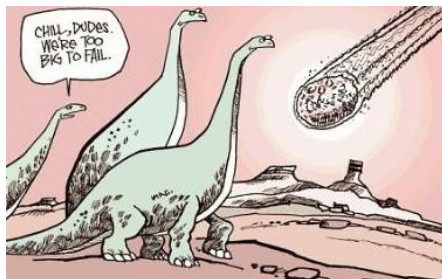
I feel very humble by the comments in the forum, many thanks to all those guys.

Mac

Ed:

This is yet again a sign of the man. Its respect for the person that was earned and didn't come with position. People today could learn a lot from

Another year has gone.



Monday saw the end of another financial year for the industry and the start of another Accountability Agreement between the Minister of Building and Construction and the Board. We haven't heard or seen the new Accountability Agreement, but history would indicate that it takes a few months before the parties agree to what is in it - so we should see it between July and September. That said, we aren't expecting any major changes – the whole thing is almost a joke.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MoBIE) are required to draft a new Output Agreement but we have never heard of anyone in the industry being approached to see what the industry needs are. If a new output agreement isn't agreed upon by the start of a new period the old one continues to operate. This is possibly so the new agreement can be delayed to give the Board more time to achieve the outputs in the previous year's agreement!

It would appear MoBIE supports the Minister by carrying out monitoring activities related to the Board's functions. (It would seem they are doing a piss poor job at that when you look at the issues over the last couple of years). It is MoBIE's administrative responsibility to monitor and report back on the Crown's interest in the Board.

We don't really see what this agreement achieves when there is no accountability, or penalty, for non achievement of the outputs - bureaucratic bullshit!

Pay no fees to the PGDB

Thanks very much to all that supported the "Pay No Fees To The PGDB" campaign. We realise it wasn't for everyone, but there was a need to make our feelings known. The number of people who participated doesn't really matter – the mere fact that people were pissed off and contemplated action should send the Board and the Minister a wakeup call.

For those who participated, you can expect letters from the Board now rejecting your applications, but remember the policies state the Registrar will consider the application in the first instance and make a written recommendation to the Board.

The Board will make the final decision as to whether a waiver or refund, in part or whole, is appropriate. They must then write

that.

Perhaps the Board should sit down and have a training session with Mac on how to achieve results without threats and intimidation.

To see what comments were made we have included a link to the forum for you.

www.plumbers.co.nz/forum/topic=1652.msg8257

Dear Editor

I admire Kevin Dare and his crew for making a stand and by also making it public knowledge.

Too many times I have seen people fade away not wanting to state what they really think or their reasons for changing and this has generally been out of fear of what people would say.

Perhaps Master Plumbers has lost its last bit of respect people had for it.

I was a Master Plumbers supporter for over a decade and have been with the Federation since it started and I am also a Plumbing World Shareholder.

I am hearing rumours of Plumbing World paying for the CEO of Master Plumbers to go to New York and must ask what benefit her attending the conference was to shareholders.

I am also hearing rumours of people who are missing out on interest on their rebates due to the recently implemented process of delayed payments.

Have you heard any such rumours editor?

Is our entire industry going to

to the applicants with a decision. As these issues deals directly with you, you have the right to complain about the decision under the general complaints policy or you can appeal to the District Court.

Once you start getting letters keep us informed via Wal Gordon. wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz, as this is all new territory we are entering and we want to ensure we are all dealt with in a fair and just manner.

How does the Public Register Look?

Theoretically everyone in the industry should have relicensed by 31 March 2014. So how are the licensed practitioners figures looking compared to the licensing figures from 28 March 2014?

- Certifying Plumbers 3135 vs. 1423 as at 1 April 2014
- Certifying Gasfitters 1339 vs. 650 as at 1 April 2014
- Certifying Drainlayers 2845 vs. 1187 as at 1 April 2014
- Licensed Plumbers 1528 vs. 365 as at 1 April 2014
- Licensed Gasfitters 626 vs. 175 as at 1 April 2014
- Licensed Drainlayers 156 vs. 47 as at 1 April 2014

There are some HUGE differences there. We noticed the Board had listed people's names as being unlicensed even when their existing licences were valid so we sent them this:

I wish to draw your attention to incorrect information on the Boards Register for my licences. My registration number is 10328.

Currently the register states I am unlicensed which is false. Section 50 of the Plumbers gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, to which the Board is bound, states "if an application for the renewal of a practicing licence is made before the licence's date of expiry but the licence has not been renewed before that date, the licence continues in force until the application is determined"

Could you please make the appropriate corrections to the Public Register to reflect that I am licensed. Please also check similar action is taken for my staff and anyone else in a similar situation.

We wish to congratulate the people in the licensing division as within 24 hours they had corrected the situation. Check to see if yours is correct and if not contact the licensing division.

When speaking with practitioners during the build up to licensing we were shocked at the number who stated they were fed up, the Board was a joke and they were just not going to license. Such a pity when all people want is fairness and equality.

It really makes us wonder what it is going to take to get

the pack due to a few people in positions of influence?

Ed:

Phew that was a brief but direct article and in answer to your question yes we have heard the rumours and it would seem they could be well founded.

We know the CEO of Master Plumbers did go to New York and John DeBernando & Deputy Chairman Paul Smart visited Patton operations in both India & Thailand during February.

We don't know the benefit to shareholders of any of the all expenses paid trips and perhaps people should ask questions.

We do know no one from the Federation was invited by Plumbing World to go to New York. Perhaps the Federation are still seen as renegades, malcontents and such like by Plumbing World.

We will do some digging around and see what we come up with regarding rebates.

If any readers out there know anything or have any thoughts on the issues then please let us now.

Send in your own letters to the Editor and let people know what you think.

Dear Editor

You seem to be writing more and more for us to read and the paper war for the protest was quite a bit. I think people may be put off by this.

Ed:

Yes you probably are right about the paperwork putting

change. Has the industry been dominated by a certain type of people for too long, and now the substandard regulation of the industry has become the norm for Government?

Final consultation on Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Qualifications

Hopefully by now you have taken the time to read the consultation document sent out by The Skills Organisation regarding the proposed plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying qualifications. We realise it is a big read and at times confusing.

It is important that you respond either supporting or rejecting the proposal as saying "nothing" is deemed to be support for the activities. So if you want The Skills Organisation and Board to have your vote then do nothing. We suggest a simple email to Sally Evers Qualifications Adviser sallye@skills.org.nz. If you don't want to list down your feelings and agree with the Federation then send a simple email stating you agree with the Federations view.

The Federation believes the qualifications cannot be dealt with in isolation as the training delivery method influences what is suitable and what certifying practitioners can provide to trainees. The Government has a policy framework for occupational regulation, which aims to ensure that certain occupational groups, (us included), are regulated in order to protect the public from the risks of an occupation being carried out incompetently or recklessly.

This regulation on us imposes costs and reduces flexibility and should provide assurance that competent people who have necessary skills are available to carry out work; and that these people have been sufficiently trained and meet the required industry, sector or government standards.

The Federation still has concerns that a qualification is being created that will create technically competent trainees that don't have the appropriate level of practical skills, but this is dependent on the delivery method. For example if the current delivery system of Certifiers being responsible and polytechnics assessing trainees is adopted, how can apprentices get appropriate skills training in sprinkler systems or solar when the majority of certifiers are not trained or partake in this sector of the industry?

If however a training delivery method was adopted that provided skills and technical training, it would be reasonable to leave the likes of sprinklers and solar systems in the qualification as hands on skills will be trained. Solar and sprinklers systems are just two subjects of many.

For over a decade we have been putting up with an add-on system where we have ended up with very little, or no formalised training. A system of assessments where the onus and responsibilities are all on the Certifying practitioners. This qualification does little to change this substandard system.

The qualification should be about what the trainee can do upon completion of the training, and what benefit it will be to the

people off but people need to realise that if they don't put in the effort then nothing will change.

The Board knows this and use it to their advantage so every time an individual doesn't respond they are playing into the Board's hands. So in effect doing nothing sides with the Board.

We can't force you to participate so all we can do is give you information so you can make informed decisions and resources to make a stand if you wish to.

Think of this "What will happen if the Federation stops?"

Is there a choice but to take the negative?

Once upon a time in the industry you didn't read newsletters containing negative information and that was for two reasons - firstly there wasn't a newsletter to keep you informed and secondly the industry was left to do what it does best, plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

Along came people with visions of grandeur and we have been on a downward slope ever since and licensing numbers so far this year are proof of that.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board's stance of not doing anything for the industry is very confusing.

How can the Board make decisions that affect the industry when they don't connect with them?

It seems very much that people of old from defunct organisations are failing to change with the times.

They seem to have missed the notification that times are changing and that bullying tactics are no longer tolerated

industry and public. Firstly look at the level 3 pre-trade training:

"It provides trainees with an opportunity to progress to a fully credentialed tradesperson level with further study, or to terminate on completion.

The New Zealand community will benefit from having graduates able to assist in ensuring public safety in the provision of gas, and water services and removal of foul water"

This qualification is providing skills and knowledge that can only be applied if in training and under supervision of a Certifying Practitioner. People who qualify cannot do anything unless under supervision as detailed, and only a small percentage will progress into apprenticeships. The saying that a little bit of knowledge is dangerous is quite apt in this case as there will be a lot of people with a little knowledge that can attempt to apply that knowledge outside the regulatory environment. Unless they get an apprenticeship there is NO benefit to the public, and in fact there could be a lot of detriment as we see a flood of cowboys operating in the marketplace.

The Level 4 training (we have used plumbing as the example) states:

"The purpose of this qualification is to provide the plumbing sector with people who are suitably skilled as plumbing tradespersons and ready to apply for registration as a licensed plumber under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.

This qualification allows the New Zealand community to recognise that graduates are able to legally carry out all sanitary plumbing work, essential for the safe delivery and removal of water. A licensed plumber can carry out any work involved in fixing or unfixing pipes, plumbing fixtures or appliances including; traps, waste or soil pipes, ventilation pipes, or overflow pipes and pipes that supply water. These people are qualified and licensed but must be supervised by a certifying person who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the work is done competently"

So yet again we have a situation where, upon completion of the qualification, the trainee can do nothing unless under supervision. So after four years, one day the individual is an apprentice and the next they are licensed and nothing has changed regarding supervision or skills. The only thing that has changed is they pay \$400.00 registration fee per trade, \$101.00 licensing fee per licence and \$256.00 discipline and prosecution levies. Yet again there is no benefit to the public unless the trainee/newly licensed person is supervised. The reality however is that a number of these people go out and operate their own business and get a Certifier from another company to sign them off (presumably for some reward).

The following statement has also been made:

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

and accountability is a way of life.

So it's not a matter of being negative it is a matter of reporting the negative so the positive can move forward.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A MEETING OF INTEREST TO ALL GASFITTERS

**COME AND HEAR ESS
SPEAK ABOUT WORKSAFE
AND ALSO THE GAS
CERTIFICATE REGIME**

8th April 2014

5.30pm for a 5.45pm start

*Porterhouse Blues Restaurant
Function Room*

King Street Upper

*Hutt RSVP to
colleen@huttgas.co.nz*

Ph 04-5650921

This meeting has been arranged in conjunction with the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation but is open to ALL gasfitters (Federation members, Master Plumber members and Gasfitters who do not belong to any industry group)

We will report on the meeting in upcoming issues of the Fellow Practitioner so those of you in the rest of the country can share in what we get told.

Thanks for the Donations

Thanks to those people who followed the example made by members who have made donations.

Every donation counts and we are grateful for any amount.

For those people who are sending in hundreds of dollars in donations we realise you could have spent that on other things to make your life better,

and after it. This change is subject to the industry and the Board agreeing with the inclusion, and is for the Level 4 qualifications only, not for the Level 5 qualifications"

As explained the qualification is attempting to INCLUDE the registration exam but this would have to be consulted on with the industry and the Board so there is a chance we could end up with a qualification that does not meet the standards required to obtain registration. If the exam is embedded in the qualification we are hoping that it will mean that National Certificate = Registration, and that the costs of the exam will be included in the apprenticeship fees, thereby reducing some of the overall costs either trainees or their employers pay. It should also mean that exam preparation is included in the qualification.

With regard to Level 5 (Certifying plumbing has been used as the example):

"This qualification allows the New Zealand community to recognise that graduates are able to legally carry out and certify all plumbing work once they have met the Boards registration requirements. These people are responsible for ensuring both their own work, and the work of anyone they supervise is done competently"

And there you have it - another qualification that doesn't really mean much as it is reliant on meeting the Board's registration requirements. A trainee could pass this qualification but still not be able to carry out the objective of the qualification.

It appears we have gone from a 10,000 hour apprenticeship where people were trained, and when qualified, were Registered and responsible for their own work, to a system where more than 12,000 – 14,000 hours is required and there is still a chance a trainee won't make the grade but will have qualifications which are of no use unless supervised or registered as a Certifier.

We do not see a benefit to the industry or the public. We do see a benefit for the training institutions that will reap the fiscal rewards of individuals paying for pre-trade courses and for apprentices paying for 6 years of study to reach certifying status if they are lucky.

There is also the issue of the training delivery methods and supervisory requirements. Currently Certifiers carry the weight of the industry and that doesn't look like changing. Supervision has become a major issue and term and condition of licensing.

It could be argued that the qualification follows in line with the registration of licensing and certifying persons as deemed by the Board. In 2013 the Federation was aware of this and requested a meeting with the Board to push for consultation with the industry regarding registration classifications. The meeting requested is scheduled for May 2014.

NZQA sets the overarching conditions of the mandatory reviews being the qualifications must be representative of the actual sector requirements and we don't believe these qualifications achieve that.

and we take our hats off to you for wanting to support everyone in the industry.

Remember if you need vehicle stickers or Certificates of Membership just send your request to

wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz

We feel committed to change but are not in favour of a rescue package where time and resources are being wasted at the expense of the apprentices training, skill levels and industry needs. Window dressing will not do.

We wish to emphasise the delivery model of the training will dictate the content of the qualification. Please read the information provided and make a decision as to whether you believe the proposal meets the future needs of the industry and have your say. If you don't say anything you are voting YES.

Remember these are the people that are the future of our industry – we are responsible for bringing them through their training and turning them into productive practitioners. These are the people who will buy the businesses and train the future generations. We need to get this right – because goodness knows we seen what the outcome of muck ups with apprentice training have done.

Disputing review outcomes

All is not lost if there is opposition to the proposal and it is still pushed through. As part of its guardianship of the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF), New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) is responsible for qualifications listed on the NZQF and in this role is the final decision-maker on the outcome of a qualification review. They anticipate that in the great majority of reviews there will be consensus over the outcome of the review process.

If an individual qualification owner or stakeholder proposes an outcome that NZQA is unable to accept, then NZQA will consult with the affected parties over its proposed final decision. In making its final decision, NZQA will take into account the views expressed in the consultation and will also explain its decision.

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