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IN OTHER NEWS

The Unsung Hero's

We picked up on comments about another person who has retired from the industry.

Another one of the unsung heroes who have given their all for the industry.

Here are some of the comments:

In the Waikato we have had another stalwart of the industry retire recently. We acknowledge the contribution to mainly the gasfitters of our region of Eddie Makin.

A past Gas Inspector who deserves the same

The use of a blunt instrument (Relicensing a week on)



The Ombudsman made comment about the Government and Board using a "Blunt Instrument" when dealing with the Board's unlawful taking of money from the industry, and over the same

saga comment was made about "what next"?

It would appear we are seeing the industries response to the Board's actions. By 1 April 2014 those people wanting to work in the industry should have applied for their annual authority from the PGD Board (i.e. application for their practising licence).

After the first week of licensing, up to 5 April 2014, this is how the statistics looked with regard to the numbers that have licensed so far this year, compared to last year's totals:

- Certifying Plumbers down 45.83%
- Certifying Gasfitters down 39.8%
- Certifying Drainlayers down 50.15%
- Licensed Plumbers down 69.24%
- Licensed Gasfitters down 64.05%
- Licensed Drainlayers down 65.38%

Last month in the Info Brief the Board stated:

"Relicensing is in full swing and it is fantastic to see the large number of tradespeople who are getting in early to ensure that they are autho-rised to work lawfully on 1 April, which is the start of the new licensing year. At the time of writing this, the number of people who have relicensed is more than double the number who had done so at the same time last year - plus 124% to be precise"

Their spin on the state of affairs differs from reality. (But then again, doesn't it always?) Remember the Board also announced that licensing was down 8.4% last year - so is it going to be worse this year? If it is - then what does this mean for the industry, for the country, and for the consumer? Think on it, because there are a LOT of ramifications.

sort of accolades that Mac has been getting. Finished his career as a Tutor and a consultant at Wintec where he was a huge help in trying to sort out the nonsensical ITO training scheme (with some success)! He will be sorely missed by everyone in the Industry. Good on ya Eddie

Good on Eddie, enjoy your retirement and thank you for all your hard work over the years!!

I concur - Eddie's contribution has been felt in Wellington as well - and he will be a great loss to industry with his retirement. He does indeed deserve the same sort of accolades as Mac is getting.

It's great to see others in the industry acknowledging the contributions of these guys who certainly did their share to foster and encourage young trainees, and not so young practitioners. You are never too old to learn that's for sure. Yes to Eddie - thanks and good wishes for some fun years!

There is no doubt there are a lot of people out there who

What is the real cost of Poor Regulation by the Board?



There are lots of ways of measuring the cost of the poor regulation by the Board, but one of the most telling ways is the cost to the country of people dropping out of the industry, starting with the cost to train those people. The Government say this:

Industry training is co-funded with industry: Government provides approximately 70% of the cash cost of training, while employers are expected to fund 30%. This recognises that industry training benefits the employer as well as the individual and the wider economy.

It appears the industry pays about \$12,000 for each apprentice so the government's cash contribution would be around \$28,000. A total of \$40,000.

We have used last year's figures off the public register to work out the cash replacement cost of the people who have dropped out of the industry. We have based this on last year's licensing figures.

- Registered Certifying Plumbers 6338, only 3135 licensed, difference is $3,203 \times \$40,000 = \$128,120,000$
- Registered Certifying Gasfitters 2420, only 1339 Licensed, difference is $1,081 \times \$40,000 = \$43,240,000$
- Registered Certifying Drainlayers 6991, only 2845 licensed, difference is $4,146 \times \$40,000 = \$165,840,000$
- Registered Licensed Plumbers 4342, only 1528 licensed, difference is $2,814 \times \$40,000 = \$112,560,000$
- Registered Licensed Gasfitters 2526, only 626 licensed, difference is $1,900 \times \$40,000 = \$76,000,000$
- Registered Licensed Drainlayers 6159, only 156 are licensed. We believe the register is showing false information with regard to licensed drainlayers so we haven't even attempted to calculate this one.

A total cash requirement of \$525,760,000.00 just to replace the registered people choosing not to be in the industry. Every person who leaves the industry has a cash replacement cost of \$40,000.00 which the taxpayer and industry pay.

Barriers are being put in place by the Board for people registering and licensing and the new qualifications being consulted on now by The Skills Organisation will do nothing to assist this problem. It is starting to look like they would be out of their depth in a car park puddle.

have contributed immensely to the industry and deserve our thanks.

If you have someone in your area that has contributed and given their all for the industry and wish to say a few words, then by all means send your thoughts to us and we will publish them on your behalf.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

It seems we have too many "Lap Dogs" in our industry and that affects the progression to better things.

What are your thoughts?

Ed:

Well it's interesting terminology you have used.

Being from a farming background a "Lap Dog" to me has always been a useless dog that gets under your feet in the house – generally small and brainless.

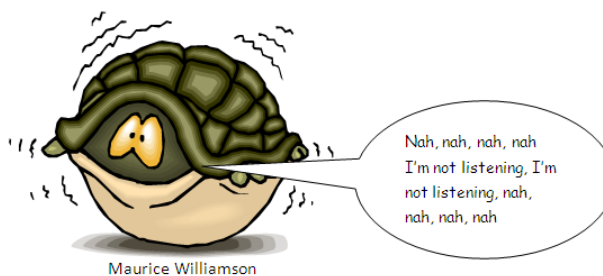
I did a search on the Urban Dictionary and found this definition which helped me see where you are coming from;

1. lapdog A suck up, ass kisser, brown noser.

Yes there is a lot who would fall into this category and it all seems to be about position and money.

It seems moral standards;

Going Turtle



Maurice Williamson is certainly a trend setter with a big rainbow over his electorate office, but it's a wonder he can see it as it seems he, the PGD Board and MoBIE have adopted one of the latest trends of people in authority and that's "Going Turtle".

"Going Turtle" is the new terminology given to bureaucrats who, when danger threatens, they pull their legs, arms and head into the shell. They can survive by hibernating. They may burrow in the muddy depths of bureaucracy or crawl under decaying piles of promises. When they hibernate they use very little oxygen.

Even if they spend months hibernating they do not have to come up for air. Recent research has shown they hear better under water – now there's a thought, perhaps they could collectively put their heads under water and wait there until they can hear the industry.

We don't know much about their eyesight, but you would think they would be able to see what's happening to the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry. We know they are not listening - or perhaps they are too busy "going turtle"?

Final consultation on Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Qualifications

Today is the final day for submissions to The Skills Organisation regarding the proposed plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying qualifications - so don't forget to have your say!

It is important that you respond either supporting or rejecting the proposal as saying "nothing" is deemed to be support for the activities. We suggest a simple email to Sally Evers Qualifications Adviser sallye@skills.org.nz. If you support the Federation's view or close to it, then let them know, alternatively if you have another view – put it to them as well. We just don't want industry to be silent – silence gets us what we've always got.

One issue that was discussed at the meetings regarding the qualification was having opt out points. These are stages where people can opt out with a qualification or part qualification. These two points are at the end of the pre-trade and at licensing level. However as you would have seen above, for every person who leaves the industry it's another \$40,000 wasted on training them.

We gave you an outline of the proposed scheme in last week's

honesty and integrity have been replaced with greed and personal status.

People seem to forget we are all equals and just because someone wears a suit and gets paid millions of dollars doesn't make them any better than anyone else.

Two of our supporters who have beaten the government's and Board's lawyers are a case in point – two guys, supported by the Federation committee using common sense, kept it simple and won.

No one wants to say it but our industry needs a good cleanout to get rid of the "Lap Dogs" and some of these people need to be bought back to reality.

Dear Editor

I am still trying to get my head around the sham of the Plumbing Board listed as a charity.

My understanding is a charity normally relies on donations which cannot be classed as fees or it would be compulsory to donate to any charity.

So if the fees are donations surely we have the right not to donate?

Keep up the good work

Ed:

The easiest way to think of this sham is this.

We, as responsible people see charity as something where we donate our time and money to willingly. We expect the majority of

Fellow Practitioner but the Federation believes there should be three qualifications being Registered Plumber, Registered Gasfitter and Registered Drainlayer.

This was posted on the Plumbers Forum this week:

I think you summed it up in your second reply Backflow where you stated: "Have to admit, I personally think you should either be qualified or not. I don't see the purpose of the licensed class. Electricians get by with only one class, why couldn't we?"

But here we are being asked to support a qualification that we don't agree with. We were told early on in the process by Skills that they couldn't alter the registration as that is up to the Board. The Federation asked for a meeting with the Board to instigate that consultation with the industry and have been scheduled for the middle of this year to meet with them.

The proposed qualification simply falls into line with the Board's Registration. We have no doubt the content of the qualifications combined go a long way to being what is needed to create a suitably qualified tradesperson - but seven years to achieve that is a joke. The ITOs have failed us in the past to such an extent that now they only provide assessments and their so called training is directed at getting people to pass those assessments, not at becoming much needed competent trades people.

These qualifications again are left open to interpretation by the ITO and training provider. We feel there should be more defined stipulation in the qualification in what skills must be taught as "hands on" skills by the training providers.

If the PGDB was to consult on the registration regime and it was changed what would be the use of these qualifications? We would yet again be left with something that is not suitable. As the qualification is dependent on the registration regime then that is where the process should have started.

With regard to the pre-trade/level 3 it may have its uses but only if we are producing numbers of people who are suitable to go into apprenticeships and if the apprenticeships are available. We would suggest people are paying to attend a course with the expectation that they will get an apprenticeship where that is not always the case.

The industry does need good qualifications that are designed for the industry not for the ITO and training providers. You could ask the question - how much money supplied by the Government to train apprentices actually gets spent on real training and how much is spent on administrators on the way to the training provider? Look at the current licensing statistics for Licensed Plumbers where there are 4348 that are registered and only 470 have licensed so far this year. That's 89.19% of the people the government have pumped money into for training are not legally applying their skills to that trade. Licensed Gasfitters are similar where there are 2526 registered and only 225 have licensed so far this year, 91.09%.

money to go to the cause itself.

Bureaucrats see charity as being a cash cow for high paid jobs and position and make the rules that only a small percentage of the funds obtained go to the cause. The rest is swallowed up in overheads.

The PGDB Board gives legitimate charities a bad name. It would be more honest if they put on a mask and held a gun to your head – because that's what it feels like – out and out theft!

Dear Editor

A message to Plumbing World Shareholders?

Recently Plumbing World changed suppliers for fuel. Has anyone had issues with dirty fuel or vehicles not running right?

We have had three vehicles fail since the changeover and were wondering if it was just bad luck or if there were other issues we don't know about?

Ed:

That doesn't sound good. Hopefully any readers will speak up if it they do have issues.

The qualification and registration regimes are failing the country.

The Government, the Board and the ITO have been ramming competence down our throats and the "do it once do it well" concept. That's what they expect from us, so it is only fair we can expect the same from them.

This qualification process should stop now and the entire qualification system should be consulted on, starting with the Board's registration requirements and industry needs.

Coming to you soon...

A successful meeting was held in Upper Hutt last night, organised by the Federation, with 45 gasfitters in attendance. Energy Safety did a presentation on Worksafe and also the Gas Certification Regime. Their presentation will be made available to members shortly – so that those of you who live outside of the Wellington district can still benefit from the meeting.

The Federation are always keen to see true upskilling take place – and indeed we feel this meeting fell into this category. There were no points on offer, no one sponsored the night – it was simply a chance to increase knowledge, iron out perceptions and ask questions. 45 people turned out on a rainy and somewhat cold night, straight from work.

If only the Board would acknowledge that as an industry we can be mature enough to realise what we don't know – and do something about it.

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