

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- **Paying to meet the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board**
- **Classes of Registration**
- **A Board Disconnected**

**IN OTHER NEWS**

**Office of the Auditor General Report (OAG)**

The OAG review which is a follow up to the 2010 report is due out within the next couple of weeks.

The Board have advised that as soon as it is available they will notify all trades people and put it up on the Board's website.

For your information the Board have already seen the report and have been given the opportunity to make a written submission to the OAG regarding the report.

The Board stated in the last Info Brief:

*"This is a very significant event for the Board and will provide the industry with a commentary on*

**Paying to meet the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board**



Last week we heard that the Greens were outraged at a National Party fund-raising scheme they label as "democracy for sale". They've revealed MPs and Ministers are running "cabinet clubs" in their electorates, which people pay an annual subscription to join.

For that they get the opportunity to have lunch or attend other get-togethers with politicians. Apparently our New Minister, Hon Dr Nick Smith has referred to it as Pizza and Politics. Perhaps the Board and Dr Smith could get together and have a few meetings to fundraise for the Board's operating costs?

The reason we mention that is that the industry pays \$4 million annually to run our Board, and it has just taken the Federation SEVEN months to get a meeting with them!

One could be forgiven for thinking that when you help fund an organisation you would have access to them, especially when it will save the industry hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This just demonstrates the Board's industrial exclusion tactics to ensure they get things their way and the way of the membership organisation they support.

Perhaps they forget that without a viable industry they don't exist.

**Classes of Registration**

Last week two members of the Federation executive committee met with the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board to request a review and consultation of the existing classes of registration to see if the current licensing and certifying classes meet industry needs.

This meeting was requested in November last year while the review of qualifications was in its early stages. Based on feedback from our members, the Federation had argued the registration classes did not

*the Board that can be relied on as being objective."*

The industry needs to remember that this report only covers the recommendations made in the last OAG report and does not look at the issues that are more recent.

We are not sure what process will be put into place to deal with more recent issues or if they will be ignored as has become usual.

### **Training and Employment**

Recruiting experts Hays released a report last week that indicated a number of important issues regarding training and employment.

They stated:

*"Due to the short supply of the right skills we are now seeing too many skilled jobs going unfilled"*

The report indicated it is clear that New Zealand is not matching the skills of graduates with the skills needed in the economy, which is very relevant to what the Federation has been saying about what skills and qualifications are needed in the industry.

According to Hays, business and government need to work together in

meet industry needs hence the request to meet with the Board to push for a review to coincide with the qualification review. This was not to be, and the Federation waited seven months to get a meeting.

The Federation was given the opportunity to voice its concerns to the Board being the classes of registration caused supervision issues, increased the number of partially trained people in the industry and put a lot of accountability issues on Certifiers to name a few.

The Board stated they had the review and consultation on this subject in the work program for next year.

So the situation is this – The Skills Organisation has just conducted a review of the qualifications for plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying where one of the main requirements was that the qualifications meet industry needs. They have based their recommendations on meetings and workshops and the registration requirements of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

They conducted limited consultation with the industry with regard to industry needs (based mainly it would seem on prohibitive costs of getting a wide and varied group together – i.e. if you wanted to take part you had to pay your own way, so it is highly unlikely that a plumber in Invercargill, Christchurch, Taupo or Auckland for example is going to pay their own way to and from Wellington for several one days meetings), and it would be extremely lucky to meet the definition of consultation. In fact other options were not even explored.

The Board were involved in the process but still failed to show leadership and have a proper review of the needs of the industry conducted. Now Skills want the new qualifications to be submitted to NZQA.

The actions being taken are typical past behaviour of this industry where a temporary measure is put in place instead of doing what is preached to us and that is "do it once do it well".

A great deal of time and effort has been put into creating the new qualifications when they may not meet industry needs.

It seems a total waste of time – Skills conduct 12 months of consultation and writing of qualifications just so we can get a NZQA recognised qualification to meet industry needs, only for licence classes to be reviewed by the Board next year (which are the foundation of the new qualifications), when it may all change again.

Two organisations funded by others - wasting money. It's no wonder the industry can't progress when we continually re-do that which has been done before.

How hard would it have been to have the organisations involved meet and have compatible time lines i.e. consult on registration classes first and then draw up qualifications after we know where we are going?

developing schemes and programs to increase the supply of skilled workers. Governments must demonstrate real financial and political commitment to improving skills and businesses need to develop and implement tailored policies for their youngest staff.

Hays suggests the following to help the Government close the skills gap and reduce youth unemployment:

- Develop closer ties with business to have clarity on the skills that are required.

- Offer fiscal incentives to employers to enable them to employ and train staff in areas where there are skills shortages.

Perhaps our new Minister may want to meet with industry earlier rather than later to help avoid a shortage of well trained, qualified tradespeople who are responsible for their own work.

Not only do we need to look at training new people but also at why the regulation of the industry if forcing people to operate illegally or to leave altogether.

### **New Zealand Independent Coalition (NZIC)**

Last week we mentioned

## **A Board Disconnected**



At the meeting between the Board and the Federation mentioned above there were a number of questions asked about the Federation and its membership. One question in particular demonstrated how

disconnected the Board is with the industry and was along the lines of:

*“Is the Federation membership made up of a couple of people expounding their views, imagining they have a following, or is it more What is the process for membership exactly?”*

The Board and Master Plumbers Executive seem more concerned about how many people are in the Federation and how people join and what they pay rather than the real issues in the industry.

Quite frankly who cares about the numbers? Shouldn't the legislation, processes and procedures be about what is right? Minorities can be just as right as majorities. We did take much pride in informing them that numbers were over 1100 and that we truly consulted our membership, that we didn't spend a fortune and used electronic media to get feedback.

The executive are very proud of the fact that in all recent consultations the Federation members have taken the opportunity to have their say, or have written in support of the Federation submission. More so than other industry organisations. This alone should have told them that our membership is more than two or three people.

At the meeting the CEO and Board Chairman whispered sweet confidential nothings in each other's ears. Being an open and transparent organisation that says things the way they are, the Federation believes this was extremely rude. We believe if it can't be said in open forum then it shouldn't be said.

We say enough of secrets and hidden agendas - it is time for people to realise that when regulation is unjust resistance becomes mandatory.

The Federation seeks your feedback as to what you want from the Federation as an organisation for the coming year.

So far the founding members of the Federation have been leading the push for fairness and equality in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying regulations and legislation - do you feel it is time for the Federation to evolve? For example is it time for trades people to be voted on from each area and vote for their own chairperson or are you happy for things to stay the way they are, remembering having your say is only a click away.

about the establishment of a new political party called New Zealand Independent Coalition (NZIC)

We are a young organisation and we want to serve our members well - please give us your thoughts, long or short – we want to hear what you have to say.

NZIC have contacted us and wish to thank those trades' people who have joined and wish to encourage others to do the same.

As soon as the party is established they can look at candidates and there has been interest shown by a Federation Executive Committee Member.

Perhaps this is the fresh start we all need.

If you want more information or want to join the NZIC contact their Secretary on (07) 575 9533 or email:  
[info@nzindependent.org.nz](mailto:info@nzindependent.org.nz)

For more information and become a member visit  
[www.nzindependent.org.nz](http://www.nzindependent.org.nz).

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