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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**Letter to the editor**

**Dear Editor**

Last week you made comment about poor consultation by the Skills Organisation - I do think we need to blame ourselves as an industry too over the consultation with the ITO.

There were such poor turnouts around the main centres when the ITO visited – Upper Hutt had the biggest numbers and even then we only filled the smoko room at Plumbing World. These numbers were bolstered by Skills employees as well.

Is this a sign of fatigue around consultation? Is it a sign of disengagement, or laziness? I don't know.

I know that as an industry we often moan after the fact – but why don't we take opportunities when given?

I think that this is an industry where guys are working all day, very hard, and at night they just don't have either the energy or inclination to

**Letter to the Editor**



**Dear Editor**

The talk around the work place last week got around to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and how much of a joke they are amongst wider industry.

One of the young chaps asked if we really needed them - he felt they don't do anything for the industry - so why follow them. I thought this was a very unusual way of putting the situation, but on reflection it is what the Board want us to do, they expect us to follow their directions and comply with their decisions.

The criticism of the Board carried on most of the week and the conclusion over beers on Friday was that most people really didn't care what the Board thought or did. They have lost the respect of the trade's people that fund them.

So my question is "What does the Government do when nobody cares what the PGDB does?"

**Ed:**

Yes it does appear the Board have gone from an organisation that has lost its credibility in the eyes of some in the industry to simply being a Government backed joke. (And an expensive one at that!)

It's been discussed in Parliament a number of times over the last four years about the troubles our industry has with the Board but here we are still enduring the same problems. NO ONE has stepped up to take responsibility or corrective action, this includes EVERY political party in the house, individual MP's whose constituents have been to visit them, policy makers and administrators in Government – not a single one.

In answer to your question, the Government is rapidly running out of choices because once people drop out of the regulation regime you would need something pretty outstanding to entice them back. As it stands now the benefits of being in the regulation regime are limited.

So the Government have a few options being - deregulate the industry, use forced compliance which long term will deplete industry numbers or create a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board that is TRULY industry representative.

fight the fight. But they need to, or else they will be forced to get what they are given.

Everything worth something is worth fighting for.

Keep up the good work.

**Ed:**

Yes writer you are right - everyone in the industry must participate if we are to move forward. Take a side not a back seat.

**Pay no fees to the PGDB action**

Thanks to everyone who supported the pay no fees to the PGDB campaign.

For some they have got their point across and have this week received letters from the Board and have relicensed.

The Boards letter was very blunt and lacked any customer service principles. It did not even outline the reasons why the applications for a fees and levy waiver had been declined and flatly refused to look at the exemption applications until the fee had been paid.

This flies in the face of what the CEO stated in the Plumbers Journal

*“When you’re in a regulatory environment, it’s easy to think you don’t have customers, but you actually do because they are registered and licensed with the Board, plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are our customers and they deserve the type of service that any other customer in any other environment will get”*

The annoying thing is there is already legislation in place for an industry representative Board and it’s called the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 but it is interpreted to be the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Consumers Enforcement Act 2006.

The Government has been duped and like the industry, has been blindly following people with set methodologies and ideologies.

Have a look around the industry and nearly every Board currently operating in our industry is struggling to get support for their line of thinking. Plumbers Merchants shareholders rejected suggestions by its Board – Master Plumbers members rejected suggestions by its Board – the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board are routinely rejected and other industry groups are influenced by similar if not the same people.

Although the Boards and the organisations are failing these people still seem to place their perspective and beliefs above others and are now in positions were they are firmly entrenched leaving the rest of the industry with no options that to show dissent.

Is it a co-incidence that several of these Board’s use the same people? It’s like a merry-go-round of ineptness.

### Does it have to be a conflict



It doesn’t have to be a conflict but it will be until the PGD Board and Government stop lying to themselves, and others. Pretending that all is good and that the Board is doing a wonderful job. They portray in Parliament that all is well

but a group of malcontents, who complain at every meeting, are the trouble makers.

We have no doubt that behind closed doors the Board will be getting told to get things under control but we believe the Government have under estimated the dissention and resolve in the industry.

The Government have supported the Board in making bad choices and have backed their arrogance which has left the Board looking like a joke. Remember the Board is deemed to be an independent statutory Board but we believe there is very little independence and the direction being taken is dividing the industry.

The Federation knows it will get slammed by some sectors of the industry but look at the fact that trades people are so sick of the Board’s direction they are walking away from their hard earned licenses.

Last year the Board reported an 8.4% decline in licensing and here they are nearly two months into the new licensing period and numbers are down again and protest actions still continue.

*Things like keeping your promises, communicating well and honesty are all part of Max's approach, he says.*

But anyway some of those who protested are continuing on, seeking information about the process that was followed by the Board and what was discussed and the reasons why.

This is done by submitting an Official Information Act Request. If you contact Wal Gordon on [wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz) he can send you a draft Official Information Act letter.

#### Fact or Fiction

A PGDB investigator approaches a plumber's vehicle in Christchurch to ask to see the tradesman's authorisation issued by the Board.

As the investigator approached the vehicle, he notices the tradesman smacking a dog over the head.

The Investigator asked the tradesman why he was hitting the dog.

The tradesman replies, "The little bugger's just eaten my authorisation."

Here is the latest licensing update:

- Certifying Plumbers down 16.78% (includes 63 new Registrations)
- Certifying Gasfitters down 12.37% (includes 25 new Registrations)
- Certifying Drainlayers down 21.35% (includes 11 new Registrations)
- Licensed Plumbers down 28.03% (includes 93 new Registrations)
- Licensed Gasfitters down 21.6% (includes 47 new Registrations)
- Licensed Drainlayers down 16.56% (includes 49 new Registrations)

If the Government is so concerned about a lack of trades people for the building boom then why aren't they doing something about it?

#### ACC Levies



Apparently the Government has announced there will be a reduction in ACC Levies next year but remember this – it was found that ACC had been overcharging everyone so it could recover from the financial crisis it got itself into a few years ago, so in effect we paid extra to get them out of strife and now

we they are trying to make it seem like they are doing us a favour, when we are really only returning to where we possibly should be.

We wonder when the Board will do the same to us – return the money that they have been overcharging us. Oh that's right they did it last fees review when they said they wouldn't increase the discipline levy.

#### Interesting Reading

THEBEXNESS is a new site which addresses everything and anything to do with business. There is a post titled "Auditors General's report on plumbing industry due soon". It is a quick overview of the buildup to the follow up report. Interesting reading.

Here is a link to the site <http://thebexness.com/> . Add it to your favourites as we are sure there will be useful articles on there.

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