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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I read last week about the Federation being labelled as negative.

If it is negative to force change and ensure people are doing their jobs right? Doesn't that make the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board the most negative organisation in New Zealand?

The Board are always on about the standards in workmanship and employee five full time lawyers, contract lawyers and investigators to ensure we do our jobs right so they must be incredibly NEGATIVE.

Perhaps that's why they don't get along with the industry.

Ed

Yes the Federation was quite surprised to find we were labelled as negative.

Perhaps in New Zealand you are negative if you go against the wishes of those in the positions of authority.

Is fresh thinking negative? Think

Another Privacy Breach



Unfortunately there has been another privacy breach which takes to four, the privacy issues from the Board in the last three years. Firstly, there was a disciplinary report sent to the wrong people where a

person's name was supposedly suppressed; secondly there was a dispute sent to the wrong person in Upper Hutt when it should have been sent to Nelson; thirdly there was the issue of the Board forcing gas fitters to release the names, contact details and telephone numbers of customers in order for a gas certificate to be issued. (This action was revoked once the Federation explained the error in their demands.)

The latest episode is the breach of privacy of over 60 people, whereby their identities were able to be read as part of the minutes of the Board meeting held in May 2014. The document which the Board posted on their website as part of their move to become open and transparent listed all the names of people who had applied for a waiver of fees and levies and applied for exemptions.

The Board had attempted to protect the privacy of individuals by way of blackening out the names, but when opening the document on a tablet it was found all the names could be read. The Board was notified of the issue on 10 July 2014.

On 11 July 2014 the Board sent a letter to the Federation. Part of it read:

"Upon receipt of your notification, the minutes were immediately removed from the website and a new, secure copy of them was made and placed back on the website at 10.50am yesterday."

This was correct, but the new copy did not include every second page so the Federation notified the Board and this problem was corrected. The letter went on to say:

"An investigation into this matter has been conducted and it has been revealed that the copy of the minutes originally placed on the website may have been able to be altered to reveal personal information that had been redacted. The Board will ensure that no future copies of its meeting minutes published on the website can be manipulated in this way."

We don't like what is being inferred in this paragraph such as "the

about the name of the Mega Ministry MBIE Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Last time we looked INNOVATION was defined as: bring in new methods, ideas etc: make changes.

It refers to new concepts or products that derive from individual's ideas or from scientific research.

Fresh thinking that creates value sums it up.

So we don't think we fall into the negative slot when we are providing fresh thinking and ideas.

While on the subject of MBIE. They are supposedly recruiting for four Board members for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board but yet this is what is on their website:

Current board vacancies

On behalf of the responsible Ministers, the Ministry is seeking expressions of interest for the following board positions. For more information, please review the details about the positions and information about how to apply.

There are no current board vacancies.

It may be INNOVATIVE to list the vacancies. Just a fresh idea.

document may have been able to be altered" and "manipulated". The perception is the Board are trying to lay the blame on the complainant for yet again identifying their short comings. It would seem the Board's interpretation of opening a PDF document is "altering and manipulating".

Our displeasure with the accusations was sent to the Board and to Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Building and Construction, who had previously asked the Federation to get along with the Board and take any issues to him.

What is also highlighted with this situation is the fact that no complaint can be laid with the Board as their General Complaints Policy does not deal with – wait for it - general complaints! Is this going to be a short lived truce?

Who will be held accountable - the Federation or the Board's Secretariat? The resources available to the Board (at our cost) mean that this sort of thing should not happen.

Mitre 10 MEGA Upper Hutt



The initiative we announced last week in conjunction with Mitre 10 MEGA, Upper Hutt has had a positive response, except for a few who you would expect comment from.

The government by way of legislation, and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board by way of regulations, have

squarely laid the liability for the actions of every New Zealander or person visiting or working temporarily in New Zealand or holidaying etc on the plumbing, gasfitting and drain laying industry. So this initiative is about mitigating practitioner's liability and protecting the unregistered from themselves.

The actions of doing plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying while unregistered are out of our control, and yet we have to pay for the policing and prosecution of non registered people. This is one simple way of mitigating our liability. For every non registered person whom we stop - its one less person we have to pay for enforcement for, or pay for court action, and not only that, it is one less person that can get it wrong.

Are we going to be able to stop the sales to everyone – probably not but at least we can keep our costs down. Here are a few of the interesting emails sent to us this week.

Letter to the editor

I'm a builder and more than capable of piping out a bathroom or putting in a kitchen or fixing a burst pipe. I should be able to buy what I want from whoever I want. I bet you go and buy timber to do your own building work. Get a life and find something else to do.

Dear Editor

Good on you for meeting with the Minister but is he "Just another Minister"?

We have been down this road before so are we going to lose traction by having a truce with them?

Perhaps it may be better to ignore him and the Board and push on with protest.

Ed:

The truce is being tested at the moment so the Minister is in control as to whether he is "just another Minister."

We have every hope he will be different and stand by his word. We want nothing more than to move ahead but it must be in a fair and equitable manner.

Anything less than that will only lead to conflict.

From the Media

The Building Industry Federation says new requirements for builders will keep cowboys out of the industry.

From January, builders will be required to have written contracts, provide information on their relevant skills, experience and qualifications, and disclose their insurance and warranty cover.

They're for residential building work valued over \$30,000.

Chief executive Bruce Kohn says the new measures will ensure higher quality standard in the industry.

He says it will help to push out any cowboys that may still be around in the industry at a time when construction is starting to

Ed:

Well there you have it, that's just one example of the attitude we are up against. Obviously this builder is capable of doing pipe sizing, knows about backflow prevention, cross connections, venting etc. In fact perhaps he knows it all, but knowing it all and being able to LEGALLY install it are too different things, and yes we do buy timber and in fact we got some last week to build the Taj Mahal of all chicken coops, but last time I looked chicken coops didn't come under restricted building work.

Dear Editor

The Federation has been getting a lot of flack from existing suppliers that they weren't approached. What do you have to say about that?

Ed:

If Mitre 10 MEGA Upper Hutt can identify an issue and come up with a solution when they are not even a main supplier to the industry then you would have to ask what the main suppliers have been doing. It would appear they have been happy with the status quo where they have had the best of both worlds selling to the trade as well as the public without restriction.

We seem to remember Plumbers Merchants was established for the tradespeople so where is the advantage to the tradespeople in that organisation selling to unregistered people? Some organisations seem to have forgotten why they were established.

Business is business and if some suppliers chose to continue on as they are that is their choice just the same as it is a practitioner's choice as to where they shop. One thing we know is that plumbers, gasfitters and Drainlayers should support those that support them!

Dear Editor

Why should it be the responsibility of the retailer to police who they sell their product to? Times are tough enough without turning away sales.

Ed:

It's called corporate responsibility and it is also mitigating the risk to the retailer because how long do you think it will be before a retailer ends up in court defending itself for selling a product to a person who is not legally allowed to fit the product?

If McDonalds can get sued for selling coffee that is too hot then how long before a retailer gets sued for a person blowing the side out of their house with a hot water cylinder they purchased?

Dear Editor

You are supporting an action to stop the sale of gear to non licensed people. What about those of us out here that are not licensing as a point of protest against the Board?

take off and that's a good thing.

Farmers in flood-stricken Northland are welcoming government assistance.

They're struggling after last week's devastating storm and Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy has declared the region a medium-scale adverse event.

That opens the way for them to access government assistance through tax relief, Work and Income payments, community support and wage subsidies.

We feel for the people in any situation like this but we don't see any money getting chucked at our industry to help us out of our every day struggle.

It is as if we don't provide any value to the Government or the country.

Ed:

We think it is a very bold move to operate without a current authorisation and support you morally and thank you for your action, but we are still pushing for fairness and equality in the cost of licensing so action like yours doesn't have to occur.

We would hope in the very near future this can be achieved with a new Minister. The review of fees and levies at the end of the year gives an opportunity for us to yet again voice our concerns and take action if we are not happy. You never know you may go from being the minority that haven't relicensed to being part of the majority.

The Federation wants everyone to be legal in the industry and that is what we are pushing for and fully realise there are a lot of unresolved issues such as historical complaints, current complaints, hatred for the current CPD scheme and high fees etc.

We realise the Mitre 10 initiative will affect a few people but we are staying positive and going with the wishes of the majority at this stage.

Dear Editor:

We applaud the Federation and those who support Mitre 10 MEGA Upper Hutt with this venture. We are in a rural area and have a Mitre 10 Store so we'll be approaching them to see what they can do for us. Well done.

Dear Editor

Thanks for giving us more options with a reputable supplier and we hope the trial all goes well. About time some of the long established companies revisited their support to the industry and made sure the industry is supported and not just Master Plumbers.

Dear Editor

Will the Mitre 10 Initiative happen right across New Zealand?

Ed:

That will depend on the support we, as an industry, give to the initiative. Only time will tell.

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