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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I'm an avid reader of the Plumbers Forum and I have gradually seen a decline in the comments on there.

Are people starting to lose interest in the issues facing our industry?

Ed: No we don't think people are losing interest but we do believe they are sick of being ignored and having to repeat themselves.

We believe this is a result of inaction by those that can actually make the changes required.

To us inaction is the same as being incompetent because if you don't take action to correct a situation then obviously you are incapable of getting the situation to a place of resolution.

Dear Editor

I think it's time tradespeople woke up to what's happening to them with regard to customers supplying their own materials.

I worked it out and for me

Solutions



At the meeting recently with Hon Nick Smith, Minister of Building and Construction he stated that if the Federation identified a problem he wants to know about the problem, but also wants possible solutions.

Very good in theory, but what happens if problems are identified, solutions suggested and nothing gets actioned?

That's what has been occurring over recent years, so we are hopeful for action by the new Minister.

We have been told change takes time, but while people are taking their time we are hit with exorbitant fees and levies that are based on assumptions. How much time is too long and who is gauging that time?

One solution would be for the Accountability Agreement between the Minister and the Board to incorporate tasks agreed to by the industry with time limits imposed on them. In recent times the Accountability Agreements have been full of tasks that are routine administrative tasks, nothing that will improve the efficiency of the Board or the industry.

Look at the current Accountability Agreement. Well you could if there WAS one, but there isn't one - although if you read the fine print the existing one carries over until there is a new one, so obviously there are no critical timings. FIVE months into the new financial year and NO accountability agreement. Someone has clearly dropped the ball big time.

Reading over old Accountability Agreements it would seem MBIE is to have a draft to the Minister by 1 March each year. Obviously there is a problem this year in that FIVE months later there still isn't an agreement. Last year's wasn't signed until late July by the Board's previous Chairman. So if we are 33% of the way through the financial year before the agreement is in place does that mean the Board are only getting work for the remaining 67% of the year?

Our solution is to hold people accountable for their jobs so implementation dates can be met and if they can't do their jobs the get someone who can! This goes from the Board, to the departmental official's right up to the Minister. Taxpayers and practitioners alike are paying for the people who are meant to be doing this job.

Continuing Professional Development has been a point of contention for quite some time. There has never been any argument about the need for

on an average hot water cylinder install I would lose a couple of hundred dollars (before tax) on material profit if the customer supplied everything.

That's the same as about three hours charge out.

So for me to make the same money I would need to do an extra three hours work.

It's quite simple. For every cent I don't make on materials I have to make it up by working on the tools.

Ed: Yes writer you have summed up the plight of many tradespeople. Consumers want to save money so they want to purchase their own materials and then want the tradesperson as labour only.

So straight away they have taken money from your pocket. The second issue is when something goes wrong with a product they have supplied the first people they call is you the installer and want you to resolve the issues at no cost.

Perhaps a higher price should be charged for labour only.

Dear Editor

I read about the Board's fees and levies.

How is it they get away with the behaviour of overcharging when it is exactly the type of behaviour they police under the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006?

Ed: Simple answer is: because they are appointed by the Government they are deemed to be innocent until proven guilty and then the government will change the rules to suit the situation.

For us it's guilty until proven

CPD but there has been about the affordability, the identification of training needs and the relevance.

Has anyone ever asked why the accreditation fees for courses to be recognised by the Board were dropped, and why the review of existing courses was paid for by practitioners? We believe it was due to the lack of uptake by training providers. We believe they could not see a return on their money for the accreditation and re-accreditation bi-annually.

The Board's actions have imposed the cost on the practitioners to justify a failing scheme which is full of courses and information which most practitioners are already trained in. They have also linked the CPD to licensing which takes away the emphasis on learning and improving to one of compliance so a practitioner can work from 1 April each year, hence the "buying of points" mentality.

The solution would be to scrap the existing scheme and implement a scheme that is voluntary, that is based on identified training needs, is relevant and affordable – the type of system that adheres to Section 32 of the PGD Act 2006. A system that improves the knowledge of qualified tradespeople, not one that covers things they should already know to be qualified. CPD should not be a mechanism for teaching what should have been taught during the apprenticeship.

This article was sent to us by one of our supporters who saw it in the Christchurch Press on 30 July 2014 and sums up a lot of what we are dealing with.

"If you gather some youthful blokes in a flat and give them some beer, they will probably develop an enthusiasm for pointless projects. Building a tower of empty beer cans, floor to ceiling, may seem like an idea worth absorbing the total intellectual and physical resources of the group. As each can is added, the sense of achievement mounts until the final structure tops out in all its futile glory.

Bureaucracy is like a tower of beer cans. Rules are piled upon rules to construct a complex, creaking edifice of marvellous sophistication that seemed like a great project initially but on reflection, in the bright light of the morning, is really a bit useless."

Current PGDB Consultation

The Board is considering making the licensed class registration examinations part of proposed new qualifications that would be called New Zealand Certificates in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying (Level 4). This would mean that a trainee would be eligible to apply for registration as soon as he or she had been awarded their New Zealand Certificate.

At the moment, after someone has gained a National Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting, or Drainlaying, they must sit and pass the Board's licensed class registration examination before becoming eligible for registration.

The Board proposes to amend its registration and licensing Gazette notices to prescribe achieving the New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting or Drainlaying as an additional means of meeting the minimum standard for registration as a Licensed Plumber, Gasfitter or Drainlayer. The present

innocent.

Dear Editor

When are likely to see the Board's Annual Report?

Ed: Well it has to be tabled in Parliament and they have closed for the election so I wouldn't hold your breath to see it before late September.

It will probably get dumped on us about the same time as the fees and levies review and the review of the PGD Act 2006.

The Charities Act requires the Board to have its annual return submitted within 6 months so they will be cutting it fine.

Speaking of the Charities Act it looks like someone is in breach of the Act as the list of officers is out of date. The Charities Act requires the Board to submit any changes in Officers but Allan Bickers is still there as an officer of the charity. More incompetence by someone. You wonder how they can be so lax given the number of highly qualified staff they have in there.

Here's one you may not know. If people telephone you on behalf of a charity trying to get money from you they must give the charity number of the entity if requested to do so.

From the Media

This was spotted on Yahoo news:

An unlikely source of praise for Labour's small business policy.

The party has announced its intention to allow better access to government procurement, kick-start 'garage' enterprises, and

requirements for those enrolled in National Certificates would continue.

The proposed New Zealand Certificates, which INCORPORATE the registration examinations, have now been developed, subject to approval from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

To recognise the inclusion of the registration examinations within the New Zealand Certificates, the Board must amend the minimum standards for registration that are contained in the registration and licensing Gazette notices.

The Board are asking:

Do you agree with the Board's proposal to prescribe the New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting or Drainlaying as an additional means of meeting the minimum standard for registration as a licensed plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer, by way of Gazette notices made under section 30 of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act?

YES / NO

Please make any comments to explain why you do or do not agree with the proposal, or suggest alternatives you think the Board should consider.

The Federation's view so far.

Yes we agree with the concept and the theory behind the proposal in so far as having a National Certificate that does not equate to registration is the equivalent of waving a wet bus ticket around in the air. The Federation have concerns about the standard and methods of delivery of the training required to get trainees to the registration level.

Training supplied to the industry by The Skills Organisation is pitiful and is not providing consistency throughout the country. Trainees are ending up with huge gaps in the skills taught. The fact is that the "purchased" training equates to assessment only and that the training is effectively all in the workplace. Not every employer does everything and so there will undoubtedly be gaps in the knowledge of apprentices which effectively puts them and the consumers at risk.

The level four qualification and Registration is not the end of a trainees apprenticeship as although they are deemed qualified, they can't do anything unless under supervision. It is a situation of no supervisor - no legal authority to work.

There appears to be a situation where there is belief the appropriate stands of training will be supplied and met. The industry has been down this track before which lead to conflict between the ITO and the Board when standards were not met and it took Ministerial intervention to bring an uneasy peace between the organisations.

We also have concerns that trainees wanting to reach Certifying Status are being abandoned as we will have in place two separate systems for becoming qualified. One will be reliant on The Skills Organisation setting the standard of training to reach registration and the other is reliant on the Board setting the standard for the Certifying exam. There is again a huge gap in what is provided to the trainee.

streamline tax returns.

Kim Campbell of the Employers and Manufacturers Association says unlike Labour's employment policies, this one makes sense.

"These are ideas that maybe are not going to cost a lot of money and actually might make a difference. Simple stuff often works the best."

Mr Campbell says many small businesses are drowning in paperwork.

"It drives businesses nutty, dopey questions asked by people who appear to be mental paraplegics. This burden of administration falls heavily on businesses."

He says anything to streamline compliance is a very positive thing.

Welcome

The Federation welcomes all our new members who are seeking change in the industry.

We were pleased to see eleven people from the Gisborne area all joined in one week.

If you know of anyone who you think would benefit from being a member of the Federation then get them to visit our website

www.pgdf.co.nz or email wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz

So yes we agree with the concept but have reservations that the appropriate standards will be reached.

The Board invites public submissions on this current proposal. Submissions can be made using the submission form in the consultation document or by completing the online submission form. Submissions must be received by 5pm on 15 August 2014.

www.pgdb.co.nz/consultation/Consultation_Submission_Form.html

We encourage you to respond to the consultation and have your say. We are open to any further comment for our submission.

A Good Fine

A welder who illegally installed gas pipes and appliances at a home in Auckland was convicted and fined \$25,000 in the Auckland District Court. Judge Dawson also ordered he pay reparations of \$6,039 along with court costs and solicitors' fees. The work was described by a gas auditor as the most dangerous gas installation he has ever come across in 40 years.

Wayne Johnson, a welder by trade and director of Global Welding & Fabrication Limited was not authorised by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board to carry out gasfitting work at a home in Papatoetoe, Auckland.

The gasfitting work involved the extension of gas pipes from the house to the garage of the residence, which was attached to the natural gas supply via a meter.

Mr Johnson also installed gas appliances including a continuous flow water heater, free standing oven, kebab roaster, commercial hot plate, and completed connection of the gas appliances to the extended pipe work.

When the Board received the complaint, a licensed gasfitter was sent out to the property to inspect the installations for the purpose of a gas audit. Several faults were identified and the work was described as some of the most dangerous he had ever come across in his 40 years' experience in the gas industry. He had never found a more dangerous installation.

The auditor believed that due to the severity and number of gas leaks that were immediately adjacent to open flames, a fire or explosion was inevitable. The deficiencies in the manner the work was carried out were found to be unsafe and posed a danger to life. Numerous faults were found that could have led to gas leaks—causing fire or explosion. Other risks included potential for the generation of carbon monoxide.

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