

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) Questions Answered](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy

We had a look at the Board's policies and there doesn't appear to be a policy on CPD!

There is a policy on "making policy" where it states the Chief Executive must take appropriate measures to ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place.

There is a General Complaints Resolution Policy which doesn't accept general complaints.

There is even a Certifying Merit Award of Excellence Policy but alas there is no Continuing Professional Development Policy.

It is not even mentioned in the licensing policy but yet it is a major term and condition of licensing.

If you don't buy enough CPD points you can't license, if you are in

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Questions Answered



The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board's claims that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is supported by the majority of the industry, and they are probably right, but the scheme they have imposed on our industry is not. Industry money is being used to buy the support of training providers and is

being used to provide training that is being missed at apprenticeship level. This should be a concern for all of us in wider industry.

Practitioners are being punished financially to cover other people's incompetence in training. The talk from the powers that be is about new technology and changes to legislation and regulations but it is just talking the talk, and the Gas Certification system is a prime example.

Here was an issue every gasfitter should have known about before it came in on 1 July 2013, and the Federation believe that training around the changes to the Code, Regulations and the Certification system should have been mandatory. We even went as far as to suggest this to the PGDF, but nothing was done by them, apart from a few articles about it in the Board's Info Brief. The Federation organised three meetings for gasfitters in the wider Wellington area which had an average attendance of over 45 gasfitters – all done with no resourcing, proving to us that there was a great need for "upskilling" in this area. We believe firmly that this fits in to the "matters necessary to" category which we talk about a lot. This one issue alone shows the Board's CPD system is a failure in its present form.

Practitioners are paying the price for the Government and the Board to tick boxes and it has to stop. An estimated 222,000 hours is wasted each year in the name of CPD.

The Ombudsman is looking at a complaint made by the Federation at the moment but no matter what he decides there will continue to be problems if the scheme is not supported by the industry. Being held to ransom to "get points or you can't licence" isn't going to do anything for the industry. To be clear – the Federation is NOT against upskilling in its true form – which we believe is "learning something new". We believe practitioners do this often and willingly. "Buying points" by having to attend a Board approved training course, which you can repeat year in and year out is not "upskilling". It does not make you any more or less competent – but

dispute over CPD points you can't license, if a salesman who may have been selling fish and chips yesterday says you are incompetent then you can't license.

It appears having a policy on CPD would be too restrictive on the Board. For example they probably wouldn't be able to remove the Accreditation Fee that once applied at a rate of \$250.00 per course but is now paid for by practitioners.

The perception is that selective governance is being applied.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Conflicts of Interest

The Federation bought up the subject of conflicts of interest and we felt CPD was an area where there were huge conflicts of interest.

How can Board members vote or approve the removal of accreditation fees when other Boards they are members of stand to benefit or membership organisations that they are part of, benefit?

For example Site Safe didn't have to pay \$1,750.00 in re-accreditation fees. Master Plumbers didn't have to pay \$7,750.00 in re-accreditation fees - which is great for the organisations but bad for the industry as these two organisations alone saved a combined sum of \$9,500.00.

All training providers who charge practitioners for their

it does mean you get "points" and that magically, this makes you ok to work in the industry.

The Federation has often questioned the real costs of CPD and believe the Board have gone too far, so we asked some questions under the Official information Act. The questions and responses are as follows:

- **What is the cost to the applicant for CPD Course Accreditation?**

"There is no cost to the applicant"

- **What are the Boards Cost to Accredite a course?** *"The cost of accrediting a course is not accounted for separately to other costs and therefore that information is not held by the Board. Your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act 1982"*

- **How many new courses were accredited in the last financial year?**

"255 courses"

- **How many existing courses were re-accredited in the last financial year?**

"181 courses"

- **How many course providers applied for the re-accreditation of their courses last financial year?**

"43 course providers applied for re-accreditation. A number of course providers applied for re-accreditation of more than one course"

- **How much did course providers pay for accreditation and re-accreditation last financial year?**

"There is no cost to course providers for accreditation and re-accreditation of courses"

- **Please provide a list of accredited courses and the date their accreditation expires?**

"Please see the enclosed appendix of accredited courses. There are not course accreditation expiry dates, however course accreditation is periodically reviewed"

Most of these answers disgust the Federation. Why? Well, to start with the Board forces practitioners to buy CPD points and now we pay for training providers, (many of whom charge for courses) to have their courses accredited or reaccredited to the Board. When the scheme started there was a charge of around \$250.00 to training providers to register or have a course accredited - and now there is nothing for them to pay.

The Board did have a cost and they have included CPD in their so called sophisticated fees and levy model. They claim the costs associated with accredited or re-accrediting courses are not accounted for separately from other costs, so here we have a critical

services stood to save \$120,750.00 in accreditation fees that could have been charged. This would be a Bi-annual saving if reaccreditation was charged to them but it isn't - it's charged to practitioners.

One training organisation stands to save \$8,250.00 but it's not their fault, it is the fault of the Board's decision. Remember the training providers sell to a captive market that is forced to do the courses for no benefit and don't have a choice.

From the Media

< Jade Cooper, Newstalk ZB August 15, 2014, 6:18 am

Thousands of former police staff will be paid back for wages missed out on between 2004 and 2010. Close to \$3 million is owed to 3500 staff members whose pay was affected by changes to the Holidays Act when they left police.

Superintendent Richard Chambers says while some people will be hard to track down, they have the resources to make sure everyone gets their money.

ED:

Maybe when the Superintendent has finished that task he could look at the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and recover the millions of dollars taken from our industry and return it to practitioners.

"Term and Condition" of licensing, which must not impose undue cost on the industry and it is not accounted for.

255 new courses accredited at no cost to training providers, but at a cost, based on previous cost figures, of \$63,750.00 to the practitioners. That's right folks – you ARE PAYING twice – once through licence fees and once through your own time and money when you attend.

181 existing courses reaccredited at a cost of \$45,250.00 to practitioners, but yet again there is no cost to training providers to re-accredit.

The Board is using industry money to buy training providers' support for the CPD Scheme.

We haven't included the list of courses but they numbered 483 and the Board claimed there are no course accreditation expiry dates; however course accreditation is periodically reviewed. This contradicts what their own website states which is:

"Note: From the date of acceptance a course is issued accreditation for two years"

So who knows what is right? What we do know is that to re-accredit 483 courses there would be a cost of \$120,750.00 (based on their own accounting from prior years).

The Federation maintains the stance that matters to do with CPD should be "identified, necessary and affordable". We believe the Board stopped charging for accreditation due to the poor uptake of courses and training organisations pulling out.

483 courses may seem a lot, but in reality there are a huge number of double ups and to have 57.34% of the courses being OSH related is beyond belief. Don't forget we have the all important courses such as "Hearing conversations in the workplace" and "Working safely in the sun".

The CPD scheme as it stands, was rejected from the start and is still rejected. An alternative was supplied to the Board and the last Minister, and nothing ever happened and the forced compliance mentality continues. We are not mirroring our colleagues in related regulated trades such as electricians who have a prescribed course of training to follow, or licensed building practitioners who are seemingly able to read a trade magazine in the dunny and claim upskilling (if the adverts on TV are anything to go by).

This disaster is a direct result of the Government's and Board's attitude of "we have the power and you will do as we say". Well this year we do have the opportunity to vote for change for our industry as it doesn't look like we will get any under our current regime. There is a better way to model upskilling and we are happy to put forward our positive ideas – we just need to get some assurance that people will listen with an open mind.

Letters to the Editor

Oh that's right the Government made it all legal – we wonder why they didn't change the law to legalise what the police did. Seems like another double standard.

NZ Newswire August 19, 2014, 4:03 am

A government coalition partner is accusing it of "near perfect inactivity" over the last six years. ACT leader Jamie Whyte says it thrives on Prime Minister John Key's popularity and has done almost nothing to reform the economy

ED:

We would have to agree with this as what has any Minister of Building and Construction done for our industry over the last 6 years?

August Info Brief August 20,2014

The Board's licence checks throughout the Wellington region in early July have cleaned up another handful of illegal operators in the industry. The sixth of the planned enforcement projects carried out in 2014, this result highlights an area of concern for the reputation of the industry.

As with the previous checks conducted throughout the year, there was strong support towards the Board's initiative by



Dear Editor

CPD SHAM - "ineffectiveness of the scheme" was the term you used, it seems it only works

for the Board if you are honest with them, then they know who you are, by way of legal tradesmen having to be on the Board's books, being registered and licensed, yes and they even know where you live because they have all your details so you can be picked out of the hat - audited, hounded, victimised, taken to court on any trumped up bullshit and fined even after you've bent over backwards to do everything they want you to do.

It's not only ineffective; they are going after the wrong people, for years the trade ticked along everything going perfectly. If a plumber was prosecuted it was big news - now we have this idiotic regime, buying points and the stupid Board thinks we as plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers have to be "micro-managed" while the real wrong doers are left alone wreaking havoc, stuff is going on under their noses and it seems the more qualified you are the harder they try to get rid of you! The gold card scheme they brought in was just as dumb but that never gave them the sort of control they craved so they let that die quietly.

What about the "tradesmen" who the Board doesn't know about- the ones that have never been registered or licensed, with no qualifications, working for big companies below the radar? What about the home owners who do all their own plumbing and even drainlaying, no training, no consents. I have reported numerous times to the Board incidences of this type and heard of no follow up.....Duh! Is Homer Simpson in charge up there on the Terrace? If he isn't they need him badly, he'd do a far better job.

Dear Editor

I believe the bureaucratic culture of the organisations involved in our industry are undermining the effectiveness of existing tradesmen to continue their occupations, and preventing new tradesmen from seamlessly entering the workforce. KISS, Keep it Simple Stupid, is something that is rigorously denied in this day and age.

I see the whole system as being in need of an overhaul, removing current systems and reinstating older systems. People should go to tech for block course, where they are trained, then assessed. After block courses are completed to a required standard they should sit an exam that enables them to become a Plumber, Gasfitter or Drainlayer straight off the bat. You sit the licensing exam, and if you pass you are licensed, registered and ready to go.

You should then be able to go back to block course and be trained on the certifying aspects of the trades, and after passing you are eligible to sit the certifying exam. And that's it, done and dusted.

If the people writing authoritative instruction on how our tradesmen are to be qualified can realise that keeping it simple, comprehensive and making sure training is provided we will ensure the industry has competent tradesmen out there in the real world.

most sites visited.

However, there still seems to be a minority with lack of understanding of the value of the licence, and the associated training that keeps tradespeople up-to-date with industry changes.

Ed:

Does the minority referred to have a lack of understanding or is the reason there is so much enforcement because the Boards regulatory practices are rejected and causing individuals to operate illegally.

The Office of the Auditor General warned of this in their 2010 report.

Successful prosecutions against qualified tradepeople should be seen as the Boards failure as there must be a reason for the practitioners to be rejecting the regulation of the industry and the terms and conditions imposed.

The Board seems to have no idea on how to make a system work, so make it as simple as possible. It's not hard, especially when you think about the trainees rather than self importance.

We have tackled the ITO's in the past during my apprenticeship and the whole experience left me with a sour taste for the groups in authority.

Fees that have no real substance, like a disciplinary fee when you have never been disciplined. It's a whole bunch of nonsense, and needs to be addressed.

I could go on all day, and I applaud the Federation for doing as much as they can to push well made points forward and see some sort of positive action taken.

Mr Board member, take a pay cut, get your act together and help New Zealand prepare for the future and assist the guys already on the frontline of healthcare and sanitation, because that's our role.

Regards Russell Smith

ED:

Well done writers, your contributions are very much appreciated. You both have highlighted a number of very important points but we fear they may be falling on deaf ears as far as the Minister and Board goes.

There appears to be no conscience, no need to be respected, no need to operate legally and an attitude of "we will take as much time as we want to do what we want".

We are sick of waiting for change so perhaps it is time for us to do what the Board, MBie and the Minister do to us and ignore them. The industry needs Governance and that will only happen if practitioners rally together and put in place the systems and organisations to move us forward and defend our rights. More on this in upcoming editions.

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