

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Collateral Damage](#)
- [Letter to the Editor](#)
- [From the Media](#)

## IN OTHER NEWS

### Letter to the Editor

#### Dear Editor

Hey Wal, gee you guys do a great job and I wish I could do more to help.

Another contribution will be sent shortly.

Your correspondent last week is correct in his comment that we would be up the creek if you guys had not confronted the issues that we all knew were happening, but in typical style as individuals the Board just ignored us.

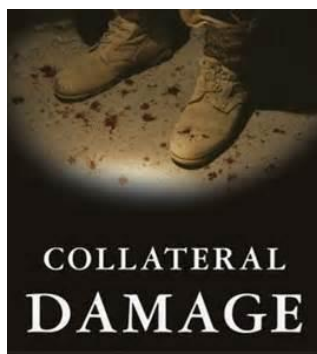
The ability of your Federation to confront issues and force a result from people who think that they have a job that does not require communication with the plebs who pay for their lifestyle is extremely important to me.

#### ED:

Thanks for your comments writer and your continued support.

It is a continual battle for the Federation as the Board and

## Collateral Damage



Is the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry collateral damage resulting from failed Government policy or is it just simply the manner in which their policy is implemented by their appointed Board? Is our industry getting fair treatment compared to other industries, or are we in the “too hard” basket?

If there is a shower of rain the farmers claim there are floods and get help and support from the Government, and then when the sun comes out they claim there is a drought and get more help, but what do we have, or get? The Industry has a 2006 Act which took four years to implement and has been in place for nearly five years and there are still issues. Our industry is still the **only** industry which pays 100% for its Government appointed Board, discipline and prosecutions costs and anything else they can chuck at us.

There is **no** equality in the funding or regulation imposed on the construction industries and the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying sections get hit the hardest as obviously we have the greatest impact on the health and safety of the general public.

We have the worst ever apprenticeship training scheme supplied by an organisation which just seems to just **absorb** money and supplies very little for it. Government allocated training money is wasted on administration and very little of their contribution or ours actually gets to the apprentices.

The Government decision to combine ITO's does NOT appear to have resulted in savings based on economies of scale but rather has resulted in a multi headed monster being formed where our significance as an industry has been lost. Mark our words this will have dire effects going forward on the quality of trainees and therefore tradespeople in the future.

We have a situation where the ITO expects all the training to be provided by Certifiers in the industry and yet the Board don't feel the Certifiers are qualified enough - so require them to “buy points” every year to prove their competence.

The industry is overcharged for what we are provided with - which is nothing. It's questionable if the Board and ITO are actually adding any value to the industry, and whether their functions couldn't be done by other organisations – for example should there be direct purchasing from polytechnics for training by employers? Effectively

Government seem to be dismissive.

They continually bring up the issue of “numbers” of supporters as if numbers matter to the way they operate, but we look at it from a perspective of what is legal.

If something is unlawful or illegal then it shouldn't matter how many people it affects whether it be one or thousands - it needs to be addressed.

The Board and Government seem to think there have to be great numbers for them to change what they implement but how would we get on as a country if we applied the same to speeding offences?

The Board and Government continually try to downplay the support the Federation has because if they believe there are only a “couple of malcontents” then it is easier for them to justify their decisions and claim to have the support of the silent majority.

It's time for the silent majority to make a stand for their own industry and to use their voices.

The Federation wants to get everyone in the industry together to work for a common goal.

The Board can't seem to get their head around our organisation – because we don't charge a membership

this would cut out the middle man – and save several million dollars on the way through. The Board could be absorbed in to MoBIE who already have a licensing administration function for electricians and builders. The saving of millions of dollars here is also an attractive option.

The gas certificate regime has now been absorbed into ESS and we understand has become as ineffective as a wet bus ticket. We believe that information obtained under an OIA request shows that no audits have been carried out since ESS took over this function. So as practitioners we are charged with protecting the health and safety of the public in our day to day work, the Board are meant to “police” this function and ESS also have a responsibility here. Of the three – who is the most effective at it in your opinion? Of course – the practitioners are, and yet they are also hit in the pocket to fund these other agencies and government departments through levies and fees and yes, TAXES!

If this government who prides itself on wanting to reduce regulation can't see that we are being hit in the pocket to prop up those who want to empire build on the backs of tradespeople then we have little avenue of redress. For goodness sake – let common sense prevail for once!

Just to help jog the Government's memory about the intent of the 2006 Act we dug out some comments from the report by the Commerce Committee on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Bill. Dated 13 October 2006

### **Review of Legislation**

*“We recommend requiring the administering department to review the operation of this legislation three years after it commences and report to the Minister, who will present the report to the House. We are aware that aspects of this legislation are contentious, and a review will allow monitoring and the consideration of further possible amendments”*

CONTENTIOUS is right and nothing has happened yet that has been made public. Perhaps this will be another fast ball on the industry. An absolute FAIL by government to keep to its own suggested timeline – nothing new there then!

### **Registration and Licensing**

*“The National Party appreciates that there has been improvements to the original bill but remains concerned about the compliance costs relating to the actual implementation of the whole system”*

Compliance costs have done nothing but increase and the industry is still paying for the implementation of the Act. A National Government that prides itself on reducing regulation and costs has done NOTHING to hold the Board accountable for compliance costs that they charge industry – they have stood idly by and watched the “overheads” increase at the Board offices and little improvement in policing figures for the additional costs.

*“We were concerned by the introduction of licensing requirements for tradespeople in the later years of their profession, who after*

fee, because we don't require you to give us every scrap of information about yourself to record on a data base, and because we operate basically by email and internet to keep costs down – they don't seem to give us the due respect for representing over 1100 practitioners!

We think they don't have to look much further than the evidence provided by feedback to consultations. Federation members have continuously made up around 60% plus of the respondents to such feedback.

In the end the only people we need to justify anything to is our members – let others ignore us at their peril!

#### From the Media

*A new consumer campaign by the Electrical Workers Registration Board (EWRB) has begun today, to raise awareness of the rules when getting electrical work done around the home.*

*Registrar of Electrical Worker Licensing at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment John Sickels says the EWRB has a duty under the Electricity Act to promote safety for all New Zealanders by ensuring the competence of electrical workers.*

*The online campaign, targeting homeowners, has four simple key*

*thirty or forty years of plying their trade will be required to pass competency tests. In the event that there are no outstanding or obvious complaints against these practitioners, we ask that the Board gives special consideration to how they deal with renewal of ongoing licenses in these cases”*

Nothing has happened here and it's even harder to stay in the industry. More people have left the industry than the Government and Board would want to admit, or have not licensed but are continuing to work in the black market.

#### Duration of Practising License

*“We recommend amending clause 93(2) to extend the maximum duration of a practicing licence from two to five years so that it is consistent with our recommended amendments concerning electrical workers in the Energy Safety Review Bill”*

Nothing done here based on a claim the Board can't afford to do it as there are minimal savings for them. Simply not good enough in our view!

#### Principles for prescribing registration and licensing matters

*“We recommend the inclusion of new clause 83A setting out principles to guide the Board in setting classes of registration and competency standards, as we are concerned that the bill as introduced gives the Board too much power in this respect. This is the same approach we took in our recommended amendments to the Energy Safety Review Bill.*

*The guiding principles are as follows:*

- *The prescribed matters must be necessary to protect the health and safety of members of the public or promote the prevention of damage to property:*
- *The prescribed matters may not unnecessarily restrict the registration of persons as plumbers, gasfitters, or drainlayers:*
- *The prescribed matters may not impose undue costs on plumbers, gasfitters, or drainlayers or on the public”*

This hasn't been addressed either and the Board legislate themselves power at every turn.

Hopefully this reminds the Government of a few of the issues that plague the industry that have never been addressed, and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

As an industry we are being done a serious dis-service by Government and the regulating authority. Sooner or later industry must be listened to – sensible suggestions to fix the problem have been made in abundance and we can only assume that arrogance, or job protection are causing those that can make the changes to feign deafness.

#### Letter to the Editor

**Hi Editor:** Just wanted to draw to your attention the upcoming

messages:

*1. There are rules when doing electrical work in your home or business*

*2. Make sure your electrical worker is licensed to do your job before completing the work*

*3. Ask electrical workers to certify completed work*

*4. To find a licensed electrical worker go to [www.ewrb.govt.nz](http://www.ewrb.govt.nz)*

*Mr Sickels says, "Many homeowners are not aware of these rules and may not realise that uncertified electrical work can cause serious harm, such as electrocution. Uncertified work may also affect a homeowner's insurance policy, as most house insurance policies do not cover damage to the home that is caused by poor workmanship."*

*"Our aim is that by the end of the campaign in late February 2015, as many homeowners as possible will be aware that safe electrical work is work that is completed by a licensed electrical worker and is certified", says John Sickels*

**Ed:**

We love their target of February 2015.

**Our Board has been taking \$250,000.00 as part of our fees for four years now for the "Ask for the Card" campaign and they haven't achieved what the EWRB has set**

Health and Safety Legislation that will take effect 1 April 2015. The Bill has not been passed yet the demands have started.

One of the building companies that my husband works for has requested that all subbies supply a Health and Safety Plan and Task Analysis for each job on site. They have been told if they don't supply this then no work next year.

While I have no real issue with making workplaces safer I can see this being a problem for many subbies. I rang Work Safe NZ and asked why there were no templates on their site for a whole Health and Safety Plan or guidance in the format of a plan. No real answer to that. How many guys know about that stuff?

The only alternative if you have no idea on how to go about this is to pay a company to do it for you at around \$1000.00. Just another money making scheme.

There are so many guys just getting by and when you have to pay so many costs i.e. license fees, CPD, etc., I fear this will tip some over the edge.

There are several hundred thousand contractors and if they all have to pay \$1000 to get this done, is there really going to be any benefit at the end of the day? The ACC figures don't differentiate between employees and subbies and every subbie I know is very careful as they don't want to go on ACC as they won't get enough to live on.

Have a great day and keep up the good fight

**Ed:**

Some very good points made writer. It seems that every time someone sneezes at the Beehive it hits the tradesperson in the pocket. Yes we are like you - we don't mind making the workplace safer but it has to be balanced against practicalities and costs to the consumer.

We seem to remember the Government wants to bring construction prices down to make homes more affordable but with all the extra regulations and administration they are dumping on the tradespeople the reduction can only come from our pockets.

It's hard enough now for most tradespeople without getting hit at every blink of an eye.

**From the Media**

*An Ebola diagnosis in New Zealand may not be a case of if, but when.*

*Health workers are meeting at Auckland University next week, to discuss how to treat patients who may have the disease. Head of general practice Felicity Goodyear-Smith says the virus is likely to reach us, sooner or later.*

*"Our primary care workforce need to know what to do if someone*

## themselves the target of doing in four months.

Perhaps they have more than a million dollars to spend on their campaign!

### Strategic Planning

The Board is currently undergoing strategic planning and invited the Federation to give a 25 minute presentation them on what the Federation's Vision was for the Board and what the Board was doing right and wrong.

Two Federation committee members attended and gave a joint presentation which the Board received.

Board members mostly listened attentively and asked some clarifying questions.

The Federation went in with the attitude of "you asked the questions so we'll give you the answers".

We didn't expect answers to questions or solutions so we used our allotted time to say what we thought.

Only time will tell if they listened.

*should walk in the door with a case of Ebola."*

*Professor Goodyear-Smith says people who are travelling back from east-Africa are at particular risk. She says the virus can be easily contained.*

*"You really only get it from contact with the bodily fluids from someone who is sick with the disease."*

*Professor Goodyear-Smith says the threat of Ebola is very real, but it isn't as scary as many people think. The meeting is taking place next Wednesday evening, at the university's medical school.*

### ED:

The Federation asks the practitioners to take note of the risks and take precautions to avoid infection while working with waste and sewage.

So here is some information it is **NECESSARY** for you to know:

- Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola
- objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus
- infected animals
- Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling bushmeat (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats. There is no evidence that mosquitos or other insects can transmit Ebola virus. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with and spread Ebola virus.

### How do I protect myself against Ebola?

- Wash hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids of any person, particularly someone who is sick.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids.
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Do not touch bats and nonhuman primates or their blood and fluids and do not touch or eat raw meat prepared from these animals.

Seek medical care immediately if you develop fever (temperature of 38.0°C or higher) and any of the other following symptoms: headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding. Limit your contact with other people until and when you go to the doctor. Do not travel anywhere else besides a healthcare facility.

**Give yourself some real CPD points for reading that information as it is NECESSARY.**

You are receiving this email as a member of PGDF or because you signed up online.

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