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IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

I have noticed a change in Master Plumbers with a new direction and emphasis since the arrival of their new CEO.

This is refreshing to see and perhaps they may be on their way to being a respected organisation again.

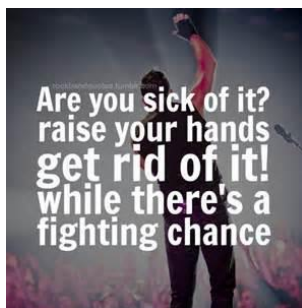
It's very good to see the Federation has been talking with them to get what is best for the industry and I hope they take it a step further and start to use their voice as well.

I feel the idea of forming a collective governance body is the only way to go for our industries future.

It allows us our independence but still puts across collective views.

It's a huge job and the sooner it starts the better. Go for it.

Sick of Bureaucracy!!



There comes a point in time when you get sick of excuses. When you see politicians appointed to positions where they should be doing good, walking away from their responsibilities and hanging the public out to dry. Well we are getting very sick and tired of it. It is time to up the pressure and play by our rules and not put up with any more

incompetence from the Government and those they appoint.

This week we received a letter from the Regulations Review Committee (RRC). The Regulations Review Committee examines all regulations, investigates complaints about regulations (sometimes), and performs other functions so that regulations are subject to effective parliamentary scrutiny and control (sometimes).

This was the content of the letter:

Complaints regarding three notices made by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board about continuing professional development

In February 2014 the previous Regulations Review Committee informed you it was considering this complaint and that it intended to report its findings to the house. The committee did not however report this matter.

The business of a previous committee is not binding on this committee and it has chosen not to readopt this complaint as an item of business. In making this decision the committee reviewed the work of the previous committee and is satisfied that the complaint has been given due consideration.

This is how we translate their letter - the last committee did nothing and because they did nothing they didn't have anything to report.

The new committee doesn't take responsibility for anything the previous committee did or said. They have looked at it and it's too hard for them to deal with.

This is the third time the RRC committee has put their credibility on the line. The first two times they were shown to be ineffective and it looks like they are doing it again. Remember the first time around three members of the National Party on the RRC recommended the disallowance of regulations and then walked into the House and voted against their own recommendations!!

Dear Editor

You have my vote for a combined governance group.

There is power in numbers and the Federation and Master Plumbers have those numbers so to combine them makes sense to me.

As a Master Plumbers member I say make the approach to the CEO.

Keep up the good work.

Ed:

Thanks for your feedback guys.

This is something that needs to be done and we know there will be some resistance so now it's a matter of getting Master Plumbers and anyone else that wants to get involved to agree to the establishment and set some time lines and initial projects.

Dear Editor

We seem to be on a road to nowhere with the current system so why not stop wasting time and tell them all to piss off and start again.

Ed:

A great thought writer but the problem is to date the regulations and legislation has been written to meet the needs of other not the industry and would all need to be changed which takes years.

Look at the review of the Act, it's theoretically been underway for nearly two years now and we have heard nothing.

We haven't had a voice to stick up for the industry and that's

The second time the committee didn't accept what was submitted by Federation members and only took action when the Ombudsman confirmed what the Federation was saying was correct. Then there was a big scramble to retrospectively put in place legislation to cover up the poor regulations and legislation which had got past the RRC. Now we have a situation where they are using exclusion to shelve another complaint.

It appears the content of regulations doesn't matter and it's all about the political aspiration – screw the public and their rights! The RRC should be there to protect the rights of New Zealanders and we believe they have shown they are just a joke.

We thought Dr Smith may have made a difference but it would seem his first six months in the job have been more of the same for our industry. Just more exclusion, poor communication, lack of positive action, lack of accountability and lack of listening.

When will the industry be taken into consideration? The facts and figures speak for themselves that we are on a downhill slide – and it's through no fault of the industry itself, but rather the politicians, their regulators and administrators.

From the Plumbers Forum

We picked up on this on the Plumbers Forum last week

Hi Guys

Watching the trial with Mitre 10 in Upper Hutt very closely and it seems too been working quite well. If it spreads to other branches we need to support it there as well. It will only take a dozen or so pissed of plumbers in each town/city to move their accounts and the plumbing merchants arses should start to pucker up and realise that we have come to the end of our tether and had enough of them selling to the public.

You could even be proactive and ask at your local store if they know of the trial and are interested. It's worth a shot.

This got us thinking about the extent of the problem. We have already reported to you that about 10 people per day were being turned away from Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt. We thought we would give you a very conservative estimate based on only one non registered person being turned away from each store each day. We have based the figures on two big box stores and three plumbing suppliers which equate to 324 stores in total.

Based on 324 stores, a 6 day week and one non registered person a day wanting to buy plumbing, gas or drainlaying fittings to undertake work illegally, we are in the area of 1,944 people per week. That's 101,088 jobs per year - all work that should be done by the industry. To us that is a huge problem that is not being addressed by anyone with the exception of the Federation and Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt.

It would be wishful thinking that only one person per day per store was doing their own plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying - and

why we have suggested a combined governance group. We need that voice.

From the Media

Rebuild employers breaching laws: MBIE

NZ Newswire November 5

Labour inspectors say they're disappointed how many staff working on the Christchurch rebuild are not being treated fairly by their bosses.

Sixteen labour hire and construction companies have been found to have breached employment laws following audits by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Labour Inspectorate.

Inspectors audited 40 Canterbury companies in the last six months and of the 23 audits now complete, 16 have breached employment laws.

Most of the breaches related to incomplete employment agreements, unlawful deductions from wages and insufficient records, Labour Inspectorate southern region manager Steve Watson says.

Nine improvement notices have been issued along with six enforceable undertakings, while one case has been referred to the Employment Relations Authority.

"The level of non-compliance is disappointing and we have identified a number of common issues that are cause for concern," Mr Watson said.

He said the audits showed there was a need for more monitoring, but that it's not just a job for regulators.

"Those commissioning work and

remember there are numerous other stores selling to the public as well.

Where is the Government help in this area – perhaps they are too busy issuing passports to convicted murders, supplying prisoners with study options to operate their businesses from within jail walls to fund escapes or looking for new flags?

The Building Boom

Also from the Plumbers Forum we picked up on this as a response to the article in last week's Fellow Practitioner about the building boom:

"Unfortunately when they talk about building boom that don't let Joe public know about the regional statistics and that Christchurch (which will start to slow down towards the end of 2016) and Auckland are the 2 areas that are driving this areas like Hamilton and Tauranga are starting to feel the spill over affect of this but the satellite regions as Hawke's bay etc are in some of the worst slumps in building is 30+ years my question is what will happen with all the tradesmen when Christchurch starts to wind up??"

"Because so many workers have been imported for Chch, when that work dies down, we will see other regions offering less pay as they will get the "cheap imports" for less. Either that or they will all apply for residency and go on the dole"

Ed:

Yes it's very interesting the way the Government play on numbers and what they claim. We see last week that business confidence in the Wellington region is down 20% on the June survey so it would seem there are pockets of development and some real low areas.

The writers pose very interesting points about what happens to all the tradespeople that are being brought into the country to cover for the lack of tradespeople being trained in New Zealand. It would be very interesting to see how many people are coming into regulated industries and what licensing is being done. We didn't see any mention of it in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Annual Report

It's not all Gloom and Doom



The Federation knows it hits you with a lot of the negative issues but they are nothing that can't be fixed. The issues are in the hands of the Government and the people they appoint so it's a matter of holding them to account and getting the job done. If we sit back nothing gets done.

The situation in our industry and the conflicts are caused by the Government as we have no say in what happens, so the buck stops with them. If they can't hold the Board that they appoint to account then that is their issue – why should we as an industry have to pay for their incompetence?

head contractors must take responsibility for monitoring compliance with labour and immigration requirements right to the work site," he said.

"And this is not just about checking wages, records and visas. We know that if employers are not treating their workers fairly, they are also less likely to be properly managing their health and safety obligations.

"Everyone has a part to play to ensure a safe and fair rebuild."

How far do we go?

It appears we get fobbed off by the Government and Board at every turn so do we need to up our protest action as an industry?

We told them we would protest when Price Charles was here and we did.

We told them there would be protest action at licensing time and there was.

We believe if there is continued ignorance of industry issues then protest action should be taken at every chance.

Perhaps protest action every time there is a visiting dignitary is called for. Our track record has proven **WE WILL DO IT** if necessary.

There are a number of things the Government and Board could do such as negotiate, compromise and listen - but alas they choose to be confrontational and operate in a dictatorship.

We often wonder what would have happened if four years ago the Government had voted to disallow the regulations as recommended by the Regulations Review Committee (RRC) and had forced the Board to correct the issues instead of attempting a cover up.

Obviously the lack of action by the Government led to the Ombudsman's decision with regard to fees and levies where the Government again had to cover for the Board and the entire time there has been the issue of continuing professional development, which in our eyes is still unlawful, and an issue the RRC has turned its back on.

It seems to us that every time the industry has an issue the Board and Government simply dictate one of their solutions which in the past have been failures and have made the situation worse. Do they not realise the industry is not stupid and sees them for what they are - incompetent bureaucrats?

The issues are nothing that can't be fixed through adherence to the legislation and negotiation with the industry. The choice is the Board's and the Government's - they can either negotiate and compromise or continue to fight with the industry.

When they lose the support of the entire industry what will they do? Forming a productive industry is always only a meeting away but the pride and arrogance of some people prevent that from happening. We are ready for that meeting anytime, anywhere.

The year is rapidly drawing to an end and over the holiday period we need to consider our options:

- Do we continue as we are now in the hope someone takes action?
- Do we fundraise and fight the fight in the courts?
- Do we turn our backs on the regulation of the industry?
- Or do we stop fighting and simply put up our prices to compensate for the manner in which we are regulated?

One of these things needs to happen and which one is dependent on the Governments actions. Simple solutions to simple problems.

We publically issue this invitation to Master Plumbers, The PGDB, MoBIE and the Minister – let's get around the table and get some of these issues sorted – let's work together sensibly and make some headway. Let's see some accountability around review of the Act, some traction of reducing our fees in light of the surplus the PGDB has, some sensible suggestions around upskilling and competency – let's move forward, let's use common sense, and let's reduce the costs of compliance. We're ready to meet in a forum – hell we'll even bring a cut lunch to reduce costs – and we can even provide the venue if the suit wearers are happy to make a trip out to the Hutt!