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IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

I congratulate Colleen Upton on her appointment to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board in March next Year.

I am sure she will do her best for the industry but how effective do you think one Federation Member will be against four or five Master Plumbers Members?

Ed:

You are right when you say Colleen will do her best for the industry. The Federation has full confidence in her and her ability to help influence the change needed by the industry.

She has a wealth of knowledge and is not shy about stepping up to say her piece.

The Federation will do everything it can to support her but realise the constraints the appointment will have on her commitment to the Federation, but at the end of the day it is a commitment to beliefs and what is right not organisations.

A False Sense of Security

Is the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry at risk of falling in to a false sense of security – we believe it is. It seems to be we all kick up at licensing time and when the Board and Government try to do the dirty on us, but the rest of the time it seems to go quiet and people just get on with their work and try to earn a living in a very tight economic environment.

We believe the industry can't afford to sit and feel secure because all we will get is more of the same - basically what we have had for the last decade – increased regulatory costs, decline in training standards, unlawful regulations imposed on us and terms and conditions of licensing that are questionable!!

What we need from the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and Government is dialogue and open and transparent action, not exclusion and silence.

Licensing



With five months remaining the number of authorisations issued for the 2014/15 licensing year has increased 7% in comparison to the same period for the previous year. If this trend continues the estimated total number of authorisations that will be issued by the year end is 15,200.

down on the total figures from the year before.

Projections are fine as long as they are accurate, and for planning purposes. They shouldn't be used as a measure of performance to try and reassure the community and stakeholders that the Board are performing to an appropriate standard.

The Board and Government's actions are what caused the drop in numbers and now they are gloating about increasing them to a number below what they were two years ago! Go figure!

You have probably seen this a couple of times now, with the latest being in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Quarterly Advisor which is designed to keep key Government and industry stakeholders updated on the impact that the Board's functions have within the community.

There seems to be some facts omitted from this piece of propaganda, and that is that the Board's PROJECTED figures are estimated to be 861 authorisations up on last year BUT ARE STILL 343

If Colleen is up against a stacked deck she can always walk away and we would think none the less of her for taking such action.

Dear Editor

I see a member of government Gerry Brownlee was found guilty yesterday by the Civil Aviation Authority for breaching security last year when he couldn't be bothered adhering to the rules like the rest of us.

It wasn't an accident, it wasn't a mistake but a blatant breach of the law and all he gets is a \$2,000 fine.

How does the security of the other passengers on the flight compare to not putting a strap on a hot water cylinder where that individual paid in the vicinity of \$14,000 and had his name put on the Board's website for all to see for the next three years.

Ed:

Yes it certainly reeks of double standards doesn't it? We see also Gerry Brownlee took a leaf out of John Keys book and joked about the events with the media.

It just goes to show the title of "honourable" means very little to this government - they can't even lead by example. They seem to live by double standards.

You could ask if the other politicians paid for the investigation or to prosecute Mr Brownlee and the answer is no it came out of our taxes – another double standard.


And will Mr Brownlee's name be plastered over the government's websites as an offender – no it will just fade away as an event in his political career.


Supervision


Supervision policies

This policy was approved by the Board on 9 December 2014 and came into force on 10 December 2014. The purpose of these policies is to set out the Board's expectations of supervisors and supervisees who are engaged in supervision arrangements, to ensure that supervision is sufficient and is being carried out in accordance with the purposes of the Act.

The Board applies these policies to all supervision arrangements that are, or should be, authorised by the Act.

 [View the policy on supervision for sanitary plumbing](#)

 [View the policy on supervision for drainlaying](#)

 [View the policy on supervision for gasfitting](#)

This policy was approved by the Board on 11 November 2013 and came into force on 12 December 2013.

The Board applies this policy when considering whether to issue an overseas qualified practitioner with a provisional licence to carry out restricted sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying in NZ

Total confusion on the website. The above is a screen shot from the Board's website.

It states the policy was approved by the Board on 9 December 2014 and came into force on 10 December 2014 – unfortunately we haven't reached those dates yet.

It then goes on to state the policy was approved by the Board on 11 November 2013 and came into force on 12 December 2013.

If the Board can't even get the simple preamble to a policy right how much confidence can we have that the content will be right. It also begs the question about how much time and energy they put into these things and how much the Secretariat are deciding for themselves.

This is from the Boards September 2014 minutes:

10. Supervision Resolved:

That the Board:

1. Receives this report;

2. Notes that the supervision policy has been reviewed and has resulted in the proposal of three supervision policies to replace the current policy, one each for sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying;

3. Notes that care has been taken to ensure that the policies do not impose or appear to impose any mandatory requirements on supervision arrangements that are over and above those set in law;

4. Agrees to revoke the supervision policy it approved on 10 December 2013;

5. Approves the **attached** policy on supervision for sanitary plumbing to come into effect on 10 September 2014;

6. Approves the **attached** policy on supervision for gasfitting to come into effect on 10 September 2014;

From the Media

New Zealand seeks to snap up WA workers

**NZ Newswire
November 15, 2014,
7:13 am**

New Zealand wants to lure thousands of West Australians across the Tasman to fill a nationwide skills shortage.

A delegation of 30 government officials and major employers will hold walk-in interviews and potentially make thousands of on-the-spot offers to suitable candidates at a two-day jobs expo in Perth on November 22 and 23.

They're tasked with finding people to fill 2000 immediate vacancies and persuading thousands more to emigrate with the promise of better job prospects in a booming economy, a lower cost of living and shorter commutes to work.

Skilled workers in almost every sector of the economy, including FIFO workers facing uncertain job prospects in the slowing Australian resources sector, are urged to consider relocating temporarily or permanently to New Zealand.

7. Approves the *attached* policy on supervision for drainlaying to come into effect on 10 September 2014.

You will note the Board have now gone from one policy to three. You would have thought we would have been told about the changes but all that appeared in the Info Brief was a set of questions and if you couldn't answer them then it directed you to the Supervision policy.

You will see at number 3 that care has been taken to ensure that the policies do not impose or appear to impose any mandatory requirements on supervision arrangements that are over and above those set in law. We are presuming that this is because the Office of the Auditor General stated in its "Glowing" follow up report:

We are concerned that the Supervision Policy still has many of the same problems we reported on in 2010. These problems relate to how the policy applies to people working under supervision under an exemption. Additionally, it sets out some of the Board's expectations as requirements, which implies that they are mandatory. The Board tell us that previous Board Members had not agreed with our concerns in 2010. The current Board are not as certain. We have passed on our detailed concerns to the Board, and it is reconsidering its position.

Four years down the track and there are still the same problems and the Board blames the previous Board members. What happened to the legal advice from the Board's extensive legal team? Have any people been disciplined for supervision issues based on the Board's Policy and do they have any right of recourse? There are still questions to be answered. And what does "appear to impose mean" – does it mean it can impose on us as long as it doesn't appear to?

We haven't had the opportunity to see what the differences are in the three policies but will report back to you once we translate the contents.

Regulatory Slavery?

"Modern slavery is any situation where one person deliberately takes away another person's liberty for some sort of profit or gain"

New Zealand has a low level of modern slavery but people are still being exploited and changes need to be made, a global survey has found.

So can a government be involved in activities that take away liberties or exploit people – well yes they can and we believe our industry is being exploited by the Government to meet their needs. Plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are an essential part of the country's infrastructure but are we dealt with in a fair and equitable manner? Imagine the issues if we were to strike or if we weren't regulated or if our numbers reduced to such an extent that we couldn't provide the required service to the public and all those things are possible and closer than people wish to believe.

"With unemployment falling and economic growth picking up, we need as many skilled workers as we can find, particularly in construction, engineering, healthcare, the tech sector and trades," said Nigel Bickle, of New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Mr Bickle said Kiwi expats were also being asked to consider returning home.

Major employers aiming to recruit WA workers include New Zealand's largest engineering firm, BECA, the nation's largest employer, Fletcher Building, and its biggest distributor of electricity and gas, Vector.

Most Australian permanent residents can live and work in New Zealand without a visa.

New Zealand is estimated to have 600 people in modern slavery, the fourth lowest prevalence of 167 countries in the Global Slavery Index but perhaps we are leading the world in the exploitation of a class of workers. These are obviously done legally, in the eyes of the government, and if it's not done legally they just retrospectively change the laws to make the actions legal with very little regard to the tradespeople and their families that their actions affect.

Have you ever heard of an employment premium – this is where a person pays money in order to secure employment. It's an offence under section 12A of the Wages Protection Act 1983.

Paying money in order to secure employment constitutes an employment premium. Now we know we don't fit into this legal category but look at the similarities with our regulation. We pay fees and levies and meet terms and conditions of licensing so we can go to work on 1 April every year purely because we are plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers. There is no real benefit to us but there is to the government and the Board who can sit back and say they are protecting the public.

So because of our skills and training we are being exploited by the Board and Government. Our right to legally work is taken away from us if we don't meet the Board's regulatory requirements - our right to work in our chosen profession in which we have worked hard to get qualified in is removed by bureaucracy.

It seems it's all about what's good for the government not us. It appears to be compliance gone wild.

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