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IN OTHER NEWS

Remember who pays?

The Government is yet to tell the industry what the benefit of being in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry is.

We can see the benefit of the industry being regulated for the protection of the health and safety of the public and their property, but what's in it for the tradespeople working in the industry?

As it stands we as workers and business owners, pay for the protection of the public.

We pay **100%** for the Board to regulate the industry. We pay **100%** for the discipline function and we pay **100%** for prosecuting of non registered or authorised people.

The public **don't pay one cent** for their own protection and when the industry tries to charge them we get

From the Editor



I generally enjoy Christmas but after the battles of the last couple of years, the Christmas lights didn't give me the same festive buzz. I found these Christmas lights were reminding me of politicians - they all hang together, half the buggers don't work, and the ones that do aren't that bright.

It would have been nice to start off 2015 feeling bright eyed and bushy tailed, but the reality is we start work looking at the same issues that were plaguing the industry in 2014.

As time goes by, those in the positions regulating the industry are creating a division between the regulator and the industry which is becoming ever increasing, and the question is how close to a point of no return are we? We say very close!

Stuck in Neutral



The Office of the Auditor General reported a huge number of issues that were wrong with the operation of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board in 2010. The report showed the Board were below the minimum standard and made a large number of recommendations.

In 2014 the Auditor General did a follow up report where they stated that the Board had addressed most of the

recommendations made in 2010.

What is very frustrating for the Federation is that we have paid for the Board to get to what can only be termed as a minimum standard. A century of regulation and we have only just reached a minimum standard. What a waste of time and money. It's as if they are stuck in neutral and are boldly going NOWHERE.

The Auditor-General stated in both reports :

told we are too expensive and the consumer goes to the black market. We then have to pay to prosecute those in the black market.

It's just a vicious circle where we, the plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers, are the victims.

This scenario needs to change and the responsibility lies directly with the Minister of Building and Housing, Dr Nick Smith.

The Board's Info Brief

The Board make a lot of claims about their communication with the industry, but did you know that 4 out of 10 tradespeople state they don't read the Board's Info Brief.

That equates to 40% of the industry that is showing a disinterest in what the Board has to say.

That certainly doesn't surprise us, as it is like cold war propaganda with a lot of rhetoric and not much clear fact.

We presume the figures also preclude the people in the industry who do not have computers.

We need you to stand up.

The Federation brings issues to light and fights the fight from Wellington out of convenience.

Sure the issues seem to happen at the seat of power in Wellington,

"In any regulatory context, it is too hard to achieve high levels of compliance through force or coercion – effective systems rely on people choosing to participate and follow the rules"

We don't mind following rules and regulations as long as they are fair and equitable and currently they are NOT. We are paying millions of dollars every year for an organisation that has only just reached the minimum standard acceptable by the Auditor General. Bare in mind that this same organisation has some VERY highly paid staff on its books and more lawyers than some law firms employ.

The follow-up report stated:

"Relations with the Federation are still difficult. Two founding members of the Federation have been right in two representations that they made on aspects of the Board's operations, and the Board could have listened better..."

If plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers can interpret the legislation and bring the problems to the attention of the Government then why can't the Board, the CEO and the Board's highly paid, supposedly highly qualified legal section that collectively are benefitting from hundreds of thousands of dollars of OUR money. Hell we pointed this stuff out to them for free and still they cocked it up.

The Federation doesn't believe the relationship is difficult as described by the Office of the Auditor General. We believe it is non-existent. What do they expect when it was the Board that have acted in bad faith towards the industry? They have not taken reasonable care - and don't forget it was the Registrar Mr Max Pederson who broke off regular meetings with the Federation citing that the meetings weren't constructive when the Federation wouldn't bow and scrape to the Board's wishes.

It's a bit like the "consultation and meetings" the Board has with industry stakeholders. Sure they meet with us, they sit around the table, they nod and smile, and bar two or three Board member's they don't appear to give a rats arse what we are saying, and certainly there is no evidence that they have listened to any of our suggestions – but just doing this allows them to tick the big box with the Minister and say they have met "industry stakeholders".

We wonder how our other colleagues are finding these "meetings" – are they being listened to any more than the Federation? We suspect not – and if this is the case we have to ask ourselves why we would continue to give up our time to attend them? Simply so that the Board can't say WE are the one's refusing to engage.

It seems the Board and Registrar was so accustomed to getting away with whatever they wanted that the unthinkable occurred when the Federation started to oppose them. It appears they wanted, and still want, the industry to make sacrifices and support them. The Federation hopes that this year the rest of the industry, including Master Plumbers, start to use their voices and stand up to the Board.

but it all affects the entire country.

Federation members in the Wellington region have stepped up to help those in other areas get their points across.

This has resulted in the Board and Government alleging that the Federation is only a couple of plumbers and a few others.

We need people in every area to stand up and be counted. Get in the ear of your local Member of Parliament, tell your local news paper, and tell the TV stations and anyone else that will listen.

The Federation wants to show national support and continue the focus on giving everyone a fair go to ensure we are all better off.

We need your ideas and information.

If you want us to come to your area for a meeting just let us know.

Our Environment

You probably haven't notice but Dr Smith the Minister of Building and Housing is also the Minister of the Environment.

We watch with interest his media releases, but since July last year there has been very little about our industry only appointments and bureaucratic bullshit.

We wonder if the Minister has ever stopped to think where our environment would

The Board needs to realise that sacrifice is free will and when you're going nowhere, anywhere's a better place to be.

Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour Policy



Just when you thought the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board couldn't exclude people and their views anymore, they come up with another policy to use against the industry.

The Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour Policy was approved by the Board on 2 December 2014 and took effect on 3 December 2014.

When you read the policy you can see why it wasn't announced with the normal fanfare because the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board want you to "SHUT THE HELL UP," as talking about their failures just helps divulge the truth.

We know of a number of people who are not satisfied with decisions and actions of the Board, Registrar and Secretariat, and with good reason because:

- Is it reasonable for an investigator to withhold evidence?
- Is it reasonable for a Board contracted lawyer to record statements that are false or misleading?
- Is it reasonable for the Board not to pursue the real offender when a person is found innocent of an offence?
- Is it reasonable for the Board to continue to unlawfully take money from the industry knowing it to be unlawful?
- Is it reasonable for people with years of experience and qualifications in the industry to be declined NZ qualifications when some members of the Institute of Professional Engineers of NZ (IPENZ) have been granted Craftsman qualification having never done an apprenticeship or sat relevant exams?
- Is it reasonable to be found guilty of an offence when the issue has already been settled in a tribunal?
- Are the fines and costs incurred in the discipline process reasonable?
- Is it reasonable for a registered charity to tax an industry?
- Is the CPD scheme reasonable?

be if we didn't have plumbers gasfitters and drainlayers.

We're talking about carbon emissions, sewage and its treatment, water usage and the endless list of other issues our industry deals with.

Perhaps the Minister should refocus and look at the good our industry does – look at the hard work we do and what we get right not just the less that 1% of work done that goes wrong or that is done by unlicensed people.

Imagine if the money we waste on the Board telling the Minister how bad the industry is was spent on development of methods and technology that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers could implement to make the environment better?

Skills News

We are waiting on some facts and figures from SKILLS so that we can let you know where the million dollars plus, that was left from the old ITO and given to SKILLS to "look after" until industry came up with some projects to utilise these funds.

Now it may take some time to get this as, somewhat surprisingly, it appears that SKILLS themselves don't know exactly how much money they have.

They've somewhat confusingly approved then unapproved some expenditure as they over approved in excess

- Is it reasonable for the above issues and others to occur and no one to be held accountable?

We believe the Board don't know the meaning of "reasonable" and have implemented this policy due to their failure to get along with a lot of the industry. This is how the Board have defined unreasonable behaviour and a lot is a mirror image of what they do to the industry:

Unreasonable behaviour

5.1 Unreasonable behaviour is any behaviour that raises substantial health and safety concerns, resourcing issues, or equity issues for the Board and/or Board staff.

5.2 Behaviour can be unreasonable in any of the following ways:

a. unreasonable persistence, including:

i. persisting with an issue when it has been dealt with to finality

ii. refusing to accept final decisions about the issue

iii. sending excessive amounts of correspondence about the issue

b. unreasonable demands, including:

i. insisting on outcomes that are unattainable

ii. 'moving the goal posts'

iii. demanding that issues be dealt with in a particular kind of way

c. unreasonable lack of cooperation, including

i. providing disorganised, excessive or irrelevant information

ii. being unwilling to consider other valid viewpoints

iii. refusing to define the issues when they are able to do so

d. unreasonable arguments, including

i. seeing cause and effect arguments where there are none

ii. conspiracy theories unsupported by evidence

iii. irrational interpretations of facts or laws and refusing to accept other, more reasonable interpretations

iv. making vexatious complaints

v. unrealistically denying any responsibility for behaviour or actions

e. unacceptable behaviour, including anger, aggression, threats, insults, personal attacks, lying, misleading, or any violent or threatening behaviour.

of the funds available.

Now a multimillion dollar organisation surely should have someone that can add – you'd think so wouldn't you?

On a serious note, these funds belong to industry and we are very supportive of them being used for the betterment of industry – what we are concerned about is the yes, no, yes, no way the whole thing is being dealt with.

Watch this space...

5.3 Unreasonable behaviour includes things said about the Board or Board staff in written and/or electronic communications to other parties, the internet and social media.

It appears the industry yet again pays for the actions of the Board. We have gone 100 years without needing glass security doors restricting access to the Board, and without policies to restrict the actions of the industry. The Board should be looking at themselves to see how they are contributing to the behaviour and actions of the industry.

It seems the people who we should be able to trust, BUT DON'T, are the ones making the decisions about what is reasonable or unreasonable. So what if the unreasonable person or behaviour standard isn't reasonable? What do we do then? Past behaviour would indicate decisions will always will in the Board's favour.

Until we can trust the Board, the Registrar and the Secretariat there will always be unfinished business.

What are your thoughts on this Policy? We'd love to get your feedback. Did you even know it existed?

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