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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

This new 'policy' is absolutely unbelievable!

If ever a document said we want a security blanket to avoid dealing with any uncomfortable issues, and the ability to walk away from complaints, this is it.

Basically they can pull this out the bag when 'they' no longer want to deal with an issue; it's their new 'trump card'. I truly despise this organisation!

Regards MAT BOWMAN

PS: Out of interest, my wife with a law degree, has pointed out the following - What is their measurement of 'unreasonable'? What is 'persistent'? What is the benchmark?

ED: As with most things the Board does what is unreasonable, persistent and what is the benchmark - will be whatever they can get away with imposing on the tradespeople to the

Registration and Licensing



Remember when the Board made the claim that authorisations were up by 7% in comparison to the same period for the previous year? This intrigued us so we looked at the public register and noted the following with regard to Certifying and

Licensed Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers from 31 March 2014 until 29 December 2015:

Registered Qualifications

Certifying Drainlayers from 6993 to 7022 a difference of 29 being a 0.41% increase in registrations

Licensed Drainlayers from 6172 to 6249 a difference of 77 being a 1.23% increase in registrations. (Note: The number of registered licensed drainlayers figure as shown is believed to be incorrect but this is what the register states)

Certifying Plumber from 6338 to 6461 a difference of 123 being a 1.9% increase in registrations

Licensed Plumber from 4348 to 4557 a difference of 209 being a 4.58% increase in registrations

Certifying Gasfitter from 2420 to 2491 a difference of 71 being a 2.85% increase in registrations

Licensed Gasfitter from 2532 to 2630 a difference of 98 being a 3.72% increase in registrations

Overall there was an increase in registrations of 607 (2.11%). You see the figures – you be the judge – lies, lies and damn statistics!!

Authorisations (your annual licence/authority to work)

Certifying Drainlayers from 2857 to 2837 a difference of -20 being a 0.70% decrease in authorisations

Licensed Drainlayers from 169 to 215 a difference of 46 being a 21.39% increase in authorisations

Certifying Plumber from 3139 to 3203 a difference of 64 being a 1.99% increase in authorisations

Board's advantage.

The Paul Gee case and others, the historical complaints and the unlawful taking of money from the industry should be a warning to the industry at the lengths the Board and Registrar will go to win.

Dear Editor

"Boldly Going Nowhere"

How can a Government Appointed Board get away with not achieving anything and taking 100 years to reach a minimum standard? Why isn't there some form of performance criteria which forces them to achieve?

If the Board was a business that had to perform to get their funding they wouldn't have a cent.

Ed: There is a so called performance criteria and it is the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

"The purposes of this Act are—

(a) to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring the competency of persons engaged in the provision of sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying services; and

(b) to regulate persons who carry out sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying"

Put simply this is what the Board must do but what is missing is the performance measures. Is success measured by the number of deaths caused by plumber's gasfitters and

Licensed Plumber from 1534 to 1576 a difference of 42 being a 2.66% increase in authorisations

Certifying Gasfitter from 1341 to 1377 a difference of 36 being a 2.61% increase in authorisations

Licensed Gasfitter from 634 to 655 a difference of 21 being a 3.2% increase in authorisations.

Overall there was an increase in Authorisations of 189 (1.95%).

So what does this mean? The difference between the increase in registrations and the increase in authorisations is 418 registrations more than authorisations.

This means either people are not seeking authorisations on qualifying or we have lost another 418 experienced people from the industry. We simply don't see where the Board get their figures from.

Where is the Government?



We seem to be letting people who do so little for us control so much of our lives, and if we don't stand up for ourselves it will only get worse – something that the last decade has proven.

In the halls of the Beehive, if you mention the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry, everyone from MP's to professional administrator's runs for cover. None of them have the guts to step up and make change for the industry. They don't want to get involved in case they uncover more devious actions by the Government or the Government appointed Board.

Ask why we are fully self funded and the response is that it is just one of the models the government uses. It appears that because we are self funded the Government doesn't care about leadership of the industry as they aren't risking anything. We don't cost them a cent but yet they claim all the kudos for the protection of the public that we provide.

When you talk about leadership, the Board, the ITO, MoBIE and the Minister all seem to run for cover and when industry organisations want to provide leadership for the direction of the industry they get stonewalled and excluded.

If issues in the industry aren't addressed the problems will escalate and it is already happening - where poor legislation and regulation of the industry is costing the industry.

Trust and belief are two traits vital to regulation of our industry and with the new year upon us we looked at some of the people who voted for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Bill which made lawful ALL the unlawful activities of the Plumbers Gasfitters and

Drainlayers, or the number of people who get sick, or the number of explosions?

How do we know that what the Board is doing is succeeding? Could it be that we could abolish the Board and still get the same results because it seems to us that **WE** are the ones making the effort and paying for every ones protection.

Dear Editor

The Federation seems to be at a bit of a standstill. You have done a huge amount over the last four years but where to from here?

It seems to me the industry is being pushed to the brink of despair and the only actions open to us are forceful and illegal. What will it take to get people to listen? I remember a few years ago motorcyclists protested and prevented increases in levies imposed on them so perhaps we should do the same? To be honest I have never seen the industry in such a bad state.

Ed: We would have to agree with you that it is getting tougher to achieve results by legal means.

There was the option open to us of going to the courts but the Government sewed this up with the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill.

You see while everyone was concentrating on the fees the Government where closing the gate on how the money was spent - remember not only was the collection of

Drainlayers Board, Registrar and Secretariat.

- Maurice Williamson got it wrong in more ways than one and admitted on national news that he got it wrong.
- John Banks was found guilty of offences but is now up for a retrial.
- Peter Dunn kept silent after accusations were made against him.
- Judith Collins featured with accusations against her.
- Gerry Brownlee got it wrong with the wrong door and breached the law.
- Stephen Joyce talked about the National Party campaign song copy write being "pretty legal".

Now we have the Prime Minister John Key's office refusing to comment on reports of an assault complaint against National's Northland MP Mike Sabin. Not only did Mike Sabin vote for the Amendment Bill but he also sat on the Regulations Review Committee and the Social Services Committee both of which refused to deal with issues regarding the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Just prior to Christmas we also read about the "super" ministry being 'clunky' and inefficient. Yes The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has been handed a scathing review by the State Services Commission just two years after it was formed on the back of a four-ministry merger.

The Government's new "super ministry" has been panned in a damning report card which highlights weak governance, poor financial management and clunky corporate systems. This is the same ministry that is conducting the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 which WAS to be conducted **THREE** years after the commencement of the Act. We are rapidly approaching **FIVE** years since the commencement of the Act and we haven't seen much action on this yet.

The report on the ministry was highly critical of the ministry's internal and external management and procedures. The weak areas highlighted were: leadership and governance, leadership and workforce development, improving efficiency and effectiveness, financial management and risk management and yet they are entrusted with the task of providing advice to the Minister of Building and Housing.

The Federation sees leadership as being about making others better as a result of a presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence. All we see are actions by the Government and Board that cause a stop start scenario and the laying of blame on the people who have gone before. More emphasis is put on laying blame than correcting situations. The very basis of democracy is questioning to get appropriate forms of results.

Here are two excerpts from a letter written by the Minister of Building and Housing Dr Nick Smith prior to Christmas:

the money made legal but also the application of the money i.e. how the Board spent it.

This stopped a lot of actions the Federation was looking at so not only has the Board got a minimum pass from the Office of the Auditor General they also get to zero the books and start again with an \$2 million dollar back stop.

We want to hear YOUR ideas – after all this organisation represents EVERYONE in this industry – apprentices, licensed people, certifiers, business owners, and employees. We believe we are the only organisation who can claim to represent the spectrum of people participating in our industry i.e. from apprentice's right through to big business owners.

We do not put one interest group in our industry ahead of another. We focus on our ideals – fairness in regulation and legislation – and this is something EVERYONE wants – whether you are a one week served apprentice, or a 40 year veteran Certifier with 20 or 40 staff.

Give us your feedback, and spread the word – numbers count – we welcome new members!

"It is my view that the purpose of occupational regulation is the protection of the health and safety of the public. The Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 establishes the Board to set standards of practice for the protection of the health and safety of the public. These standards are reflected in training developed by the industry training organisation. The Board is not responsible for the training of trades people."

"I appreciate industry concern about the continuing professional development requirements that are widely criticised as over the top and adding more cost than value. I will be having a fresh look at these requirements, which were added to the Act in 2006 by the previous Government, in the New Year"

All the words in the world don't mean much if they are just rattling around as rhetoric and are not followed by action. Dr Smith and his appointed Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board need to stop clinging on to failed ideas and work with the industry to make it better.

A message for the Government



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