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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Hi, I stated my apprenticeship in 1961 and retired two years ago.

I really feel for all the plumbing related trades' nowadays and the absolute crap they have to put up with from these clowns at the top.

I feel lucky I worked in a much better time when we didn't have all this bullshit to handle.

You are doing a great job just hope it's not a losing battle keep up the good work.

Ed:

As you have read it's hope that keeps us going.

We are an aging industry where the hope is being taken from those who are needed by the industry to hand on the skills required for the survival of the industry.

Bureaucrats seem to believe they can force the survival of the industry through rules

Occupation outlook



As predicted by the Federation over three years ago, the trade shortage for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers has hit the country. Plumbers are on the Canterbury Skill Shortage List, meaning that New Zealand is actively looking for people from overseas to fill these jobs. Jobs that we could have trained our own people to fill.

According to the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment Occupational Outlook anyone looking to become a plumber in Canterbury is likely to get a position, and due to the repair and rebuild of Christchurch and the Auckland construction boom, demand for plumbers in these regions will continue to be strong over the short to medium term.

The occupational outlook lists plumbers as having average wages, average fees and average job prospects, where builders and electricians have average wages, low fees and high job prospects.

In 2014, the estimated average income for plumbers was \$52,300. Four years of training was estimated to cost \$10,000.

In 2013, the average income for electricians was estimated to be \$56,900. Training cost is estimated to be \$4,500 over three years.

According to the Certified Builders Association, carpenters and joiners usually earn between \$16 to \$30 per hour. Over a year, the average income earned is estimated to be \$44,400. Training costs were estimated to be \$4,000 for 3.5 – 4 years.

It may interest you to note the average income for truck drivers was \$51,850 which is nearly the same as a plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer and was behind graduates with a Bachelor's Degree in the field of nursing who earned \$51,100 two years after their study ended. After five years, income had increased to \$55,600.

With regard to our industry the outlook makes no mention of the annual costs associated with Continuing Professional Development, discipline or prosecution levies. They also fail to mention that after four years you cannot do plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying unless you are supervised.

Plumbers' employment and projected growth is

- 2013 8,300

and regulations.

They seem to forget we deal with the issues no one else wants to deal with and that requires enjoyment and a passion for what we do.

When the passion goes so does the industry because it's not all about qualifications, as according to the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment we have average wages with average job prospects and don't forget, we have huge responsibilities as a certifier.

There definitely have been better times in the industry where people looked up to the Board for leadership and the regulation of the industry was respected with support for the purpose of the Act.

Bring on the bureaucrats and it has all turned to shit. No leadership in the Board or in the industry - 8,000 plus individuals floundering in the hope the situation will get better.

The news is the Board and Government have tried it their way and it has failed. Now they blame the industry and impose more regulation which makes the situation even worse.

There is a shortage of truck drivers and they get paid the same as us with nowhere near the responsibility or the additional annual costs.

Something needs to change before it is too late.

Dear Editor

What's happening with

- 2014 8,800 up 5.7%
- 2013–18 4.2% per year
- 2018–23 2.4% per year

Based on the Board's public register figures the industry is falling behind the projected growth figures and as more people turn their back on the regulation of the industry there will be fewer experienced people to train new tradespeople.

The outlook also failed to outline that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers who reach Certifying status are required by law to be **100%** responsible for the work of those who have qualified to licensing status, **100%** responsible for the work of others employed in the industry, **100%** responsible for funding the Board, **100%** responsible for prosecuting non registered people and **100%** responsible for proving their own competence every year.

They also forgot to mention the cost of reaching certifying status so you can do plumbing unsupervised and the registration costs.

You can find out more about the occupational outlook at <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/occupation-outlook>

When does hope run out?



You could be forgiven for thinking the Prime Minister is shedding a tear for the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying industry, but it is more likely he is hoping the industry looks better through

one eye. You see **HOPE** is the voice you hear whisper "maybe" when it seems everyone is shouting **NO**.

Adlin Sinclair an accomplished businessman stated:

*There can be no hope when there LACKS INTEREST FOR BETTER.
There can be no trust when there lacks CONFIRMATION OF TRUTH.
There can be no faith when there lacks COMPLETE CONFIDENCE OF PURPOSE.*

A lot of people who write to the Federation make comments like, we hope you are right, we hope you are not wasting your time, we hope someone sees sense and the list goes on about hope.

A lot of people and organisations operate on hope, but what happens if hope runs out? What happens if an organisation or individual realises a situation isn't going to change no matter what they do?

We believe our industry went through nearly a decade of this and the result was a regulatory board that was doing what it wanted without accountability, without proper consultation, and eventually without industry support. The result was the report by the Auditor

the review of the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying qualifications as this has been going on for a couple of years now?

Ed:

It's a bit like the review of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, the Government Department involved will get it done when they feel like it.

We are not a priority because we are regulated and our livelihoods depend on us doing as we are told and abiding by the regulations and legislation imposed on us.

As far as the Federation is concerned it doesn't really matter when the new qualification regime starts as we are opposed to a lot of what is being instituted, and as time goes by that opposition gets worse.

Think about CPD and the courses the Board say are necessary for us to be competent each year – they are nothing more than courses to pick up on the failures of the apprenticeship scheme.

It is starting to look more and more like the trades people in the industry have to pay for two apprenticeships.

Dear Editor

Last week you had a pretty good swipe at the government, the people in it and the Board and CEO. In your opinion do you really think they are that bad that the people can't be trusted?

General in 2010 which showed a regulatory Board that wasn't meeting minimum standards.

The decade preceding the report is proof of the need for industry organisations with a voice to push for fairness and equality.

When the Board and Government want to impose something on us we get told "other industries do it so why should plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers be any different?" – well we ARE different in so many ways. We fund our Board **100%**, we fund discipline **100%**, we fund prosecutions **100%**, we have **NO** say in the appointment of our Board, we have **NO** industry representation on the Board and so the list goes on.

We survive on the hope that mechanisms of Government will make things right, or do right by us, but what happens when the government takes away the hope? The Social Services Committee turned its back on the industry, the Regulations Review Committee has turned its back on the industry, the Prime Minister's Office doesn't want to know, the Minister of Building and Housing places his hope in the board he appointed, and we can only presume they hope the situation will correct itself.

The Auditor General's follow up report on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board indicates in their eyes the Board have now reached the minimum standard, but look at the Board's own satisfaction survey with regard to registration and licensing, whereby 33% were not satisfied and 3% didn't know if they were satisfied or not. A third of the industry not satisfied!

With regard to consultation, 39% were not satisfied with the level of information, 38% were not satisfied with timeliness and 46% were not satisfied with how the Board communicates final decisions or reasons for them. Now take into account the 24% of people who didn't know if they were satisfied or not and these figures could go into the 60% region of people not being satisfied.

How can the regulation of the industry be classified as a success if over a third of the industry is not satisfied. Thousands of tradespeople hanging in there in the hope the situation will get better.

Four years ago the Federation provided a glimmer of hope for the industry by standing up and voicing the issues people were not satisfied with. This has seen some changes but it has also seen retrospective law changes that took away hope, it has seen government committees turn their back on the industry taking away hope and it has seen the Board tighten policy taking away rights and hope.

The Federation has fought hard for four years in the hope that the regulation of the industry would get better. We ask the question "If all hope of improvement is gone or taken from the industry then what will happen?"

As stated above there can be no hope when there **LACKS INTEREST FOR BETTER**. Where is the interest in betterment of the industry or the people in it – all we have is heavy handed regulation imposing on us.

Ed:

Our opinion doesn't really matter as it is the facts that speak for themselves.

The Federation makes a lot of claims and they are based on information and fact.

We are sure that if what we are saying was false we would have the lawyers knocking on our door threatening liable and defamation action.

Everyone has an opinion but very few people stand up to let other know what it is.

Condolences

The executive and membership would like to pass on our condolences to Wal & Jeen Gordon and family on the recent loss of their mother, grandmother and great grandmother.
Wal – thinking of you!

There can be no trust when there lacks **CONFIRMATION OF TRUTH**. As an industry we get told what they want us to know. We don't know what the real reasons behind decisions are. The acts of bad faith or decisions made without reasonable care outweigh any good that is being done for individuals in the industry. What incentive do trades people have to stay in the industry?

There can be no faith when there lacks **COMPLETE CONFIDENCE OF PURPOSE**. The manner in which our industry is treated, and costs and responsibilities imposed on us take away support for the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

We believe the current regulation of the industry is having the reverse effect of what the Act requires, and is driving good people from the industry or to operate in the industry in an illegal manner.

We had an industry with no representation for over a decade and the regulation failed so what will happen if we return to that situation where there is no hope or representation?

What are your thoughts?

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