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IN OTHER NEWS

From the Media

There may be money in plumbing after all.

On Tuesday night there was a documentary on Prime about capitalism in Cuba.

They interviewed one guy who was selling plumbing fittings part time to supplement his main income. Now get this - his main job was as a Trauma Doctor in one of the Government Hospitals which paid in the vicinity of \$30.00 a month.

Looks like government jobs aren't paid that well in Cuba and others in business do well - the opposite to good old New Zealand.

Obviously we are used to the trauma dealing with the regulation of our industry. Maybe a few of us could retrain and become Trauma Doctors.

Licensing



It's licensing time again – that time of year when the Board “sell” us the authority to work for the next 12 months. Building up to the new licensing year the Board had this to say:

March Quarterly

Adviser: "Applications processed in the first two weeks of the 2015/16 licensing year saw an increase of 39% in comparison to the year prior"

March Info Brief 2015: "Relicensing is proceeding at a rapid pace with authorisations issued being well ahead of last year at this stage"

On 6 April 2015 the Federation calculated the following licensing percentages based on the figures of that day in the Public Register - which should be accurate at all times according to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006. We know, however that the Licensed Drainlayers figures are wrong and have been for years.

Percentage of people that can license, that have licensed, compared to the same time last year.

•	Certifying Plumber	2014 - 28.8%	2015 - 28.2%
•	Licensed Plumber	2014 - 11.99%	2015 - 11.76%
•	Certifying Gasfitter	2014 - 35.53%	2015 - 34.05%
•	Licensed Gasfitter	2014 - 10.17%	2015 - 8.04%
•	Certifying Drainlayer	2014 - 21.49%	2015 - 20.45%
•	Licensed Drainlayer	2014 - 1.05%	2015 - 1.01%

As can be seen as a percentage of the number that can license, every class of registration is down on the same time last year.

Percentage of people that have licensed compared to the final number licensed last year.

•	Certifying Plumber	56.56%
•	Licensed Plumber	33.79%
•	Certifying Gasfitter	61.37%
•	Licensed Gasfitter	32.71%
•	Certifying Drainlayer	49.62%
•	Licensed Drainlayer	29.61%

This indicates there is a huge number of people that have not yet

licensed and are operating illegally in the industry.

Is Tradition to Blame

The Prime Minister is blaming tradition for MPs taking their spouses with them for a taxpayer funded trip to Europe.

The Speaker's delegation has just left on a business class trip costing \$138,000, aimed at strengthening ties with other Parliaments such as Poland and France.

John Key says such trips are important, but bringing along a significant other is more difficult to justify.

"In my case I pay personally for my wife to travel with me when she travels, just generally speaking they are not paid for, but it must be something that goes back in the standing orders a long time."

John Key believes MP travel is legitimate, and he doesn't have the power to stop spouses going.

"I know people think all roads lead to my office, but they actually don't in this case. It's whatever committee handles it. Is it business committee? Parliamentary Services maybe but not my office."

Labour's Andrew Little thinks personal contact is important.

"We are a small isolated country at the bottom of

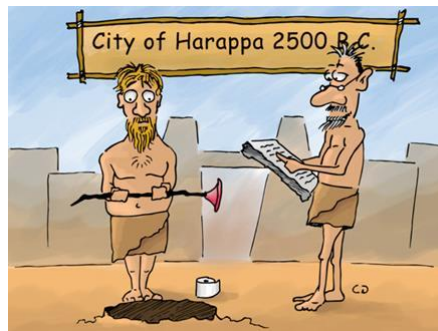
For tradespeople to operate legally they should have been licensed by the end of March, so the question is why is there such a high percentage who have not licensed one week into the new licensing year?

The Board should be urgently looking at why on average of the six registration classes, only 43.94% have licensed. Over 50% of the industry on average, is currently operating illegally.

The Board could claim these figures are better than last year but that doesn't make it right. Is it Continuing Professional Development (CPD and lack of points) that is causing the holdup, is it the cost of relicensing, is it the fact that the majority that haven't relicensed are under supervision, or is it just that people don't care about the regulation of the industry?

Whatever the reason it certainly needs looking at. You would think MBIE, the Ministry that advises the Minister of Building and Housing would have picked up on this and notified the Minister that on average over 50% of the plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are operating illegally.

Who are in the Industry?



The Federation office had a personal visit from two Federation members last Friday. The guys wanted to express their disgust in the fees and levies being charged to the "TRADESPEOPLE" in the industry.

During the course of the conversation one of them bought up about the sections of the industry which he believed didn't contribute to the protection of the public and that the fact the Board did nothing about the situation.

They were both dismayed that the registered tradespeople get hammered with excessive fees and levies to protect the public when the real money earners don't contribute to that protection. They were referring to others in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry and the Government.

They used the example of the building industry being supported by building and construction fees, and the electrical industry being supported by electrical levies and fees, but what of the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry?

They stated they appreciated the suppliers supporting the tradespeople with CPD etc., and weren't having a go at them, but they felt the real money makers in the industry didn't contribute to the protection of the public. Their main question to the Federation was this - why does the burden fall on the tradespeople?

the world. Our connections with the rest of the world are invaluable, and they have to be undertaken by a range of people, including politicians."

How about strengthening ties with tradespeople in New Zealand and worrying about what's going on here? It'll only cost you a bit of gas in the car to get around – and hey, you can even bring your partner along and we'll shout the tea and biccies.

That \$138,000 would run the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for a couple of weeks. Two weeks the tradespeople wouldn't have to pay for.

Reminder

Don't forget to put your submission in to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for the first stage of the Fees and Levy review.

The Federation is currently working on its formal submission to the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on the Review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

Hopefully the efforts we put in will be worth it long term.

Well, quite frankly the only answer we can give them is because the Government wants it that way. They make the laws that the Board impose on us but that doesn't clear the Board for the manner in which they regulate us.

Our two intrepid supporters are right about there being an imbalance in burden for the protection of the public and that is never going to change unless the tradespeople band together and object to the inequality. Why can't the public contribute by way of a levy for plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying? Are you prepared to ask your local Member of Parliament? This might be just the one thing we finally have in common with our colleagues at Master Plumbers and the Board themselves – we are sure both of these bodies would like to see money flowing from such a levy to the public.

Currently there is a gas levy on everyone's gas bill – but this money goes to GIC – who are they you ask? Who indeed – according to their website the Gas Industry Company are the "co-regulatory body for the gas industry and their strategy is to optimise the contribution of gas to New Zealand." Does this make you any wiser? Their shareholders are (according to their website) – Contact, Genesis, Greymouth Gas NZ Ltd, Methanex, Mighty River Power, NZ Oil and Gas Ltd, Nova, OMV NZ, Powerco, Shell and Vector. You can certainly see why these companies need our Gas Levy (we say tongue in cheek). Just how is this money spent by these big boys? And why does the electricity levy go to the EWRB and the Gas Levy go to GIC?

The clock is ticking for change so help make it happen by getting on to your member of parliament or write to the Minister of Building and Housing and let him know how you feel.

As always we invite your comments on articles in our newsletter – how are you finding things? Got something annoying you, something you're happy about? Let us know either way!

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