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IN OTHER NEWS



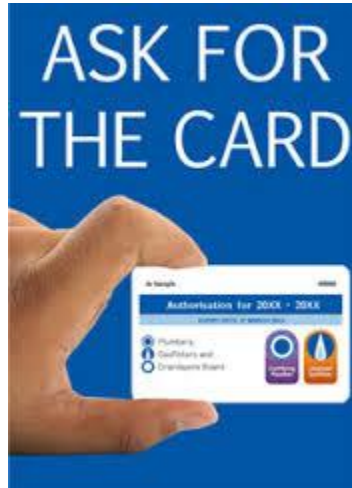
Dear Editor

I'm retired from the industry because of the PGD Board, and had time to read this article in the NZ Hunting and Wildlife 186 - Autumn 2015 magazine.

Department of Conservation middle management recently got a rap over the knuckles from the Ombudsman, Professor Ron Paterson, after unlawfully extending a commercial concession on the Routeburn Track. This followed a complaint when DOC staff ignored limits set in the newly approved Mt Aspiring National Park Management plan and allowed a concessionaire to increase 24 to 40 the number of overnight guided walkers entering the track each day.

The Ombudsman said that allowing such an increase "drives a horse and

Ask for the Card Campaign



It seems obvious to us that the Board are using the same tactics with the "Ask for the Card" campaign that they used with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme - that is just keep on hammering away at the industry until people accept it. The latest article in the Board's Info Brief poses a lot of questions for the Federation. Look at the article:

"Rolling out in a store near you national retail support is about to give the ask-for-card campaign another new lease on life. Following on from the Board's recent digital marketing efforts, national plumbing merchants and DIY building retailers will be helping to boost public awareness by spreading the message to the public throughout their stores nationwide. First cab off the rank is Plumbing World, who will be displaying 'new look' ask-for-the-card promotional material in the form of consumer facing advertising on counter tops. They have also shown support for the campaign by placing the message in the latest 'hot deals' catalogue which was distributed nationwide inside the Sunday Star Times. View the catalogue at www.plumbingworld.co.nz. Next month: iconic DIY brand comes on board to help squeeze out illegal operators. See the new look ask-for-the-card posters at: www.pgdb.co.nz/publications/card-campaign"

If you remember - the Federation told you of the actions of Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt some time ago – we told you that they were asking for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Authorisation Cards before they would sell items used in sanitary plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying. We even incorporated some photos from the aisle storing these goods, clearing showing everyone that approached that these were goods used in restricted work. This action was to prevent non registered people from purchasing the said items. This initiative received absolutely no support from the Board, no congratulations to Mitre 10 Mega on this outstanding initiative - yet look at where they are directing their support now.

Here are two potential scenario's as we see it, starting with Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt:

Customer: *"Hello I'd like to purchase a mains pressure gas hot water cylinder, the associated valves, gas pipe and crimped joins please"*

carriage through the Plan". He described the DOC claim that the situation was exceptional circumstances as "Nonsense on Stilts", adding: "There is often a temptation for decision makers, when determining rule-making bodies intended rules to apply to a particular set of circumstances, to circumvent the plain meaning of words and devise innovative solutions"

DOC had wasted thousands of dollars of Federated Mountain Clubs and Save Fiordland's money and caused "years of work" by ignoring FMC's advice that management plans mean what they say, said FMC President Robin McNeil. DOC middle management had been arrogant and undemocratic by acting as though the new management plan was out of date and ignoring it, he said.

When reading this article I couldn't help but be reminded of the issues we have faced as an industry with the interpretations being made by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. In particular the Board's interpretation of Section 32 which was backed by the Ombudsman.

It seems to be, on the face of the facts, that the Ombudsman is being very hypocritical on one hand he is saying *"There is often a temptation for decision makers, when determining rule-making bodies intended rules to apply to a particular set of circumstances, to circumvent the plain meaning of words and*

Sales person: *"Certainly can I see your gasfitting authorisation card please?"*

Customer: *"I'm not a gas fitter I just want to purchase the gear"*

Sales person: *"Sorry as you are not authorised to carry out gasfitting work so I can't sell you the items you have requested"*

Now let's look at the potential scenario with Plumbing World and the iconic DIY brand as advertised by the Board:

Customer: *"Hello I'd like to purchase a mains pressure gas hot water cylinder, the associated valves, gas pipe and crimped joins please"*

Sales person: *"Certainly what size cylinder, what size pipe etc"*

Customer: *"It think it's a 175 litre. I want a mains pressure one and I'll need the valves that go with it. I'll need some elbows and joiners as well".*

After some time and conversation about fittings and pipe the gear is placed on the counter

Sales person: *"There we go that will be \$4,845.00. Will that be charge up, cash or credit card"*

Customer: *"Credit card please"*

Sales Person: *"There we go. Thanks very much for shopping with us and I just want to draw your attention to the Ask for the Card Campaign from the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board. So if you decide to use a gas fitter please make sure you ask for their card".*

Customer: *"She's right. Thanks very much, Bye"*

So there you have it the two potential scenarios non registered people can face, in our opinion you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know which one will be more effective in stopping non registered people from doing sanitary plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying and yet the initiative by Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt was ignored and seven months later there is all the fanfare in the world for Plumbing World and DIY.

We would hate to think that Plumbing World were getting preferential treatment because they have a NZPM Board member amongst the PGD Board, but this latest Info Brief begs the question why the Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt initiative got little to no mention and yet the ineffective scheme by others does? Perhaps it is because some Federation members are backing the initiative by Mitre 10 Mega Upper Hutt.

The reality is ALL outlets have the option not sell to non registered people - but chose to do so for financial gain. The bulk of their customers (for merchants anyway) are plumbers, gasfitters and Drainlayers – so you have huge commercial sway in your own hands. Support those that support you – and those that support you don't sell easily to non registered people. Make your feelings know at your

devise innovative solutions" and on the other hand he has supported the Board doing exactly that.

My question is how much political influence is there over the Ombudsman and other organisations that should be there to provide fairness to all?

Ed:

We have never wanted to believe the tactics and immoral actions we have seen since the Federation was formed, but as time goes by the exposure to substandard ethics is common place. We originally had belief in those in positions of authority such as Board members, politicians, select committee members, the Auditor General and Ombudsman but after five years with no real change in the regulation of the industry how can we trust them anymore?

We see the Board employing four or five lawyers to use as their wordsmiths and twist, warp and distort issues that should be in plain English. In our opinion legislation, rules and regulations should be able to be understood by the people it is directed at without them having to seek legal advice every time they want to do something.

The Ombudsman's comments above appear to us to state what is common knowledge to the average New Zealander, yet he seems to vary the application of the knowledge with some of

local merchant!

It would appear the Board have chosen to back the less effective of the two scenarios at continued cost to the tradespeople in the industry.

Are the tradespeople being ignored?



On the face of it, there seems to be a contentment by tradespeople in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry to accept the actions by the Government and Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, yet when speaking to them they state they are not happy and absolutely sick of the situation that has existed for the last decade.

Most ask what it will take to get change and why the Government won't listen?

When a new Minister was appointed after the misadventures of the previous Minister the Federation hoped things would change - but alas that does not appear to be the case.

With the general election last year, we again lived in hope that a ministerial reshuffle would at least give us a Minister that was slightly interested but it seems it was a false hope. We have checked the Minister of Building and Housing Media releases since the middle of October last year through to the end of April 2015 and note not one of the 48 media releases pertains to our industry. Generally the media releases are the opportunity of Ministers to gloat on their successes.

It appears those regulating the industry seem to think time is on their side, meanwhile the tradespeople in the industry endure more reviews, more consultation and more cost. After 100 years you would hope the regulation of the industry would be right but it is probably in its worst state ever.

We have different regulatory systems for the licensed trades i.e. electrical, building, plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying. Surely this Minister sees the efficiencies and sense in having one licensing body at least for all these trades? Then it would make sense to have a common investigatory regime as well. Costs could be lessened and some fairness applies across all these trades.

So to answer the question yes we believe tradespeople are being ignored and this will continue until the tradespeople force change.

his decisions.

As far as political influence goes we believe it would be naive of us to think it is not in play as only the Government could let the regulation of an industry fester over a period of 15 years and still expect the trades people to respect their authority.

Review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006

As you will be aware the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 is under way and the industry was given the opportunity to comment.

The Federation will soon be putting in its submission so if you have any final comment to make please send it to us.

Training

We seek your views of training in the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industries.

Please send us your views - is training better or worse than it was ten years ago, does it meet the needs of the industry or anything else you can think of.

Give us your feedback.

Realisation



By now the realisation should be setting in with tradespeople working in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industries that nothing will get better for tradespeople unless we collectively change it.

We implore all tradespeople out there - whether

Federation members, Master Plumbers members, or people who belong to neither - to support action to form a suitable entity to provide leadership and governance for the tradespeople and not to be content to sit and wait.

Some are happy to "work constructively" with the Board and Government but the realisation should be there now that it is getting the TRADESPEOPLE nowhere that is of any benefit to them. Other parts of the industry are no doubt benefitting from the current situation.

And yes there is a difference between the tradespeople and the rest of the industry as the tradespeople pay for the regulation of the industry and the protection of the public and the others ride on the coat tails for personal or commercial gain.

The first step needs to be the creation of an entity to represent ALL the tradespeople in the industry- apprentices, licensed employees and certifiers. This could be the expansion of the Federation to a more formalised organisation, or the creation of another entity, but no matter what it needs to be made up of people voted on by the tradespeople FOR the tradespeople to provide leadership and governance - **with a view to achieving fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying regulations and legislation.**

This needs to happen now. If you feel you have what it takes then let us know as we need a start point. If we know there is widespread support to move the Federation to a new level, or there is a call for a new entity bridging with others, then we will set in place formal processes to achieve the goal. Achieving fairness and equality is why the Federation was started but it is not exclusive to Federation members - it's for everyone including those in other organisations.

It's better for realisation to set in late - than for it not to set in at all.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE?

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