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#### IN OTHER NEWS

##### Letter to the Editor

##### Re: Issue 254

Thanks heaps for this Issue! Absolutely agree with the letter sent in - this has been a thorn in our side for many years.

The quicker we rid ourselves of this supervision/ certifying system that really is made up for prestigious justification of Board existence and power, the better, as it creates an atmosphere of lack of esteem for achieving and trusting those with trade certs. The flow on affect I believe will be that tradesmen will become more interested in self development without the unnecessary regulation and costs of an outdated board.

Self development comes from someone passionate about what they do and with a willingness to become better at it.....not through forced compliance and compulsory so called

#### Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 Review

Thanks to the large numbers of Federation members who submitted their views and opinions.

The collective views have been collated in a report and submitted to the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

A copy of the submission can be found on the Plumbers Forum

<http://www.plumbers.co.nz/forum/fellow-practitioners-update/41/pgd-act-review/1865/>

#### Competence Based Licensing



When the Government introduced the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 in 2010 the industry was exposed to competence based licensing. The gasfitters had been exposed to it under the 1976 Act, **albeit unlawfully.**

When you break down the two main components of Competence Based Licensing you end up with competence - which is skills, abilities and knowledge and licensing - which is when the Government takes away your right to do something and sells it back to you. It can't be put any simpler than that.

At the moment there is a "points scheme" where tradespeople collect points to prove competence. In the early stages of the Continuing Professional Development scheme the questions were asked - what is the value of a point and how can competence be measured by using a point. Simply competence can't be measured by points?

For example, why does it take a tradesperson 8 points per trade to be competent at certifying level if they have 3 trades, and 10 points per trade if they have 2 trades, and 12 points if they have only one trade? Does the number of trades make a person more or less competent?

We are not going to get into the failures of the current scheme but want to look at **UPSKILLING**, however we do need to keep in mind

competency programmes.

With the help of local bodies and tradesman working together for the good of those we service the need for supervision of qualified tradies and probably the Board in general become obsolete.

And the justification that they are there to limit cowboys or underground operations is yet to be proven in terms of their worth and outcome on this issue.

Would totally support any efforts to remove this stifling and demoralising system we have if you are looking to challenge it in the future!

**ED:**

It's hard to undo what has been done in the past because people's pride gets in the way of common sense.

The Government on a regular basis enters into agreements with Councils regarding housing etc so why can't they do the same with an industry?

How about this?

*The Government and the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry agree that tradespeople require a tailored solution, and a collaborative approach is needed to improve the industries regulation challenges.*

*The Accord signed today provides the basis for*

there are some issues which are competence based and it is the Board's responsibility to apply the principles of section 32 of the PGD Act when prescribing of registration and licensing matters.

Section 32 of the Act should be affording tradespeople the protection which was intended, so the matters must be necessary to protect the health or safety of members of the public, promote the prevention of damage to property or promote the competency of persons who do, or assist in doing, sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying. The matters may not unnecessarily restrict the registration or licensing of persons as plumbers, gasfitters, or drainlayers and may not impose undue costs on plumbers, gasfitters, or drainlayers, or on the public.

The Federation believes the matters must be necessary and must be based upon a demonstrated need. It is the PGD Board's responsibility to identify these needs and have them facilitated. We would expect them to include changes to regulations and legislation as a given, and new materials and techniques. Some find this pretty hard – but it is necessary to keep ourselves and our customers out of trouble.

Other subjects such as employment law and contracts and specifics to our trades –the Gas Amendment Act, Codes and Standards could also fall into this category.

The matters we want to discuss are not the sort the Board dictate for points, but what we think upskilling is – separate as a term and condition of licensing, things that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers enjoy doing to make themselves better in their job. Things that increase knowledge ability and skills, as after all tradespeople know what is best for them and the industry.

Let's look at what's out there regardless of what points are attached to it. We should look at upskilling for tradespeople as a whole person as opposed to just getting points to purchase our licenses.

A few course suggestions include but are not limited to:

- Defensive Driving
- Hazardous substances
- Building Customer Service
- Effective use of time
- Present the presentable
- Quality Service Emphasis
- Negotiation skills
- Employment contracts
- How to write advertisements
- Valuing Human Resources

*the Government and the Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry to work together to clear the bureaucracy for tradespeople to better address the needs of the industry so that the regulation of the industry is fair and equitable and appropriate training and development is instituted. The Accord sets a target of an increase in productivity and a decrease in regulation costs over the next two years.*

*The Accord documents the Government and Industry shared commitment to:*

- *The Health and Safety of the Public;*

- *Encourage tradespeople to upskill to meet the needs of their employment/business*

- *Increase industry confidence in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board to encourage a more collaborative approach between the two parties that results in a commitment to industry needs and the health and safety of the public over the long term; and*

- *Better align tradespeople's investment in the industry with identified needs.*

*If only it were true it would be a sign of good will from the Government if such a thing exists.*

- Managing Apprentices
- Managing Staff Performance
- Accounting for non accountants
- Train the Trainer
- Supervisory management
- The Fair Trading Act
- Consumer Guarantees
- Facilitate on the job training.

The feedback the Federation has received would indicate tradespeople want to be taught things they don't know so they can improve their lives thus leaving them more time to ensure they get their primary tasks of plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying right. They want the skills to be able to hand on their knowledge, skills and abilities to others in particular their apprentices.

The Federation has been working with Master Plumbers on a scheme to deliver such courses to tradespeople in the industry. Unfortunately the discussions also include ways to meet the current requirements of the Board for CPD Points even though both organisations disagree with the current scheme.

The Federation wants an environment where there is support for apprentices, where the tradespeople ensure the apprentices are getting all the learning they need and where the employers are up to the task and have the skills they need. We want an environment where there is real support for the employers of apprentices and others.

The Federation wants the tradespeople in the industry to again be proud of their skills, knowledge and abilities and not to be punished for getting those attributes.

The Federation feels upskilling shouldn't be linked to licensing but failure to upskill and meet mandatory requirements should be addressed by the Board through performance management.

There is no objection to tradespeople undertaking identified and necessary upskilling to give them measurable competence which is skills, abilities and knowledge.

Remember licensing is when the Government takes away your right to do something and sells it back to you. In the current situation you are competent one day and the next day, because you haven't bought enough points, you are deemed incompetent and the Government takes away your right to work in your chosen trade. Then you buy some points which allows you to buy the right to work back from the Government.

The Government needs to ask itself if the current scheme of imposing what tradespeople have already qualified in as CPD should

## Waiting on a Response



We got a response from the Ministry regarding our questions on what is being done from a Government perspective about tradespeople choosing not licensing by the due date.

*Dear Wal,*

*On behalf of Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister for Building and Housing, thank you for your correspondence of 8 May 2015 regarding licensing of tradespeople.*

*Please be assured your comments have been noted. I have also sent a copy of your correspondence to officials at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment so they can respond directly to you.*

*Kind regards,*

*Ministerial Secretary*

*Office of Hon Dr Nick Smith*

*Minister for the Environment | Minister for Building and Housing*

be replaced with a scheme that tradespeople can actually improve themselves. A scheme that will actually meet the needs of the Act and the industry.

The current CPD scheme displays the attributes of a system designed to fill in the holes of a failing training system where people are qualifying without the skills, knowledge and abilities to do their jobs to a high standard. Continued Professional Development is not refreshing what you already know or teaching you something you don't need to know.

The Government, because they aren't creative enough to come up with a better scheme, will continue to take away your right to work and sell it back to you but that doesn't mean it has to be at a loss to the tradespeople and the industry. Every dollar spent on licensing or the current CPD scheme is a dollar taken from your family or wallet to buy back what the Government took from you.

As tradespeople and business owners we need to calculate what our CPD and licensing costs are and then it needs to be factored into wages and charge out rates.

Your thoughts are welcomed on this issue – along with all the consultation on at the moment - we need to discuss issues and collectively demand change.

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