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IN OTHER NEWS

The Budget Funny Part (You have to laugh or go mad)

We have to admit there was part of the budget you had to laugh at and that was the part that includes ACC levies which will be reduced by \$375 million in 2016-17 and \$120 million in 2017-18.

Isn't that the money they have overcharged every person in New Zealand for the last few years until the deficit was paid and a huge surplus was built up in ACC?

The overcharging that they knew about - we were under the impression ACC was funded on a cost recovery basis and were for non profit.

Looks like they are simply cutting the levies (tax) back to where it should have been and saying we are cutting the fees, where in fact they are giving our own money back to us that they took under dodgy pretence.

And think of this - you pay ACC contributions for every vehicle you own even though you can

The Give and Take Budget



A lot of people in the industry may think the Government budget doesn't affect our industry - but in reality it does. We all criticise the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for their expenditure but that is mainly due to the industry not seeing value for money, or improvement in what the Board are trying to achieve. The real blame for

the burden placed on tradespeople in our industry and others lies squarely with the Government.

The Government have developed the perfect situation in the manner they fund, or don't fund, the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industries. You see, we fulfil their promises to the public, provide the protection for the public and their property and the Government doesn't have to pay a single cent. It is the tradespeople who are levied (taxed) for everyone else's benefit.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board are not blameless but it could be said they are playing the hand they have been dealt by the Government. In some ways the situation with our industry explains why we don't get any equality or fairness from the Government because perhaps they want the regulation of ALL industries to be self funding like us. This would save them tens of millions of dollars. This would account for why it has been so difficult for organisations such as the Federation to make change when campaigning for the rights of tradespeople.

The Government, during the debates over the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Amendment Bill 2013, implied there was no money to help the PGD Board but yet we see a budget that includes a:

- \$50m fund to tackle the housing crisis in Auckland but nothing for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board or Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers who protect the health and safety of the public.
- \$11.2 million to prevent wild kiwi becoming extinct but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board.
- \$40m (\$20m each) for New Zealand's spy agencies, the GCSB and the SIS but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the

only drive one vehicle at a time.

From the Media

We picked up on a media release from the PGD Board last week where a Rotorua man has been convicted and fined \$1000 plus court costs and solicitor's fees today for illegally carrying out sanitary plumbing.

The person replaced existing copper pipes at a Rotorua property with Buteline pipes in a manner that wasn't compliant with the building code.

The hot water cylinder that the individual completed work on was attached to a wetback without a pressure limiting valve, allowing the cylinder to reach temperatures as high as 92 degrees. The new pipes had a recommended temperature of 80 degrees.

The non-compliant work was defective and caused leaks in the pipes that resulted in repairs for the home owner. The bathroom floor tiles, shower and toilet were damaged.

The interesting part is where it states "...attached to a wetback without a pressure limiting valve, allowing the cylinder to reach temperatures as high as 92 degrees".

It was the first time we had heard of a pressure limiting valve affecting temperature.

We thought this may have been a mistake and they meant a temperature limiting valve so we notified the Board and they stated they couldn't alter it

Board.

- \$80 million the Government plans to spend on research and development but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board.

- \$20.4 million over four years to provide greater national direction and support to Councils in implementing the resource management reforms but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board.

- \$4 million towards supporting the Environmental Protection Authority's role to implement the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) legislation in 2015/16 but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board.

- \$16.8 million to support the Government's programme of improving the management of freshwater but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board.

- \$400 million into struggling rail operator KiwiRail over the next two years so it can maintain the rail network to a safe and reliable standard and for KiwiRail to deliver services

But yet they can't afford \$4m annually for our industry to do a real job in protecting the public of New Zealand. They tax us to do that and it looks like they will do similar with other construction trades.

So why do they get away with it? Well they take away our right to apply our knowledge, skills and abilities in our chosen profession and sell it back to us knowing that if we don't license we can't work legally.

John Key made comment regarding solo parents getting jobs and that there were "Mutual Obligations". Where is the "Mutual Obligation" in our industry? It seems we provide the knowledge, skills and abilities, and provide the protection to the public and their property and what do we get in return - we are told we have to prove our competence every year or we can't work, we get taxed to use our skills, knowledge and abilities, we get taxed to prosecute people who haven't paid for the right to do plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying so where are the mutual obligations?

The manner in which the trades are being regulated could be likened to the protection rackets of old where thugs would demand money before you were able to work or operate your business and if you didn't pay the dues to the thugs you were crippled, either physically or financially.

Perhaps our industry should stop this nonsense because if we are going to fund a Board we may as well fund an industry board that is going to develop the industry and provide leadership. Perhaps the PGD Board, Master Plumbers and the Federation could all go rogue and do what is best for our industry.

Our Industry is fighting for fairness and equality but yet the Government can afford to spend an alleged \$11m plus on

because it is how the court have reported it.

Seems a bit odd to us so is it true or false?

Current Consultation

There is a lot of consultation going on at the moment where the Government and their supporting organisations are claiming to be looking to the future but it seems the future never arrives for our industry - we just go from one issue to another.

Later in the year you might attend meetings hosted by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board as part of their consultation on the Fees and Levy Review so we want you to go with ideas for our industry.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at the consultations and what we believe are real costs that affect you and your families.

We will be looking at issues such as - while you are attending courses to buy points the people you are paying to prosecute are sitting at home with their families enjoying valuable family time.

We want to give you as much information and ideas as we can.

subsidising an overseas sheep farmer but nothing for Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers or the Board. Is he going to contribute what the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry contributes to New Zealand?

Guide to tolerances, materials and workmanship in new residential construction

Building and Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith released, at the Certified Builders' Association Conference in Christchurch, new guidance on the standards of work expected for key aspects of new home construction.

The guide covers roof and wall cladding, windows and doors, flooring, wall and ceiling linings, cabinets and bench tops, plumbing, drainage and electrical fittings.

"The guidance covers common areas of dispute, like what degree of slope on a floor is reasonable or when a crack in a driveway is unacceptable. It will help resolve problems more quickly by giving clarity about what tolerances are acceptable," Dr Smith says.

The guide has been written with advice and consultation from the building and construction industry, and represents currently accepted standards.

The guidance is available online at:

www.building.govt.nz/guide-to-tolerances.

We note the National Kitchen and Bathroom Association of New Zealand (NKBANZ) was acknowledged for providing information and feedback in the development of the guide but it doesn't look like Master Plumbers, the Federation or the PGD Board had any input.

So it looks like this new guide that has been written with advice and consultation from the building and construction industry, and represents currently accepted standards and includes plumbing and drainage, was written without consultation from plumbers and drainlayers or their representative groups. Well done Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)! If we happen to be incorrect on this – let us know.

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