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IN OTHER NEWS

Another good initiative

An age old suggestion has finally come to fruition under the guidance of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers new Registrar/Chief Executive Mr Martin Sawyers.

Mr Sawyers made the recommendation to the PGD Board recently and the Board have agreed to establish a Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG).

The purpose of this group will be to provide a regular opportunity for the Board to receive feedback on:

- Proposed initiatives
- Implemented initiatives
- Issues/areas of concern to the Board
- Issues/areas of concern to the SLG
- Other issues within and facing the Industry
- Other matters of relevance

The SLG will be convened and chaired by the Chief Executive of the Board and

Who Cares?



It would seem democracy has gone and has been replaced with a dictatorship as the Minister of Building and Housing, Dr Nick Smith has made three new appointments to the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

After speaking to people in the industry it would appear that no one seems to have heard of the vacant

positions, and no one spoken to has seen an advertisement for the positions, so is it a situation of those in the industry not being given the opportunity to apply for positions on our own Registration Board?

The three new Board members are Deborah Cranko, Kenneth Douglas and Barry Wilcox. Re appointed were Nicholas Fleckney, Graham Hardie, Craig O'Connell and Richard Merrifield.

The appointments were announced along with others in the construction industry. Dr Smith had this to say as part of the announcement:

"Building work across New Zealand is at record levels and ongoing strong growth is forecast. An extra focus is required in these boom times on maintaining high professional standards across the building and construction sector," Dr Smith says.

"These appointments and reappointments bring a wealth of skills and knowledge to their respective boards, with backgrounds and many years of experience across professions. The strength of these boards is the mix of industry, higher education, commercial operations, governance and leadership."

The challenge for these board members is to help ensure these industries contribute to the Government's goals of increasing housing supply, and maintaining high standards while keeping compliance costs to a minimum," Dr Smith says

Does this indicate a predetermined direction for occupational licensing and a possible sign of things to come? Is it the first step in seeing a merged Board for the regulated trades? The last decade should surely have shown the Government that forced compliance doesn't work and simply saying something doesn't make it true or likely to succeed.

If the Government really wants to maintain high standards while keeping

will meet "forum style" with Board members and Board staff as required, with a minimum of three meetings being held every year.

The Board sees the SLG as creating an opportunity for wider industry input into the decision making of the Board.

The Board is proposing that the membership of the SLG will be:

- 2 representatives of Master Plumbers
- 2 representatives from the Federation
- 6 people to be selected from nominations from the industry.

The Federation is invited to nominate two persons to participate in the SLG as Federation representatives.

If anyone is interested in representing the Federation could you please send your details to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz. Two very good initiatives from Mr Sawyers in two weeks! Here's hoping that the momentum can continue and doesn't get bogged down in bureaucracy and take years to implement as time is critical to the industry. The Federation looks forward to engaging with industry through these SLG's.

A push too far

A lot happens in our lives and generally as individuals we handle it with ease.

We go through life believing

compliance costs to a minimum, they need to pull their heads out of their arses and get industry buy in. To carry on with the tactics that have been imposed over the last decade is just stupid.

The only buy in they have at the moment is from those who stand to profit financially from implementing the Government's will. The last two Ministers have said the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and industry have been problematic for years so why don't they change the way the Government interacts with the industry?

Have they ever thought that what they are doing is wrong instead of blaming others and attempting to exclude them. Perhaps the Government actually want prices to increase by forcing the industry to go silent and just put up with what is imposed on them. Maybe like some in the industry, they want less tradespeople so economic principles of supply and demand take over whereas the shortage of tradespeople creates a greater demand the prices go up.

We know of people who are passionate about the industry who have been excluded by the Minister from sitting on the Board because they are outspoken about the industry. The Minister seems content to just put bums on seats in the hope the situation will resolve itself or the Government changes and it becomes someone else's problem.

The Federation realises it has been doing the same for five years - holding the Board and Government accountable and saying the things others don't want to say, which is why it has drawn a line in the sand for March 2016 where if the situation doesn't change, then the Federation certainly will.

Prisoners and the industry

Remember recently there was media coverage about prisoners refurbishing houses in Christchurch - well the Federation had concerns about the legality of inmates doing plumbing and electrical work so we asked some questions of the Minister of Corrections Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga seeking information regarding the Christchurch rebuild project at Rolleston Prison. As the Minister cannot intervene in "operational matters" our letter was referred to the Department of Corrections for response. We asked the following questions:

- Are inmates doing plumbing and electrical repairs? • If so under whose supervision are they under?
- What authorisations are issued to the inmates to do sanitary plumbing and electrical work?
- Who funds the repairs and are costs recovered?

Apart from the full page stating how beneficial the project is to the prisoners, the community and the housing stocks in Christchurch the following paragraph answered the questions:

"I can advise that although trades training undertaken by prisoners does include electrical and plumbing skills, Housing New Zealand contractors carry out all the plumbing and electrical repairs for the Rolleston Prison Construction Yard project. The Cost for these repairs are fully covered by

in others and trusting in most people we deal with, but it is becoming more common to be let down and a lot of the time with devastating effects.

Even in our own industry there are examples of people who have trusted the system and have suffered because of their trust.

People have been pushed to breaking point and have walked away – others have been pushed to breaking point and have spent years teetering on the edge waiting for justice.

In the near future the Federation will be looking at lessons that the industry can learn from two issues - one to do with discipline and the other with insurance. Both have a huge impact on the manner in which we operate in the industry.

Don't forget to send your nominations through for the SLG to Wal Gordon!!

Housing New Zealand"

We don't begrudge inmates being rehabilitated but where is the fairness when apprentices have to pay a contribution to their training of over \$50.00 per week for the duration of their apprenticeship. Then they pay an annual licensing fee as well to be called an apprentice. As an industry we pay for them to attend assessments by way of wages and time. It just doesn't seem fair.

Fees and Levy Review

Earlier this year the Board held an initial consultation to hear your ideas on the Fees and Levy. The Board has considered that feedback and has developed a proposal. The Board will make a final decision on the fees at its Board meeting on 27 October 2015

The Key Points are:

- A reduction of \$15 annual licence fee
- A reduction of \$54 per registration
- A reduction in the disciplinary levy of \$4
- An increase in the offences fee of \$19
- A reduction in the examination fee of \$121
- An increase in the trainee certificate fee of \$26
- Maintaining the examination reconsideration fee at the current level
- An increase in the Exemptions fee of \$275
- All of the fees are at actual cost except for examination reconsideration's and exemptions

The indicative annual costs for a licensee resulting from the proposed fees will be:

- 1 licence-current cost \$357, proposed cost \$357
- 2 licences-current cost \$458, proposed cost \$443
- 3 licences-current cost \$559, proposed cost \$529

The disciplinary levy of \$166 and the annual offences fee of \$105 will be combined into a disciplinary levy totalling \$271 but are shown separately for the purposes of consultation in order to demonstrate what costs make up the combined levy.

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