



## Fellow Practitioner Issue 268 Dated 21 August 2015

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### IN OTHER NEWS

#### From the Media

Did you see last week charities and organisations kicking up that they had to pay for police services such as screening of people?

We wonder how they would feel if they had to pay to prosecute people?

Did you hear of the shortage of General Practitioner Doctors. GP's are some of the most highly trained doctors around yet there is a shortage because of what they get paid and it seems to be the part of the industry no one wants to do. Sound familiar?

What about the auto-

### Building Code information to be more accessible

Building and Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith announced that the Government is investing in a single website for all Building Code information to make it easier to access and comply with building regulations.

It would seem building industry productivity is lagging behind other industries so part of the Government's solution is the smart application of information technologies. The new service will be accessible from a computer, smart phone or tablet.

Dr Smith seems to believe the building and construction sector is on the cusp of unprecedented levels of sector growth in coming years, and this project is about the Government ensuring the right tools are in place to meet the demand.

But don't hold your breath as it is not expected to be functional until late 2016 and there has been no mention regarding if it will be free, and also if Standards will be included on the site.

We would say his biggest problem with demand will be if there are enough sufficiently qualified and skilled tradespeople prepared to work under his heavy handed regulation.

### Fees and Levy Review



Meetings conducted by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board have started throughout the country for the Fees and Levy review. We encourage tradespeople to make the time to attend the meetings as the outcome has a direct impact on your future.

If you have taken the time to read the consultation documents you will find figures are stated and you are

electrician fined more than \$2000 after he carried out unauthorised work on his property -- leaving exposed, live cables hanging from a ceiling?

As plumbers, gasfitters and Drainlayers are the only tradespeople who pay a prosecution fee we can only presume the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) paid for the investigation?

And of course there are the New Zealand Transport Agency staff that are alleged to have broken speed limits on thousands of occasions.

The Herald revealed that NZTA staff have been caught speeding 8,500 times in nine months - and none were ticketed!! Apparently it's made Transport Minister Simon Bridges angry so we wonder what the chances are of the staff getting a whack over the knuckles with a wet bus ticket!!

The Bill allowing bars to open during Rugby World Cup games is on Parliament's fast track so that means the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying legislation and issues must be on the very slow track.

But we know the reason why and that's because plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying only protect the health and

asked if you agree or disagree. For most this will be okay, but others amongst you may want to know how these figures have been calculated and what assumptions have been made, if any.

For example Board personnel costs increased 5.98% from 2013 to 2014, so what has happened from 2014 to 2015? Why have personnel costs increased 42.46% since this Board took over in 2011 and 73.93% since 2008?

Why has the discipline levy increased 502% since 2003 with no measured improvement?

These are the types of questions that need to be asked, and we encourage you to do so, along with any other questions you have. Some of the smaller towns the Board are visiting simply don't get these opportunities often and you should take advantage of hearing things from the horse's mouth so to speak.

Why do the tradespeople in the industry now pay for the accreditation and reaccreditation of CPD courses? Why should tradespeople foot the bill for people who are going to make money from the courses?

Overhead costs seem to be the reason for huge fees and levies so ask questions. The only stupid question is the one you don't ask!!

Make the effort and go to the meeting. Those who have attended so far have indicated there is a change in attitude towards the industry.

## Letter to the Editor Fees Review



Mr. Editor,

These d\*#@heads (the so-called Board) have got to be joking, haven't they? Do they seriously think in their bloody arrogance pondering on all these "fees" and listing them for us to read

that they are somehow flaunting their bully-boy power and we are all going to roll over and play their bullshit game?

I will be putting my money into learning something new and shoot this thing in the head once and for all, it's just dead money.

safety of the public.

What has changed?



What has changed is that nothing has changed and that is what has made us so unhappy.

For years the industry has been waiting and for years we have been paying but there simply is no change for the better and a lot of changes for the worse.

Charles De Gaulle once said "Silence is the Ultimate Weapon of Power" and the industry has certainly been exposed to the silent treatment from the Government.

It's almost as if the Minister of Building and Housing says nothing so he doesn't draw attention to himself.

Sometimes there are glimmers of hope about change but then the ulterior motives surface and decent sets in.

We don't feel it is too much to ask for change that we can believe in, change that will improve the way we do things in the industry and change that is fair and

We are seeing no improvement in their attitude towards the industry, everyone in the trade is guilty of some imaginary offence that some day they will fit you up with- that's why we all are having to pay a prosecution levy, or maybe that should be called "persecution" levy- and don't forget this was an illegal charge because it was never in the legislation.

You have to work your arse off most of the time in dirty, dangerous conditions out in all weathers, pay your taxes, chase your money, pay all your associated business costs, price jobs etc....Yeah and buy points, like kids collecting cards out of the Weet-bix packet.

All of us bar none have all forgotten more about Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainage than any of those useless bastards will ever know and put up with their shit for what? Why has there been a sudden massive rise in licence costs from \$78.00 for three licences in 1990 to \$600.00 plus at the present time with no dialogue ever having taken place, initiated by the Board with the industry in a friendly, fair, inclusive, democratic process in the first place?

### Guess What?



What can we say in response to the letter to the editor above, apart from nobody cares except for the tradespeople in the industry and their families.

When you think about all the issues in the industry

how many of them have been implemented by the tradespeople?

- Continued Professional Development was implemented on the whim of the Government because it was trendy and organisations within the industry jumped at the opportunity to make money and supported the initiative. Tradespeople have been learning new things year in and year out – they don't need to have a "points" scheme to do this, in fact the "points" scheme has probably taken professional development of individuals back a decade. It didn't make sense when it came in, and since then it has been taken over by suppliers who have often used it as a thinly disguised marketing tool for their goods – with the marketing information often of higher quality than the technical information provided.

equitable.

Probably one of the first things that need to change is attitudes towards the regulation of the industry. Change in attitudes not just changes in faces because we know that doesn't work.

The Government has branded those who want to make change for the better as malcontents but have they proved those malcontents wrong? It's very much a case of "you're right so shut up".

Every tradesperson in the industry needs to take the time to see their local Member of Parliament no matter what party they are from and let them know the regulation of the industry is failing and skill levels are dropping. We need to keep on at them until they do something about it.

**DON'T JUST THINK ABOUT IT DO IT - YOUR SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN.**

Attend consultation meetings with the PGDB. Let us know your thoughts through a Letter to the Editor.

Put yourself forward for the Stakeholder Forum Group with the PGDB.

Visit your local MP.

- The Prosecution Levy was implemented by the Government because they don't want to pay anything for protecting the public and their property. They have left the burden of paying on the plumbers gasfitters and drainlayers - no other industry does this in New Zealand.
- The Ask for the Card campaign has seen hundreds of thousands of dollars taken from the tradespeople and the scheme is still not having any positive effect, or gaining substantial support after five years. How do they measure success? We measure it by asking ourselves and our members how often they are actually "asked for their card". There does not appear to have been any noticeable change in consumer habits in this area that we can see.
- The move from Ministry of Health to Ministry of Building and Housing was done because it was thought our industry was more under construction than health. The Government made this decision and the industry has been in somewhat of a downward spiral ever since.
- Appointments of the PGD Board are done by the Government without any tradespeople input. A lot of it seems to be based organisational membership and who you know, not what you know. Prior to this latest round at least people in the industry who were interested could apply.
- The situation where overheads incurred by the Board are more than the cost of performing the functions required and there are no measurements of success of the Board's activities. How does the industry know if it's getting value for money? In fact what is the industry getting for its money?
- The situation where the number of registered tradespeople seeking authorisations is shrinking and the number of skilled tradespeople per head population is on the decline.

We could go on all day but what's the point as no one in positions that can change or prevent problems seems to **CARE**. They know they have us over a barrel and we have to do as they say because it's our livelihoods and we all need to support our families and futures. Sure, we do see some changes coming – but it all takes too long.

This Government doesn't have the moral fortitude to admit they have got it wrong they just continue to make the situation worse and obviously they have a scapegoat the Plumbers Gasfitters and

There are numerous ways to let your opinions be heard – so don't miss these opportunities.

Men are four:

He who know not and knows not he knows not: he is a fool – shun him

He who now not and knows he knows not: he is simply – teach him

He who knows and knows not he knows: he is asleep – wake him

He who knows and knows he knows: he is wise – follow him

Which one are you?

**Best Wishes....**

Allan Day Snr, a long time supporter of the Federation, has recently been in hospital but is now at home.

We wish Allan and his family all the best for a very speedy recovery!

**We need you back on the horse buddy!**

Drainlayers Board.

The Federation believes a more productive industry would be one where:

- We pay a fair discipline levy to discipline our own – the smaller infringements would be deal with using infringement notices, or by negotiation at a lower level. Only the significant disciplinary problems would see the Board convened for a disciplinary hearing. Where the practitioner is found guilty, then the full weight of costs would befall them as these should not be carried by the innocent tradespeople.
- Tradespeople have an upskilling programme that has nothing to do with points – but involves a feedback loop from the disciplinary process, has updates on changes to Codes, Regulation and Legislation – so there could be no more “but we didn't know” and everyone could hear the message at the same time. Updates on H&S legislation could also be covered off as well. This would make immense sense and would get our backing. We would expect this information to be available via on line courses or face to face.
- There is a more economical regulator where overheads did not outweigh the actual cost of doing the job. We support the appointment of a qualified investigator and hope that this leads to better quality investigations whereby both the regulator and practitioner will get a better deal.

Let everyone know what you want or all you'll get is what they want.

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