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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**From the Media**

*The government is being accused of stealthily fixing up a flaw which has seen beneficiaries underpaid by millions of dollars over 18 years.*

*Since 1998 Work and Income has been starting people's benefit a day later than it should be, says benefit advocate Kay Brereton.*

*The Social Security Appeal Authority had ruled that WINZ's computer system had been set up to grant a person's benefit from the day after their stand down ends, she said.*

*However, the law required that the benefit be started the day the stand down ends, which was one day earlier.*

*"What this means is that many thousands of people were short paid by one day.*

*"While each underpayment is probably not large, it is to the people who have*

**Letters to the Editor**



**Dear Editor**

With regard to "Cashies", I agree totally with what you said last week and my wife likened it to taking your own

food to a restaurant and asking them to cook it for you at a cheap price. We all know what the restaurant owners would say, yet they are probably some of the worst offenders in our area for wanting cash jobs done!

If you take your own booze you pay corkage, so maybe we should be doing the same when people supply their own fittings and fixtures.

Keep up the good work.

**Dear Editor**

I do "Cashies" because I have to. I have to support my family any way I can. None of us like working seven days a week but we have our responsibilities and we all want to get ahead. Perhaps if some of the business owners spread the profits down to the workers it would make our lives easier.

When I can earn in the working week what I earn in the working week and weekend cash jobs I'll stop doing them.

I understand what you are saying but it's just not practical now days when everything is increasing but not wages.

**Dear Editor**

Cash jobs do a lot of damage but I believe it is because it is too easy for members of the public to purchase their own gear and then they get the taste of savings and get greedy.

Simply stop selling product to them and that stops half the problem.

Good thoughts but not an easy problem to solve.

**ED:**

Thanks writers for your comments. "Cashies" have been part of trades for years and stopping them is not an easy task but what people need to remember is that as long as the public can get a cheap job done we will forever be stuck on low wages.

*been short-changed."*

*Ms Brereton said the Social Security (Extension of Youth Services and Remedial Matters) Amendment Bill, which is now going through parliament, contains an amendment which will retrospectively change the benefit start date, meaning the government won't have to make good the shortfall.*

*"When the government became aware that they had been commencing benefits on the wrong date and short paying people did they take steps to rectify this error and commence paying correctly?" Ms Brereton asked.*

*"No, they sought to change the law to legalise the defrauding of the poor."*

*Social Development Minister Anne Tolley says the government is clarifying the law to reflect what her ministry has been doing in practice.*

*She said the tweaks shouldn't come as a surprise, as the bill's explanatory note explained what the government was doing.*

*The briefing that was sent to the select committee considering the bill also outlined the clarification.*

*"The opposition sits on this select committee and would have been well aware of this at the time, so to now try and*

Likewise as long as the public can buy their own fittings and fixtures the industry will miss out on making the profit to supplement wages. I know my mechanic won't fix my vehicles if I supply my own parts, my doctor won't operate if supply my own medical supplies and my dentist won't pop around home to fix my teeth.

Have you ever tried to hire an operating theatre from the hospital or borrow a dentist surgery for the weekend? As trades people we seem to put ourselves down below others and let them dictate the terms to us.

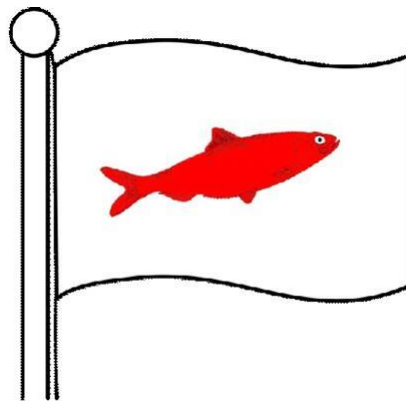
Speaking for myself, I'm sick of others dictating to me so I fight for what is right and if it means shit flows in the streets then so be it because it won't be my fault.

Remember this - it was the Government that put in place the legislation to protect the public so it is the Government's responsibility to ensure there are resources available to provide sufficient well trained, knowledgeable, competent tradespeople.

At the moment the Government is making tradespeople prove their competence every year to make the Government feel better. They don't know if what they are doing works or not as there are no performance measures in place.

Perhaps this comes under the "loopy rules" that have been in the news of late?

## It's a Red Herring



There has been a lot of debate about the New Zealand Flag and millions of dollars has been spent, and will continue to be spent, but in reality is it just a Red Herring to distract people from the real issues affecting us all.

Look at our industry - falling numbers, pitiful training, high regulation costs, parts of the industry regulation that is possibly unlawful, despondent practitioners and the list goes on. The money spent on the flag issue could have protected the health and safety of the public by funding the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board for around 7-8 years!!

Napoleon Bonaparte once said "A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of coloured ribbon." We believe a flag is a rallying point, something you identify with and it is the belief of what the flag stands for.

Here's an example: let's place four flags in a car park and put every plumber, gasfitter and drainlayer in the middle of the car park. One flag will be the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, one will be Master Plumbers, one will be the independents and one will be

*say it's a surprise just doesn't wash," she said.*

It looks like what the Government did to our industry has now spread to the general public with regard to retrospective legislation.

When are these fools going to get things right? How many opportunities do they get when tradespeople only get one opportunity to get it right?

They put demands on us to get it right but the Government fails to lead by example. They then get to change the rules to get themselves out of the proverbial shit.

### Consultation

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, through the new Chief Executive Martin Sawyers, is trying to consult and communicate with the industry - but is meeting with some resistance with very poor turnouts to meetings and limited returns to their consultation documents.

We know the Board have bought this upon themselves and if anyone should be pissed off it should be the Federation Executive Committee who has put in five years of their time to try and get fairness and equality in the legislation and regulations that regulate the industry.

the Federation. Tell all the plumbers gasfitters and drainlayers to stand under the flag that they identify with.

Every Practitioner would make a decision based on their personal beliefs and what flag they believe will do the most for them to improve their situation and that's the point we believe the industry is at now, where practitioners decision of what "flag" they support will shape the future of the industry.

We ask you to look carefully at what each group will provide and what they are trying to achieve. Also think about what the Government sees, do they see an industry with infighting and no common goal? If they do then as an industry we are easy pickings. As small groups we are nothing.

Everyone would have watched a medieval movie at some stage and seen the archers rally under the archers flag, infantry under the infantry flag, light horsemen under their flag and the list goes on but the one flag they all identified with was the flag of their country. As individuals they could be easily beaten but as a collective they were a force to be reckoned with.

As an industry we need to **rally together** for our own future. The groups are not going to get everything they want so compromises will need to be made for us all to move forward.

The formation of the industry stakeholder group is a good start and is long overdue. (It was actually suggested by the Federation 5 years ago just before the Board cut off communication with us). The formation of the group shows a willingness to work towards a common goal, as does the current consultation on CPD.

Working together and standing together is going to be needed in the future as the Government starts to review the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act and regulation of the construction industry.

When it gets to Select Committee stage we will need to show we are a cohesive group with common goals, or we run the risk that acting as individuals we will get picked off.

### The Loopy Rules Report



This week the Government released a report on the loopy rules and regulations frustrating New Zealanders all over the country and it was amazing how many were similar if not the same as some affecting our industry. Even some of the solutions were similar to our recommendations.

This has got to be one of the best comments in the report:

We stated we wanted change by April next year and will work to ensure that happens - **so we encourage you to participate in consultation and new processes, otherwise the last 5 years has been for nothing and the future will look even worse!**

Does the Board deserve another chance, well no - but we believe the Board members will ensure appropriate leadership is put in place to get the Board and industry working together. If it's not then the Board will run the risk of a total industry shut down to their regulation.

For our part – we are willing to put the effort in, to try and co-operate and see changes which will be good for everyone. We realise we won't get everything we would like – but that's democracy – but we have a better chance of change if we participate – and no chance of change if we don't.

### **Unnecessary bureaucracy**

*Some rules are there “just in case” a problem might arise in future, with little evidence that it will.*

And what about this regarding the new LBP scheme:

*The licensed building practitioner (LBP) scheme sought to restore confidence in the building industry in the wake of the leaky home issue. Many builders and DIYers have not reacted well to tougher rules about who can do what in the building industry. We got a mixed picture of the industry as both full of “cowboys” and yet unnecessarily restrictive. Changes under the scheme are too slow for some and too fast for others.*

The report can be found at [www.dia.govt.nz/RulesReduction](http://www.dia.govt.nz/RulesReduction)

It's well worth a read.

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