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## IN OTHER NEWS



Hi Editor , couldn't agree more with the Federation's policy on one class of registration for us all and in my opinion would achieve the following:

1. as you say will make everyone responsible for their own work
2. takes all that confusion that the public has regarding licensing , certifying , craftsman away . If I have ever been asked in 30 years it has always been : are you a registered plumber?
3. we can save all the money the board is spending on confusing the public
4. will kill off the cash black market as registered people will be paid their worth
5. will then allow the registered people to take on apprentices and therefore give back and

## Training of Apprentices is a Serious Matter



People employ apprentices for various reasons, some as legalised slaves, some for cheap labour, some to full staffing gaps in the future, some to make the tea and then you have those who employ apprentices to learn the skills and knowledge to perform the skilled role of the trade in which they are employed.

People employ apprentices for various reasons, some as legalised slaves, some for cheap labour, some to full staffing gaps in the future, some to make the tea and then you have those who employ apprentices to learn the skills and knowledge to perform the

This is the first of a series of articles about our current Registration Classes, and the plumbing , gasfitting and drainlaying qualifications to be recognised and registered with the New Zealand Qualification Authority - neither of which the Federation believes meets the needs of the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry.

Late last year we mentioned a couple of paragraphs from a report called "The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan"

***What is an apprenticeship?*** *An Apprenticeship is a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills.*

*This definition is underpinned by four principles of Future Apprenticeships:*

- *an Apprenticeship is a job, in a **skilled occupation**.*
- *an Apprenticeship requires **substantial and sustained training** lasting a minimum of 12 months and includes off-the-job training*
- *an Apprenticeship leads to **full competency** in an occupation, demonstrated by achievement of an **apprenticeship standard** that is defined by **employers** and*
- *an Apprenticeship develops **transferable skills**, including English and maths, to progress careers.*

The Federation has had similar beliefs ever since it was

the industry can tap into this huge pool of experience

6. will return it to where it should be 4-6000hrs , block courses , trade cert exam , register with the Board , CPD your done. Shit we have the Board , council inspections and taking responsibility for your own work to fall back on.

7. will also help these people to speak up that would rather lay low or under the radar because they fear the Board etc . Hey the Board had 140 odd responses out of 6000 odd p/d/gas fitters on the review, we need all these people to combine so we have a bigger, better & more powerful industry where everyone is represented not just a chosen few

I would like to stay 100% positive but I fear the following factors will have a huge influence

1 . any employers association i.e. Master Plumbers. These guys have had a big say & in my opinion are responsible for where we are today and it's a cock-up . These people fear extra competition and like to have a pool of workers that they don't have to pay as much. Expect resistance .

2. craftsman/certifying people. The current scheme could be very profitable , as I would think some registered people are paying for the right to be supervised

3 .egos , when you make someone higher on the ladder they don't like

started over five years ago, but has been cried down by people in positions of authority and organisations pushing for their self gain.

Currently there are two reviews underway which have a direct impact on the future of apprenticeships in our industry. Firstly there is the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board consultation of Licensing Classes, and secondly there is the New Zealand Qualifications Authority review of the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying qualifications.

With regard to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board they are the ones that set the requirements and standards for registration as a plumber gasfitter or drainlayer. In essence the Board SETS the standards that must be met in order for them to recognise the training, skills and knowledge of people wanting to register in our industry. It is therefore up to other organisations to set HOW the standards and requirements are met.

The Board have stated they are not specifically looking at the needs of the Registration class of "Licensed" but will accept submissions on it. We believe it is imperative they look closely at it, and if required consult again. This is more than a name change and the knowledge and skills requirements need to be looked at closely.

This is where the New Zealand Qualifications Authority come into the picture with their qualifications, which must achieve the standards set by the PGDB. If they don't meet the standards of the Board then the qualification means nothing.

So hopefully you can see the importance of the two reviews under way at the moment and the responsibility laid upon the two organisations -because if they don't get it right, we as an industry are the ones to suffer for at least the next 15 years.

The Federation believes it is up to practitioners and employers to lead the way, but first they need the support of the government. When we look at other apprenticeships we note **that upon completion the apprentices are deemed to have achieved full competency in their occupation.** Meaning they can apply their trade **without supervision.** (If you don't think Supervision matters, then think again – the Board have indicated a number of times in a number of publications that this is going to be an area they will be focussing on during 2016 – and it is an area that will be covered off in the CPD kicking off after 1 April 2016). Inadequate supervision will land tradespeople in a lot of trouble!

Looking at apprentices in the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry, we see that our apprentices are **NOT** deemed to have reached full competency at completion of their apprenticeship, so what does that leave the industry with? Well it seems it leaves the industry with a lot of Level 4 Qualified people who require supervision for two years

others stepping up to the same level with less qualifications

All this is only an opinion but the way I see it the whole thing means nothing if they don't do what you are proposing . Good luck with it & thank you for your work .

**ED:** Thank you for your words of encouragement and support. There is a huge amount to be done and a lot of discussions so the more that are involved the better and easier it is to achieve a good outcome.

After more than five years of fighting the bureaucracy it would be nice to be able to sit around a table to nut out the issues but the Government seems threatened by anyone who does not follow their line of thought to the letter. Yes, they have some good ideas but those who live and breathe the industry could possibly have better ones.

If only MBIE and the Government would listen to the Industry it would be so much easier. Perhaps they have been watching too much television with all the cloak and dagger antics that go on in politics overseas.

How much time and money could they save by having an engaged interested industry? Look at the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board - an example where simple changes in attitude have started to turn the process of regulating the

and then requires them to sit another exam before they are deemed to have reached full competency. By competency we mean they are able to do the work without supervision and are responsible for their own work, much like a registered electrician or registered builder.

Does the Government know they are funding an apprenticeship scheme that upon completion the apprentices are NOT deemed fully competent to in that industry? With regard to funding The Skills Organisation being the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry Training Organisation appear to get funding for industry training in two ways being both Apprenticeship and Industry Training.

The Apprenticeship funding (Plumbing L4) is for a greater amount than Industry Training (Plumbing L5) as the government expects that there is more investment from ITO's with trainees in terms of pastoral care and in most situations the apprenticeships are larger credit qualifications than industry training qualifications.

To the Federation it appears the Government, NZQA and Skills are concentrating on Level 4 Qualifications where apprentices are being trained, or should we say assessed, to become partially competent in their chosen trade.

In the last decade the costs to apprentices/employers has increased by around 100% and the level of off the job training has decreased such that it is nearly nonexistent. This means the emphasis on employers to provide more training has increased to an unprecedented level. Employers in NZ receive no subsidy for taking on apprentices, no payment for the training they provide and they are often the target of other employers who do not train apprentices but wait to cherry pick from those that do.

There are various theories about why our apprentices are qualifying at level four NOT fully competent to perform the functions of their trade which range from; employers not wanting to train people to leave their businesses, allowing an out for apprentices if they don't want to stay in the industry, for organisations to make more money by providing additional training to get apprentices to a competent level and for the Government to reach their targets of level 4 qualified people.

The list of theories goes on as does the blame game and defence of the current failing system, but the Federation believes enough is enough and that it is time to stop the cover ups and get a system where the industry and apprentices will benefit.

As stated above this is the first of a series of articles looking at our apprenticeship scheme , registration classes and New Zealand Qualifications. These issues need to be industry driven and led but the Government needs to be supportive of the entire industry, not just a sector that has in the past supported them.

industry around to a stage where the public is truly getting the protection intended by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2010.

As practitioners in the industry we don't get paid to solve all the regulation problems and waste time on doing other people's jobs, hence the reason we are direct and to the point. The Government should take this into account if they ever get around to doing anything about our industry.

Everyone has better things to be doing so why not get together and nut all the issues out and put in place a plan for the industry and practitioners?

Thanks for the letter – keep them coming!

The Federation will, in the near future, be writing to The Minister of Building and Housing, Hon Nick Smith to get his support for change for the industry, but be assured we will be resolute in our push for change to benefit the industry. Get behind us and send us your ideas and if you want to get involved in the front line discussions then please let us know.

Apprentice feedback and involvement is welcomed so we ask apprentices to contact us with their views and ideas.

Next week we will be looking into Registration and qualifications more.



**Mastery of an occupation means that the skills learnt by an apprentice will need to be sufficiently transferable for them to adapt quickly to undertaking the same occupation in another company in the same sector, functioning effectively after minimal instruction on new equipment or working practices.**

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