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IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

Correct me if I am wrong, but with regard to apprentices currently qualifying as Licensed Plumbers Gasfitters or Drainlayers after completing their apprenticeships, are you saying that they are useless and not worth a damn because that's what it sounds like.

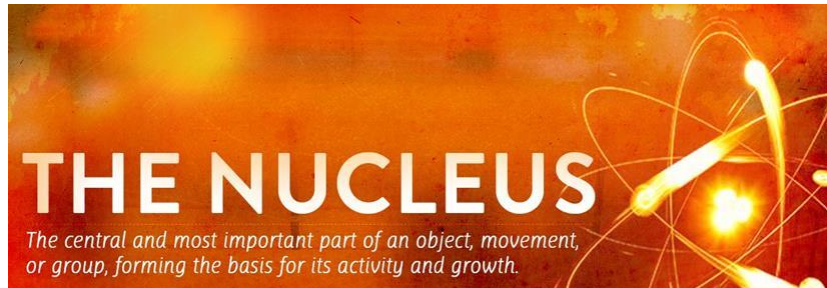
I have a guy who has recently passed his exams at licensing level and I would pit him against any Certifier in our area so how can you criticise their skills.?

Ed:

No we are not saying they are useless at all, what we are saying is that they could be better and of more use to the industry.

You in fact support our argument where you state you would pit your apprentice against any Certifier in your area - so why shouldn't your apprentice be recognised for

Apprenticeship Standards



There is no doubt self confidence, knowledge and skills are required to be successful but where do those attributes come from - they must have started somewhere? Most tradespeople have done apprenticeships that involve them going from raw material to being moulded into the finished product – essentially apprentices could be seen as a nucleus for our industry.

A nucleus is the central and most important part of an object, movement or group, forming the basis for its activity and growth - so is an apprenticeship the **Nucleus of Craftsmanship** which helps direct our industry?

Continuing on from last week's article on "**Training of Apprentices is a Serious Matter**", " we left you with food for thought.

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.

Apprentices have the role of working hard to achieve the set standards of skills and knowledge and the employers and industry have a role of driving the system to deliver the skills and knowledge to meet their needs, and future needs of the industry and country. The needs of the industry, the apprentice and employer seem to have been lost.

Last week we touched on possible reasons why we have the current situation of apprentices ending the apprenticeship not having **full competency** in an occupation. We didn't discuss it too much as it doesn't really matter, but one conspiracy theory that does matter is the theory that persons unknown felt the qualification of a trade should be equivalent to qualifications of so called "**professionals**".

We are talking about the comparison between "professionals" and "skilled workers". The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), is a list of occupations that outlines the tasks and duties normally undertaken in an occupation, the level of qualification and/or amount of work experience

his skill and knowledge.

Rather than being recognised for what he can do, you are going to supervise him for two to three years while he gets a qualification that recognises his full competency i.e. his Certifying ticket.

I ask you this question "what are you going to teach him over the next two years and who is going to pay to get him to Certifying status?"

We are saying the industry can do better and deserves better.

Dear Editor

CPD is back in the headlines and is the subject around the smoko table.

My question is why have the rights to CPD training been sold to Mico's - why weren't other suppliers given the opportunity?

Ed:

That's probably a question that should be answered by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, but we are lead to believe others were given the opportunity to sponsor the CPD training, and we use the word "sponsor" because that is basically what they are doing, and are saving practitioners in the vicinity of \$40.00 per person.

Micos have taken the bull by the horns and have taken on the challenge to run activities alongside the CPD training at their cost. We take our hat off to them for getting on board with the activities being facilitated by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Everyone is entering new territory so we can't wait for it to all start. If other suppliers feel put out they

required to work in an occupation and the skill level of an occupation.

PROFESSIONALS perform analytical, conceptual and creative tasks through the application of theoretical knowledge and experience in the fields of the arts, media, business, design, engineering, the physical and life sciences, transport, education, health, information and communication technology, the law, social sciences and social welfare.

Most occupations in this group have a level of skill commensurate with the qualifications and experience of a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification. At least five years of relevant experience may substitute for the formal qualification; or NZ Register Diploma, or at least three years of relevant experience.

TECHNICIANS AND TRADES WORKERS perform a variety of skilled tasks, applying broad or in-depth technical, trade or industry specific knowledge, often in support of scientific, engineering, building and manufacturing activities.

Most occupations in this group have a level of skill commensurate with the qualifications and experience of a NZ Register Diploma, or at least three years of relevant experience; or NZ Register Level 4 qualification, or at least three years of relevant experience.

If this conspiracy theory was to be applied you would see our level four qualified apprentices, who are not fully competent, falling into the Technicians and Trade Workers category and then our level five qualified certifiers falling into the "Professionals" category.

In reality it doesn't really matter as it is only a bureaucratic status symbol. Those of us in regulated trades know that our skills and knowledge have been deemed to be above that of other people, hence the reason for industry to be regulated. For our occupations to be performed safely they must be done by a registered, fully competent person.

So the question is - are our level five qualified certifiers performing analytical, conceptual and creative tasks, or are they performing a variety of skilled tasks, applying broad or in-depth technical, trade or industry specific knowledge?

Who cares if our Certifier's qualification is equivalent to a lawyer or accountant or not? We know the country can operate without them but it can't operate without tradespeople and it if did it would fall into a state of disrepair very quickly.

The next question is what is being achieved in the two years "under supervision" after an apprentice finishes their apprenticeship - is the industry taking a practitioner performing a variety of skilled tasks, applying broad or in-depth technical, trade or industry specific knowledge and turning them into a person who is performing analytical, conceptual and creative tasks?

Our industry apprenticeships and job roles should be defined by the employers and industry to ensure that apprenticeship standards are meaningful and relevant to employers. This would lead to increased recognition of apprentices, trust and transferability between

could always offer to reimburse practitioners the money they are paying to attend the CPD sessions. We believe this is one of the best things to happen in the industry for a long time.

Letter sent this week to Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister Of Building and Housing.

Dear Hon Dr Nick Smith

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation respectfully writes this letter to ask for your assistance.

You are no doubt aware of the problems that have occurred in the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry over the last two decades, and the dramatic improvements in relationships over the last six months.

The Federation wishes to continue with the momentum of improvements in the industry, and is seeking support for reviews of the Class of Registration and the industry NZQA Qualifications.

We realise some of these tasks are delegated to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and to another Ministry but we seek your verbal support to help convince people for the need for change and a rethink of the current system.

You may or may not be aware the Government is currently funding an apprenticeship scheme where after four years the apprentice completes the apprenticeship and hopefully passes their exams, but they are not deemed fully competent in their chosen trade. This is out of line with both the electrical and building regulated trades whereby an apprentice who completes their apprenticeships is able to sign Electrical Certificates or have their name appear on building consents if they are

employers of apprentices and registered tradespeople.

It is the responsibility of employers and the industry, working with professional bodies and others, to design apprenticeship standards, and the Federation believes that the standards should be based on one final qualification being a Registered Plumber, Gasfitter or Drainlayer. This qualification will be given when the apprentice is **fully competent**.

The Government can't determine the skills needed for all occupations so their support should be to the employers of apprentices. Millions of dollars are currently being paid to Industry Training Organisations for what we term as very poor results, and in our industry we are ending up with apprentices completing their apprenticeships **NOT FULLY COMPETENT**. Therefore, funding then has to be found for them to achieve full competency two to three years later.

The Federation is fully aware that there will be resistance to change at this stage because of work done on the NZQA qualifications, and because of consultation of Registration Classes by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board but we implore those that can affect change to stop and look carefully at what is being done and the long term outcomes.

The work done so far on the NZQA qualifications is not wasted and will only need to be enhanced so that full competency is achieved. One qualification assists in savings and better value for money for all concerned, but more importantly gains the confidence of the public.

A qualification and registration that is simple but concise and easy for all to understand alleviates a number of problems that currently exist within the industry.

As stated above, a nucleus is the central and most important part of an object, movement or group, forming the basis for its activity and growth and the Federation firmly believes apprenticeships are the **Nucleus of Craftsmanship** which will help direct our industry.

To form the nucleus we need one class of registration where an apprentice qualifies on completion of the apprenticeship with full competency of the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform in our industry unsupervised. Nothing less will do!

The registration and qualification needs to be publicly recognised as being capable of delivering on the purpose of the PGD Act 2010, being to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring the competency of persons engaged in the provision of sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying services; and to regulate persons who carry out sanitary plumbing, gasfitting, and drainlaying.

The scheme must be suitable and affordable for small business to use to train apprentices.

The system must be the same throughout the entire country so employers can have confidence that staff employed from different parts of New Zealand have been trained the same.

LBP's.

To become fully competent, plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers must endure a further two years under supervision, and have to pass an additional exam which could extend their total time to be deemed fully competent out to seven years.

The Federation believes there are better and more economical ways to achieve improved results than are being achieved at the moment.

We seek a qualification and registration class where upon completing a longer apprenticeship, say five years, the apprentice completes their training and exams and is deemed fully competent and responsible for their own work.

One qualification and registration class removes a number of issues currently in the industry such as supervision, unlicensed practitioners and should also reduce the black market.

We seek your support and are more than happy to sit down with you or your representatives to discuss this issue in depth.

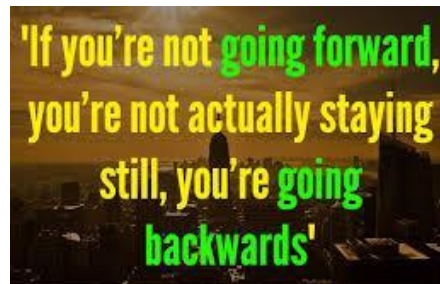
The provision of off the job training is a must.

Food for thought



The current system of assessments every 17 weeks seems to be failing and is a waste of valuable resources. However, the time away from work is valuable for apprentices as the "off the job" training provides them the opportunity to talk to other apprentices and share experiences which are a valuable part of learning. Training is critical to success.

What is the Federation about?



The Federation is about Fairness and Equality in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Regulations and Legislation.

Five years ago the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation was established

to ensure our industry got treated in a fair and equitable manner and to make sure you as practitioners were heard.

As a Federation member you can help make sure we can:

- Make the PGD Board and Government Accountable
- Tackle Excessive Expenditure
- Ensure Past Issues Are Addressed
- Ensure Relevance in Training
- Increase Industry Participation
- Ensure Better Decisions
- Strengthen the Industry
- Make Your Opinion Count

Let's keep moving with change for our industry or we will be going backwards and every other trade and profession will pass us.

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