

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Substandard Plumbing Products**
- **Funding of Apprenticeships**

IN OTHER NEWS

Apprentices have to play their part



Apprentices need to step up and take responsibility for their training.

We realise society has created a generation of people who expect everything for nothing but perhaps it's time for responsibility to be placed on them as part of their apprenticeship.

We are trying to teach them trade skills and knowledge, so why not include responsibility and gratitude?

We get employers saying to us "I don't know why I employee apprentices because they aren't grateful that I'm taking the time to train them and jez I end

Substandard Plumbing Products



The debate over substandard plumbing products continues with conspiracy theories everywhere and the blame game rearing its ugly head.

We all know there are good products out there that have served the industry for years, and we also know there are some not so good, and as tradespeople we pick which ones we use.

Last week we discussed tradespeople having to protect themselves now for the future, but we also have to take responsibility because the law says we have to. Some may not like that responsibility, but it's our cross to bear.

Reporting faulty product is much the same as reporting unauthorised people operating in the industry, nothing will be done about it unless the authorities are given the information they need to enforce the legislation.

Some people and organisations are claiming there is a problem now and others are denying there's a problem. Whatever you believe the Federation believes all product must be to applicable quality standards applied in New Zealand. It is obviously more effective, efficient and less expensive to eliminate sub-standard products before they are installed than to try and do it later.

Last week we said:

We feel the Government should be helping us with the task - NOT just imposing the liability on us. Perhaps the Government should get their Ministries and Ministers to talk to tradespeople and not dictate to them, after all we have a particular set of skills they will never have.

Well now you have the opportunity. When the Minister of Building and Housing made comment to the media last week, he also put the challenge out to the industry to advise of specific products that practitioners may have concerns about.

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have established a team that will look into the issues reported to them.

being their bloody mother when they bring all their problems to work."

Apprentices need to prioritise and take the attitude that it is only 4-7 years before they qualify. They need to realise that after qualification the world is their oyster. As an industry we need to help by making it achievable for them.

The Federation's line of thought has been voiced a number of times where we believe when an apprentice qualifies then they should be fully competent, not like the current system where they qualify and then go under supervision, and then can later achieve full competence if they feel like doing it.

We see the current system as a complete waste of time, money and resources where all the effort is put in to partially train an apprentice and keep the shackles on them for a further two years.

There is a lot of experience in the industry and a lot of people who know the way things used to be before the modern learning system came into play.

As an industry we need to harness the skills and knowledge of those people before those individuals and the real systems of learning are gone forever.

Apprentices can't learn it all from a book and neither can people trying to transfer their skill set into our industry.

The current problem is that everyone has heard of someone who knows of a problem, but no one has put forward any REAL evidence. This dedicated team will struggle to get evidence unless the industry provides them with the leads - or even better - date, time, place, product - real evidence. Help them do their job and identify if there is a real problem and how big it is. Doing this helps the Government, the public and the tradespeople – it's a win, win.

MBIE have set up a direct e-mail address to the team that would look into your issues - products@mbie.govt.nz

The Federation supports this action and sees it as a positive move to protect our future, so please if you have any suspicions or firm evidence send it through to the team. If sub-standard products are a problem as speculated then let's stump up with the evidence and stamp them out now.

Funding of Apprenticeships



Is the burden being placed on employers costing New Zealand well trained apprentices and jobs?

Over the last few weeks we have discussed what the Federation believes we need to progress the industry with regard to

industry training, in particular apprenticeship training, and this week we look at financing apprenticeships.

Welfare was never intended to be a career opportunity but it seems to be the way the New Zealand is going, and yet there is so much scope for apprenticeships but cost is a barrier. Which is better? Having someone sitting on their arse at home playing video games or having them out learning a trade? Not all people on benefits want to be in that situation and those that could do apprenticeships should be selected and funded into them. Too much money is wasted by the government paying for people to go on courses they will never get a job from.

What would be wrong with redirecting that money to employers to encourage them to train apprentices? A simple concept of getting value for money.

An apprenticeship is a joint investment between the apprentice, the employer and the government. So theoretically it is right to share the cost between the three parties.

The current system has the Government handing funding to the Industry Training Organisations (ITO), and has the employers /apprentices paying the ITO. The ITO clip the ticket on the way through and the employer and apprentice get what they are given.

Who actually has a say in what's happening? The system is so complex that only the Government and the ITO know exactly where

An example would be that just because a person has a Level 7 University Degree, it doesn't mean they have the knowledge and skills to actually be a tradesperson.

Just because a person can interpret and analyse legislation or draw plans doesn't mean they are competent enough to actually do the job in the physical sense.

Apprentices need to rise up and see themselves for what they actually are - the future of the industry.

Employers need to help apprentices by encouraging them and showing them the way.

The Government needs to recognise the contribution being made by the apprentices and the employers and reward them where possible.

A long term fix is needed but in the mean time apprentices can change attitudes and so can employers. There is no cost as it's only an attitude change.

Employers need to create an environment where apprentices know they have more to achieve because if they think they are done learning they switch off, but if they know they have more to achieve it makes every day easier knowing they have the potential to make themselves better.

Think of this:

It's not the problem that's the problem it's your attitude to the problem that

the money goes. How much of the money paid to the ITO actually goes to training the apprentice, and how much is soaked up in administration? Is it possible it's like some of the charities where only ten cents on the dollar gets to those who need it?

Of particular interest is those apprentices who have completed a 6 month pre trade at a cost of \$6k or \$7k, and who get NO financial relief from the full cost of an apprenticeship, yet they have gained a number of unit standards and are not required to attend full block courses. Why is this? Why is there not a two tiered system of charging in this instance? Someone is pocketing the difference in not purchasing unit standards and less attendance at block course.

Perhaps a direct funding model should be adopted where the employer controls the money, after all the employers already contribute significantly to apprenticeship costs via wages, mentoring and in-house training etc. If money was routed through the employer it would give them the incentive to push up the quality and relevance of training. As it stands the controller of the quality of training controls the money and standards without contributing as they are only providing assessments.

How many employers are forced into the situation where they cancel training to save money and send people into the field with no experience and then complain that the workers are not producing top quality work?

Currently the training providers have the ITO as their customer so how about a change, how about having the employers as the customers? The ITO is simply a facilitator working on behalf of the Government so when they say they are pumping millions into training they should actually say they are pumping millions into administering training and few hundred thousand into the actual training. The employers and apprentices are paying the rest.

Having the employers as the customers would increase providers' incentive to help the employers meet their business needs. If the employer contributes to the training then there would be more incentive for them to demand relevant high quality training which is value for money.

The Federation believes a system should be established where support is given to all employers, but additional support should be given to smaller businesses taking on apprentices. A system that gives employers incentives to ensure their apprentices complete their training and achieve the relevant standard. This could be a bonus funding scheme.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board is required to ensure competence in the industry so the Government needs to ensure that meeting Apprenticeship standards fully demonstrates the ability of the apprentice to operate effectively in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry during their apprenticeship and is fully competent upon completion.

No matter what system is implemented it is important that all apprentice employers are incentivised to demand the best training

can be the problem.



The Minister of Building and Housing last week announced a new website www.building.govt.nz, which makes information on regulation of New Zealand's \$25 billion a year building industry more accessible.

This affects our everyday lives. Well worth a look.

for their apprentices. Smaller employers may find the investment in external training and assessments more challenging than larger employers so assistance should be given.

The development of training is vitally important to the industry and currently only those who can afford time and travel to attend meetings about training and development get the opportunity to voice opinions. There are a few individuals who stretch the limits to attend but the majority of apprentice employers simply can't afford to attend to voice their ideas. This needs to be rectified and funded.

You are receiving this email as a member of PGDF or because you signed up online.

[Edit your subscription](#) | [Unsubscribe instantly](#)

Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation 6
Tacoma Drive, Totara
Park, Upper Hutt 5018 Ph
(04) 5277977 Mob
0276564811 Fax (04)
5277978
information@pgdf.co.nz