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**IN OTHER NEWS**



**Dear Editor**

I see in the latest Feds news letter that you have tried again to bring some more light to Paul Gees injustice.

This case seems to be typical of the "old boys club" that was always rumoured to exist within the Board for the last 30 years that I have been in this industry, it's hard to believe that this can go ignored considering the amount of evidence that Mr Gee has amassed.

It appears that the Board were happy to throw \$200,000 of our funds at an old fashioned witch hunt but are unwilling to take any responsibility for their actions, yet if a tradesman makes a

**Been There Done That**



It's a day to celebrate!! Today is the 300th edition of the Fellow Practitioner and although we may not be dining in hell we certainly know what it's like visit there.

Nearly six years ago, the Federation was told it wouldn't last five minutes, but do you know what one of the greatest things you can do is - to do what others say can't be done and the Federation has done that.

We have started with nothing but problems in the industry.

Thousands upon thousands of hours have been but in by Federation members and here we are still battling away. We put our survival down to sticking to our core business - and that is fighting for fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying regulations and legislation.

We could have taken numerous opportunities to expand and to make money from the practitioners but that would be stooping to the level of others. We have continued surviving on the donations from practitioners and supporters who believe in what we do and stand for, and we would like to take the opportunity to **thank** those that have donated and continue to donate to pay for the minor administrative costs of the Federation.

In particular we thank those apprentices on low wages who have continued to make a donation – we know it isn't easy – we believe in being a voice for you. We have kept all our supporters in mind and our expenditure is very low. Committee members do not get paid, nor do they make any claims for mileage or other costs - we make good use of the internet so people don't need to travel from Auckland or Invercargill for meetings.

The Federation a long time ago made the choice to be motivated, not manipulated, so we have stood our ground and maintained our self esteem not giving in to temptation of buy offs, position and benefits. We have walked the talk and followed through with what we have said we would do. This has included reports, complaints and protests.

Right from the start we have wanted to make change and not

mistake (or does some underhand secret handshake dodgy shit like they have) the tradesman would be expected to front up, nod the bounce and expect the punishment that they have the power to dish out. It's serious power and money, our money and the power to strip you of the ability to provide for your family and also to defend yourself.

Until this is sorted we cannot move on, you can't just bring in some new suits and pretend it didn't happen or blame the Act for not being able to do it, shit we saw how quick they can change that when they want to.

As for the new crew, time will only tell. I felt positive at first but I must say with Paul Gees case, the current focus of apps, ex police investigators and enforcement rather than getting everyone responsible for their own work and coming off your trade able to work without supervision looks like that same old MPA I'm better than you stuff again. I hope I'm wrong.

**ED:**

Hello supporter and Federation member.

Thank you for your thoughts on the Paul Gee situation. We are sure he will appreciate

survive on excuses. We have made sure we have not been used by those wanting to benefit from practitioners and have always tried to be useful to the industry.

The concept of doing the majority of the Federation's administration and communication electronically was scoffed at but it has worked and has kept our costs right down. This has enabled us to communicate with members on a weekly basis. This has been so useful that if the Fellow Practitioner isn't out by 6AM Friday mornings we get calls to make sure everything is okay.

The Federation has always wanted to excel and win, not just compete until things got hard. We have chosen to make informed decisions and listen to members rather than act on the random opinions of others.

We have been economic by doing nothing which is of no use, which reminds us of a quote from Miyamoto Musashi who was a famous Japanese swordsman:

*"There is nothing outside of yourself that can ever enable you to get better, stronger, richer, quicker, or smarter. Everything is within. Everything exists. Seek nothing outside yourself."*

The Federation has always had the opinion that practitioners know what is best for the industry because we live the industry every day, we rely on the industry and we rely on each other. We don't have anyone out there going to bat for us ensuring we are doing well - what we do have is a lot of leaches and a lot of bureaucrats who rely on us and would be screwed without us.

Over the next few months the Federation will be consolidating and hope to update the website and contact lists. If you want to assist you are more than welcome just send an email to [information@pgdf.co.nz](mailto:information@pgdf.co.nz)

## Is OSH Getting Ridiculous?



The Editor spoke to a builder the other day about the builder's Occupation Safety and Health (OSH) practices and the builder responded that he treats OSH with the contempt it deserves. He believed it had turned into a joke and said he saw more high visibility gear at the pub on Fridays nights than what he sees on site.

He sent through the above meme to highlight his thoughts on the current situation. This got us thinking about when people treat regulation as a joke, even when under the threat of prosecution. Now we all know that doesn't work as we have just been through 20 years of that.

the support and to know he is not alone.

Paul has found the isolation from the industry very difficult since he was forced out of the trade and would love nothing more than to operate his own business again, but living in such a small area his reputation is tarnished.

Paul is not alone and there are other people who feel they haven't been dealt with in a fair manner and are seeking to have the situation corrected.

We understand it is difficult for the new people at the Board in that they are trying to move forward but do get dragged back to deal with old issues.

Getting a balance is difficult but it needs to be done because as you say there can't be any moving forward until issues like Pauls are dealt with.

If you feel so strongly about this then you might like to drop a letter or email to the Minister of Construction and ask for a full review of the case. After all it was, as you so rightly point out, practitioner funds that were spent – and the guilty parties have never been found. Federation members have always been good rallying to the cause – would you be willing to write to the Minister

Benjamin Franklin probably had it summed up when he said ***"They who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."***

Apply it to our situation as tradespeople and what is the Government actually achieving? They are imposing on our rights and freedoms at a cost to us and the consumer and it will only last as long as they are enforcing the regulation they are imposing (forced compliance). This is just a short term solution that makes people reliant on the regulation (Dumbs down compliance). The meme above with the child in the washing machine probably sums it up, where people are reliant on instruction rather than using common sense.

Why is it the tradespeople who get hit with the cost and selective rules - shouldn't that which is imposed on tradespeople be applicable to everyone? Why should a member of the public be able to walk around a roof without edge protection with ACC coverage and no risk of prosecution when, because we work for a living, we are under constant risk of prosecution.

Now don't get us wrong we support the theory of everyone having the expectation of getting home if they go to work, but surely common sense comes into it. It's a bit like the company that got fined tens of thousands of dollars because one of its employees tried to drink from a high pressure water blaster and blew out the side of his face - it was deemed that they should have told the operator not to drink from the 6,000 PSI hose!! Really???

It seems to be a lot of regulation and policy introduced now days is really only short term solutions that cost us more in the future until it gets to the stage where people say enough is enough and the system is addressed. Perhaps the question should be asked if the right people are making the decisions on these practical aspects of life?

## Our advise to you is;



And while you are protecting it, how about passing on some of the costs to the consumer for the additional health and safety requirements.

If you have to walk around a domestic house and check hazards before you start work, that should be chargeable and we are recommending that the 10 – 15 minutes is built in to a job and charged as such – health and safety assessment - \$25.00.

This means you or your staff will take the time to record any hazards and then if Worksafe happen past you will have the paperwork they might want to see.

and ask (respectfully) for a full review?

As always, we would ask that you are fully aware of the case and don't go off half cock because that does no one any good, there is a huge amount of information of [www.plumbers.co.nz](http://www.plumbers.co.nz)— go to the Forum section and look under Paul Gee – it's all laid out there in black and white.

If you write or email – please CC the Federation in on a copy.

When you ask questions about health and safety – and get told “the court will decide” it's really not bloody helpful. Who wants to be that person that the court decide over? None of us that's for sure.

We have several members who have attended various training and seminars and when they have pressed for detail on what it would look like, say to “corroborate with other subbies on a kitchen”, they asked if this meant having a yak over smoko, or was something more formal and written required – you got it – the answer was “the court will decide.” So better take the high road, write everything down, but pass on the costs to the consumer – after all it's a legitimate cost in this day and age we think.

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