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IN OTHER NEWS

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I take my hat off to the Federation for all you are trying to do but I'm afraid you are up against a lot of hidden agendas.

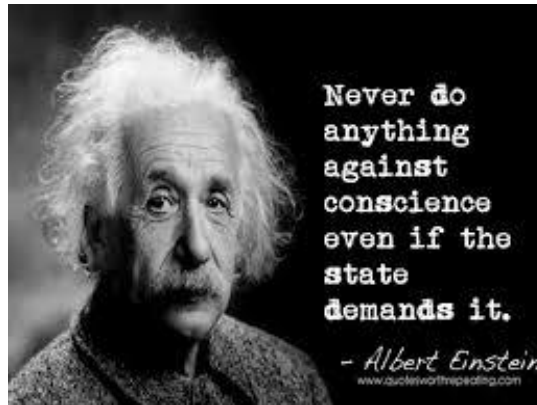
I've been in the industry for a long time and when the Federation started, I thought it was a fart in the wind and wouldn't last 5 minutes but they have proved me wrong.

The Federation's tenacity has shown they will stick at an issue and fight until the end but I think you are up against it this time wanting to change qualifications, registrations and training.

The Government seems stuck in the old ways and seeks people in the industry that supports their way of thinking.

In my opinion, the Government is gutless, as they have known for years that there are issues in the industry and

It's a Conscience Year



What is your sense of right and wrong, and where do your principles lie?

These are just two questions that you will be asked in the near future, as there is a push by the Federation and others for changes

in the industry with regard to registration classes and training for plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying.

This isn't about taking sides or voicing opinions based on your membership to organisations, this is about doing what is right for the future of the industry. We realise we have been harping on about this a lot this year but if we don't push for change now it will be another decade before anyone will even look at change. It's up to practitioners to voice their opinions while the opportunity is there no matter which organisation they belong to!

We say it's a conscience year because the issues being dealt with are issues of individual practitioners; it's about how THEY feel and what THEY see the future of the industry being. Practitioners need to let the Executive Committees of their membership groups know how THEY feel about qualifications, registration, licensing and training.

The issues aren't about what's good for the organisations, it's about what is good for the individuals and the individuals joining the industry in the future. To make your conscience vote on the issues you need to understand about the direction of your membership organisation, such as the Federation is about "*Fairness and Equality in Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Regulations and Legislation*", that's it, no frills or other benefits just a voice for you to use.

Master Plumbers on the other hand provide the industry with a different service, they state on their website "*Why wouldn't you be a Master Plumber? Master Plumbers is the brand consumer's trust. It tells them your plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying business is Quality Assured and backed by the Master Plumbers Guarantee. We have resources to support, protect and grow your business when you become a member. Why wouldn't you?*"

As you can see Master Plumbers provide a service to help develop individual businesses and their owners, but by default over the years

all they have done is tinkered with things to get by.

What long-term issues have they dealt with?

They have done nothing for the industry and now some of those issues are coming back to bite them in the arse such as the skill shortages in plumbing and gasfitting.

ED:

You have highlighted some good points there.

Yes it does make you wonder what it will take before the Government actually helps the industry especially when you see articles like this:

Primary industry needs 50,000 more people

NZ Newswire on June 15, 2016, 4:01 am

New Zealand's primary industries are going to need 50,000 more people by 2025 and the government has set about finding them.

Prime Minister John Key and Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy will launch the campaign at this week's national field days.

"The aim is to raise awareness of the huge range of exciting careers in the primary sector, their importance to New Zealand, and encourage young people to consider a career in this broad field," Mr Guy said.

"The primary sector is a

they were chucked into a "voice of the industry" role and now do a huge amount for the industry that their membership pay for. Working with Standards is a prime example where costs of attending meetings and participating in work groups are imposed on Master Plumbers.

The Federation and Master Plumbers are just two of the organisations pushing in the same direction for the betterment of the industry, but the methods are different. In some ways, Master Plumbers should be thanked by the industry for doing a lot that others in the industry don't want to do, or can't afford to do. Some people don't realise the amount of effort that goes into trying to keep the industry on track and out of the greedy hands of Government empire builders.

One past problem in the industry was that at times the directions and wants of organisations clouded the future direction of the industry. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was a prime example of the opinions and wants of a couple of organisations that were making money out of CPD that subsequently influenced the direction of the entire industry. Some saw the scheme as providing them with a captive audience to push their products. Others saw it as a scheme to make money. The true nature of CPD was lost.

Most organisations have their place in the industry but where it gets difficult is when they use their influence to dictate the direction of the entire industry, not just their membership and without industry governance, this behaviour can go unabated.

That's why the Federation has stayed true to its purpose, that's why we don't worry about membership numbers and that's why we are only answerable to our members (as opposed to sponsors as well). All we want is a better industry now and in the future and we will take on any organisation, including the Government that sets its self-interest ahead of the industry as a whole.

The Federation will happily work with others to move forward and get what is needed by the industry. We are sure Master Plumbers would agree with us that practitioner feedback is required for the organisations to be able to put forward cases for change or no change as the case may be. Different practitioners seek different support and what the Federation is encouraging practitioners to do is to think about the future. Individual needs of those that are in the industry now and those who come into the industry in the future may be different.

Times are changing but that doesn't mean we ignore what has worked in the past so send us your ideas as you may know something that we don't.

The cost of being involved can be minimal compared to the cost of being dictated to.

major part of the economy but we face big challenges in attracting enough young people - by 2025 the sector will need 50,000 more people."

The ministry will be releasing a series of videos featuring primary industry "champions" including farmers, growers, fishers, foresters, scientists, economists, rural consultants and marketing specialists.

How are they helping us with the skills shortage in the industry? It really does make us feel underappreciated.

Just because we don't produce a commodity to be sold such as milk, cheese or lamb doesn't mean we don't contribute to the economy and deserve the same help.

There seems to be no appreciation for the preventative nature of our work and the basic necessities we provide to the public.

The Forty Hour Week



In line with the above article practitioners need to take responsibility for their own destinies and have their say. We hear of many practitioners who simply say, "That's the boss's problem" and then try not to get involved.

Next time an issue comes up why not question a bit more about it and help come up

with solutions. Business owners and bosses have families and hobbies the same as everyone else. There is no doubt they would like to spend time doing the things they enjoy the same as everyone else.

A forty-hour week would be a part time job for most people operating a business, so spare a thought for them and help out where you can as they will be doing a lot for you that you don't realise, just the same as the industry organisations do a lot for the industry that goes unrecognised.

From the Federation we thank all employees, employers and industry organisations because we are a diverse industry that has no governance and that leaves many people in a situation of going the extra mile for the benefit of others.

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