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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**The Answers as we see it (just so you know we actually think about that not just the problems):**

**Review Level 3 – the course needs to be NO longer than 3-4 weeks – it is simply an introduction to the industry for those that aren't sure it's what they want to do – they simply need to get first aid, Site Safe and know the names of some tools so that they are "apprentice ready".**

**Bring in actual training at the Polytechnic – not every employer does everything so we need to ensure there is a broad-brush stroke approach – this is where the polytechnic comes in. Bring back tutoring and make the block courses not all about assessment.**

**Bring back some "skin in the game" for apprentices i.e. like correspondence or the pre-block course work – except have some consequences when it**

**The Continuing Rebellion**



Rebellion is when you stand up and say, "We know what you want us to be but we are going to show you what we need to be". There are a number of threats to our industry including unauthorised people, and people with their own

agendas, but the biggest threat is from people wearing suits and ties trying to dictate their will upon us to make their statistics look good.

Can someone with analytical skills stack the figures to make the practical application of skills and knowledge workable, or do they simply make the figures look good? For years, the Government have tried to beat the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying industry into submission and all that has happened is that more and more practitioners have turned their back on the Government and their cronies.

They have not been alone and have recruited some within the industry to assist them in their quest. It has now reached the stage where experienced, competent practitioners are rare and there is no credible plan to resolve industry issues.

The Government say, "sort out your industry" - but do they assist with the leadership or tools to do that? We try with the resources we have and the Government still dictate what we can and cannot do. They apply their "one model fits all" regime but it's amazing how this only applies when they want it to because we are still the only industry in New Zealand that gets levied (taxed) to prosecute members of the public and is **100% funded by the industry.**

The Federation questions their wisdom and methods. The Industry is handed the most dangerous people in the Galaxy, THE UNSKILLED, and immediately we are told to make them competent to protect the health and safety of the public. As knowledgeable practitioners, we know this takes time, training and experience. There are no shortcuts to this!

So we say **NO** to dumbing down the industry and **NO** to allowing partially trained people loose on the public. Both of the actions put the public and their property at risk, which is in direct contradiction to the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

What can be more empowering for an apprentice than to know at

isn't done.

At the moment the lazy and less inclined are NOT doing this part of the deal and are holding up EVERYONE else on their block courses while it is repeated – this costs every employer and every apprentice time and money and is unacceptable.

Doing an apprenticeship is more than just working 7.30am – 4.30pm and going on block courses. Let's see a return to the apprentice investing in themselves.

Make the apprenticeship contract with Skills include a minimum time frame of 10000 hours – plumbing and gasfitting are not just theoretical trades, hands on time is very important in ensuring competency.

This is something "missed" by NZQA, TEC and Skills themselves – our industries are not just paper based – we actually make, fix and produce something at the end of the day, and the skills used to do that are the most important.

Therefore simply having what is described as a competency based apprenticeship (i.e. unit standards that are assessed at the polytechnic), without a minimum hours requirement does not take into account the hands on skills and experience required to become competent.

the end of an arduous training regime that they are deemed competent? That they are responsible for their own actions and they are able to hand on their knowledge and skills to the next generations of tradespeople. That type of empowerment is the exact opposite to what exists now where it is assessment to a partial qualification.

We ask you - who pays when you screw up? You do. Who pays when the Government or their cronies screw up? You still do. For a long time the industry has been paying for other peoples bad calls and poor service. The power of the dollar has been dictating the direction of industry training. The term training should not be taken at face value.

When the Federation refers to training, we mean a structured programme that produces a tradesperson that has the skills, knowledge and experience to be deemed competent to protect the health and safety of the public as required by the Act. Training as it stands now is a series of assessments that take a snapshot in time to grade competence at that time.

## The Current Situation



The impression is that organisations given the charter to train the industry are so busy congratulating themselves on the success of their numbers that the value of the content has disappeared.

The Government seem happy to throw money at them because the numbers look good and pay lip service to the quality of what is produced. When things don't look good they always have the backup action of blaming the industry. They seem to forget that the industry doesn't have the power and never has had the power to effect change. Everything that has happened and is happening falls squarely at the feet of the Government.

They expect the industry to follow blindly and we have been – up until now. Remember the times we have proved their incompetence, they have made a mockery of democracy by taking actions like making recommendations in the Regulations Review Committee and then walking into the House of Representatives to vote AGAINST their own recommendations. Then to cover up the flow on effect of that they have retrospectively changed the law of the land!

Are these the people we entrust with the future of our industry? People who now provide us with a regime that has a Level 3 Qualification where upon completion very few people progress in to the industry and have potential to put the public in harms way. Trainees pay around \$6,000 for the course and the Government contribute to this training on top of this, but what can the trainee be and do at the end? In most cases NOTHING. It is a "pre-cursor" to a

Have a qualification that allows a person to ply the trade they have become competent in – yes a one-qualification requirement that puts us on an even footing with our fellow regulated trades like electrical and building.

This may mean a change from 8000 to 10000 hours – but at the end of it, let the competent person work in the field they have trained in without the need to extra supervision.

This is not rocket science. It does not involve us ticking all the boxes that TEC require, nor SKILLS, nor the Government, but what it does do is:

Stop people spending money on something that doesn't do a blind bit of good (Level 3)

Produce a qualification that actually allows those that have it to use it and be gainfully employed.

Have them able to sign off their own work, thereby making people more productive earlier than they are now (with the requirement for a four-year apprenticeship and then an additional two years to Certifying standard). This would reduce some of the shortage and encouraging more people to enter the industry.

The money we are paying to SKILLS for the outcome we are getting is, in our opinion, a crime. Our industry needs to stand up and fight for itself – we

real apprenticeship.

They then give us a Level 4 Qualification and upon completion of their apprenticeship, the trainee is deemed to be qualified enough to be under supervision of a suitably qualified tradepeople. **They are not deemed competent enough to work unsupervised.** This again puts the public at risk with more partially competent people.

At this stage if they have completed a pre trade for \$6k and a full four year apprenticeship at around \$12k – they have now spent \$18k of their own money and a substantial amount of taxpayer money (we believe another \$10k) So \$28k later and they still cannot work unsupervised.

Next there is the Level 5 Qualification where there is **no training path** to get the individual to that level and no one really knows what is to be taught at this level that is over and above that which is taught at Level 4.

For the last three to four years, a project has been underway by NZQA, ITO's and industries to make New Zealand Qualifications. After all that time they still have the same that they started with, in fact it's worse than when it started. Others are dictating what they believe our industry needs based on the one size fits all mentality of the Government.

## Don't like it?



Don't like what you're reading – well frankly, we aren't making any apologies for that. Suitably qualified people who have stepped up and tried to make change for the industry have been branded and even told by the Minister of Building and Housing that

they will never be appointed to a position where they can make change. Now why would that be?

Perhaps the Government is too cowardly to allow change because it will highlight the money being wasted and that their previous decisions have been nothing less than stupid. It's easier for the Government to say the industry isn't playing the game and it's an industry problem not the Government systems.

The Government has been blaming the industry saying that it is not employing enough apprentices - but who in their right mind would put in the time and effort and spend tens of thousands of dollars to get someone to a stage where they are only partially competent? Why bring people into an environment full of mistrust of the Government and their cronies?

Rather than listening to the industry and resolving the problems the Government seems content to abandon New Zealanders in preference to importing tradespeople from overseas and have them

know what is needed by our apprentices and it's time we made sure those that are meant to be supplying it listen and act on it.

If we do what we've always done, we will get what we've always got.

Here's a quote for SKILLS when it comes to apprenticeships:

***"To lead the people, walk behind them." (Lao Tzu)***

jump to the front of the line for jobs.

So rather than putting in the effort to provide appropriate training, appropriate qualifications and appropriate governance the Government appear happy to abandon the New Zealand qualified tradespeople and those young people who want to be tradespeople.

It's costly and time consuming fighting against stupid people who simply won't listen to the needs of the industry. Eventually the fighting will stop and people will walk away in disgust. The big question for the Government is – how far away is that walkout or has it already begun?

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