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IN OTHER NEWS

Has there been improvement?

It's hard to distinguish if its improvement or getting the industry back to where it should be.

From the Federation's point of view, there has been change for the better, but probably not as much as we would have liked, or as quick as we would have liked.

The Board Registrar/Chief Executive Martin Sawyers has implemented changes, which have improved the operating environment we work in and is communicating with the industry in a meaningful way.

Obviously not everyone is happy and we feel for the few who are still trying to resolve historical issues. We believe the Board should make an exception and address a few of the main historical complaints that continue to displease some in the industry.

Not only will this resolve problems but will help rebuild the confidence practitioners should have in the Board.

The Federation still gives whatever support it can to those who are still fighting

We Were There



A lot has happened to the industry in the last 6 years and we were there.

What happened, or was said in July over the last six years?

July 2010

Why is industry competence and Board governance being made so difficult?

Most people in the industry are doers, hands on workers who can pick something up, look at, rip it apart, improve it and put it back together.

On the other hand, we have bureaucrats who are trying to govern the industry. People who are not doers, people who analyse, document, record, discuss and confuse. These are not hands on people and trade competence would be difficult for them, is this a matter of what is difficult to them is difficult for everyone?

Practical thinkers could probably come up with practical solutions to perceived industry issues within a few hours. Are the bureaucrats over thinking simple issues?

July 2011

This week was the first meeting involving the new Board members and what a failure. It just goes to show you what's on paper may not be reality.

We have Board members with alternative dispute resolution skills, Fellows of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand, Members of the Institute of Directors, and an ex Directors of Arbitration New Zealand and what's the best they can come up with - a line that the Minister had used before about working constructively with the Board. Wal received this message on Wednesday this week:

Dear Wal

It is disappointing that there is no constructive working relationship with you and your organisation at the present time. Accordingly, our monthly meetings appear redundant and I will not be continuing with them.

for their rights.

Restoring trust in the Board is a huge task and inroads have been made in this area but there is still a long way to go.

We don't see the Minister of Building and Housing or the Government helping in this area, as they appear to be a dam to any progression in the industry.

Already their past actions and policies are coming back to haunt them. The skills shortage is a case in point and the retrospective legislation they imposed to slam the industry will never go away. Arrogance making decisions instead of common sense.

Looking at the 2015 key focus areas from the Board:

Streamlining complaints and discipline - Mr Sawyers and his team have implemented new processes and procedures, which appear to be working. This initiative was designed to reduce both the cost and stress associated with complaints. It would seem practitioners have been co-operative and the system is gaining industry trust.

Industry engagement - Mr Sawyer and the Board Members have actively made the effort to understand the concerns of our industry and how things could be improved. Having an approachable Registrar/CE has made life easier for the Federation and its members. Martin Sawyer may not agree with every issue but at least he is prepared to listen.

Continuing Professional Development – This issue has been mostly addressed

I will of course continue to alert you to the various consultation processes that will occur over the remainder of the year and your input to these will be welcomed and valued by the Board.

Yours sincerely

Max Max Pedersen

Chief Executive Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

The Federations response was simple - "okay". The old "Play by our rules or we will take our bat and ball and go home", doesn't really wash with us. It's certainly a bit childish but it shows the mentality of this closed organisation.

July 2012

Dear Editor, I was at the meeting with the Minister Maurice Williamson and the Board in Napier a few months ago, where he twice compared us qualified tradesman with a trade certificate, to unqualified builders.

He said "the days of a builder only needing a cell phone, ute and a dog" to practice in the building trade were over The Minister has now gone on to state this in the latest Master Plumbers journal, April/May 2012 edition.

Our trade certificates are equivalent to a degree; I am offended the Minister keeps comparing me and my fellow qualified tradesman to cowboys. I ask the Minister does he have a degree in the trade he practices, i.e... a degree in political science or political philosophy - no I bet he doesn't.

So Minister compare your unqualified self, to incompetent "only needing a cell phone, Ute and a dog" builder - as you only need a cell phone, tie, and a pin stripped suit to practice your unqualified trade.

The major problem in this country in this hard economic time is unqualified people leading the qualified, and installing their unqualified old boys' club mates in positions of guidance and decision making, which the Minister does every time the Board needs new personnel.

The Master Plumbers Society should be ashamed of themselves, allowing their publication to let an unqualified person like the Minister, compare qualified trained plumber tradesman, to untrained dodgy cowboys masquerading as qualified builders.

Every Plumber, Gasfitter and Drainlayer in the country needs to stop putting up with this trade eroding nonsense, and vote with our feet, don't put your vote to a party whom has the unqualified Minister in its ranks.

July 2013

We NEED Governance!

Remember when the Americas Cup was enjoyable to watch? A time when sailors ran it and it was all about the competition and them

and a substantial effort has been put in to making quick, efficient changes to assist practitioners. The new scheme appears to be meeting with the current needs of tradespeople.

Supervision – The Board has gone to great lengths to ensure practitioners in positions of supervision are aware of their responsibilities. There are still things that could be done to aid in this such as practitioners being responsible for their own work and having relevant qualifications to support it. We are working on this area for our members.

Unauthorised people - Strategies that help deal with illegal operators within the industry have been implemented and staff to support those strategies have been employed. The Federation still believes the current Registration Classes and qualifications create a problem in this area where the industry is contributing to the training of partially trained people.

Some of these people are operating unlawfully without supervision and are no doubt endangering the health and safety of the public and costing the industry by way of lost income and enforcement costs.

The industry can help in this area by reporting unauthorised people and by supporting the Federation's view of qualifications and registration so that every tradesperson is competent and responsible for their own work.

The Federation's hope was that Martin Sawyers open approach and a change in

applying their skills in their sport, and then the lawyers got involved and now more time is spent in the court room than on the water.

Much the same has happened with our industry - everything ran smoothly when it was run by trade's people but since bureaucrats and lawyers have got involved, the industry is slowly being destroyed. The egos of people, who are in positions of authority and have been appointed beyond their levels of understanding, are dragging the industry down.

It seems to be that the Board and others cast doubt on the skills and abilities of the industry, so there is no end to the things they can fail at without being noticed. The Board and secretariat have continually done that over the last decade by interfering with the training system, which is now nonexistent and is purely an assessment scheme; by imposing CPD and by using discipline as a measure of success.

The big question is what does the secretariat and Board ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTE to the industry? We believe the answer is NOTHING. You see there are NO measurements of success with regard to industry performance hence the reason the Board puts so much emphasis on discipline and prosecutions, it's an easy way to cast doubt on our abilities whilst hiding behind their own incompetence.

It's claimed by the Board and bureaucrats that their regulation of the industry protects OUR reputation as an industry. That may have been the case at one time, but now the Board's regulation is CREATING the problem it claims it is fighting - non-registered or non-licensed people operating in the industry. It's a prime example of bureaucracy at work.

Let's look at the last decade. We have had the Board trying to get involved in the training of the industry, which was outside their legislative responsibilities (ref the Armstrong Report). Hundreds of thousands of industry dollars were wasted. We had a Continuing Professional Development Scheme implemented and operated for 8 years WITHOUT statutory authority and a situation now where the scheme is still believed to be without authority but political influence is holding up the allegations being addressed.

The last decade has seen discipline and prosecutions fund the building of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board empire. What does it tell you about an organisation and the way they operate when licensing is DOWN 12% in one year, and they have to install security doors to protect their staff from the perceived danger imposed by practitioners?

July 2014

When the Federation met with Hon Nick Smith, Minister of Building and Construction part of the discussion was about the industry and productivity.

The Federation has always believed practitioners have the right to operate in a fair, efficient, economical manner, with no undue costs to the consumer, or barriers to employing staff. We believe the current regulations impose excessive undue costs on practitioners, restrict the innovation in businesses and INCREASES costs to the

attitude by the Board may set everyone on a converging course to a better final product - being fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying regulations and legislation.

We feel this is slowly happening but the challenge now is to keep momentum and keep the industry interested in improvements being made and that need to be made.

There are still challenges ahead that are out of the control of the Board such as the review of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 and the Occupational Licensing Review for the construction industry.

Both these reviews could be the catalyst for an industry walkout if our industry needs are not considered and met.

Delays in these reviews and the debacle in the review of qualifications for NZQA are already causing problems in the industry.

We are still mindful that the clock is ticking and are hopeful change is ahead but everyone can be forewarned that if it is not then our resolve will be even greater.

Forced compliance by the Government will no longer be tolerated.

consumer.

This is what the Federation told the Government in 2010 during the Regulations Review Committee hearing:

- Average cost to a business per tradesman for Licensing and CPD is \$5,035.87
- The cost to Business is \$119.00 per week for each licensed worker for licensing and CPD
- The Industry will pay \$1,370,000.00 for licences
- The Industry will pay \$1,966,006.00 for discipline levies.
- 227,273.25 hours will be spent on CDP training.
- CPD will cost \$37,219,449.98 across the industry annually
- Individual cost if all CPD is after hours \$1,349.91

Unwarranted expenditure imposes barriers to entry or retention in the industry as practitioners and employers are paying excessive costs to enable them to work. They will be very cautious about employing apprentices and tradesmen due to the ongoing costs. How can productivity increase when the government pays to train apprentices but gets provided with assessments?

So is the manner in which regulation is imposed on the industry stifling productivity, creativity and innovation? We believe it is. The industry is busy fighting for equality and fairness in the regulation and paying for enforcement, which does not leave time or resources for increasing productivity or for innovation. We are busy proving competence to qualify, proving competence to licence, and proving competence if someone lays a complaint no matter how frivolous.

We operate in a forced compliance environment that provides little, if any benefit to the industry. We have a \$4 Million Dollar Board and \$30 Million CPD costs annually which is money that could be better directed towards innovation and productivity, and we would actually have something new to teach the industry.

July 2015

Change Ahead? The Board Registrar/Chief Executive Martin Sawyers has hit the ground running and has implemented changes already, which have been approved by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Here are some of the key focus areas:

- Streamlining complaints and discipline
- Industry engagement
- Continuing Professional Development
- Supervision
- Unauthorised people

Check out the side column for our current thoughts.

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