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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor

So Wal Gordon was called a shit stirrer by some guy.

Hi Wal,

You can now sleep easy as you have officially made it! You have reached the giddy heights of public recognition for all your hard work for the PGDF.

I would have taken it as a compliment and I hope you have too?

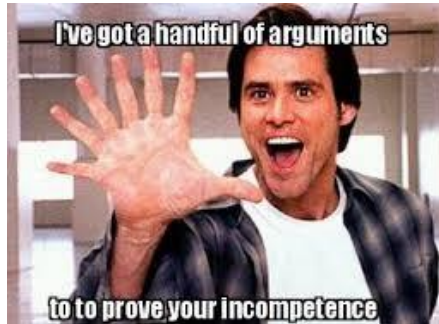
Without your stirring, all Plumbers would be the worse off and at the mercy of the people whom we pay to shaft us!

Keep up the stirring Wal.

ED:

Thanks for the comforting words for Wal.

The Cost of Incompetence



As an industry, we are dictated to by the Government and their departments, and nearly every time they “make a MISTAKE” or simply get it wrong it ends up costing us, the humble taxpayer, in some way.

The Productivity Commission has just released a 402-page draft report “New Models of Tertiary Education”. Parts of the content of this report affect our industry and our apprentices.

The report has identified issues such as:

- Funding for industry training is predominantly restricted to provision at level 1 to 4 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).
- The government-funding rate for apprenticeships differs markedly, depending on whether apprenticeships are administered by an Industry Training Organisation (ITO) or an Independent Training Provider (ITP). (Editor’s comment – you would not believe how much of a difference there is in funding for this!!!)
- Current funding and regulatory settings for tertiary education that focus on younger full-time learners create barriers to mid-career retraining.
- Compared to other OECD countries, workers in New Zealand are poorly matched with their positions.
- Government typically recovers just 60 cents per dollar lent through the Student Loan Scheme.
- NZQA processes are time consuming, costly and a barrier to innovation in the development of delivery programmes. (Editor’s comment – we have recently experienced this first hand – it is ridiculous!)
- The tertiary education system is poorly suited for lifelong learning.
- Course and qualification completion rates as currently published by government are not a reliably good indicator of a provider’s performance in educating students, because they do not measure value-added.
- Whatever happens educationally between age 15 and young adulthood in New Zealand does not reduce variation in skill levels across the population, or improve the skills ranking of younger New Zealanders compared to other OECD countries.

The Federation is not that foolish that it thinks it can make everyone happy. There will always be the non-believers and those that are totally out for themselves and not the industry as a total.

All we can do is keep pushing for improvements and hope a happy medium is found.

Dear Editor

Last week Corrections Minister Judith Collins was quoted as taking a hard line on her department's prison monitors, saying their excuses over the Serco fiasco were "absolute nonsense".

To me it poses a question of who oversees the overseers.

ED:

A very good question and a very simple answer "**The Public at election time.**" In between times it is up to individuals and organisations to try to hold them accountable and that's a battle in itself.

Ministers appear to be doing very little to control or get better productivity from their portfolios and as we identified in the main column we need to take control of our own destinies but barriers are put in our way.

We want what is best for our industry, practitioners and apprentices.

Perhaps sending apprentices to jail may be one way of getting funding because under a new scheme \$15.4m

This just names a few of the issues but to us it's an alarming signal that if the government and its departments can't get their own systems right then how can we as an industry be expected to invest out time and resources in tertiary training? It seems the bureaucrats benefit and we struggle on, because they would reach first class honours when it comes to burning through taxpayer money.

It would be interesting to know how much of the funding given to ITO's and the TEC actually progresses on to "value added training" and how much gets soaked up in administration simply running the place.

Have we reached a stage where bureaucrats sit in their office creating work for themselves stacking percentages and numbers, gloating about their achievements and how many languages they can speak? Well we can speak three languages, English, Profanity and Sarcasm, and we will use them all as we are getting sick of not seeing value for money, but rather pathetic training that costs us as an industry.

Perhaps if we told the bureaucrats, the brain was an App they may start using it. The Federation attends meetings in an attempt to effect change but at some of the meetings we simply sit back and listen to people for a while and wonder who ties their shoelaces for them.

If you bring to light the short comings of departments or organisations it's like shining a torch on a cockroach infestation where its every cockroach for themselves as they scamper for somewhere to hide. There seems to be an endless supply of stupid out there where policies and procedures are implemented on a whim. They claim its improvement but it's really only change, a different approach just for the sake of it.

The Industry has been working hard to get new qualifications documented and filed with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority but haven't been told the entire truth. Time and effort put in at no cost to the Government only to see that in the background a review of tertiary training, the very foundation we have to work to, has been going on. Who knows what the outcome will be?

Not only that, the industry has been contending with the review of occupational regulation within the building and construction sector and the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the ACT) hanging over our heads.

It seems that by the time anything is achieved by the Government the system and circumstances have changed and we are back to square one. Look at the review of the Act. It took 4 years to implement the Act and it was written into the Act that it would be reviewed three years after its implementation and here we are **MORE THAN SIX YEARS AFTER ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND WE STILL HAVEN'T SEEN THE RESULTS OF THE REVIEW.**

We as an industry may be working to failing sections of an Act. Why is this taking so long? WHO is accountable – the Minister? His Department? MBIE? WHO should have their neck on the block over

will go into a three-year trial where Work and Income case managers and professionals will work with up to 200 prisoners at a time, beginning 10 weeks before release and for 12 months after release.

They'll develop individual plans to get them into employment and help them access training and support services.

You have to ask what help our practitioners and apprentices get (when they are taxpaying law-abiding people). It used to be "do the crime do the time" but that appears to have changed to do the crime, do the time and get the help other New Zealanders aren't eligible for.

Dear Editor

An aircraft made in Hamilton has turned up in North Korea and Prime Minister John Key wants to know how it got there. Apparently, an inquiry has been ordered to find out what happened and how it got there.

More tax payer money wasted that could have funded our industry or gone into providing training.

ED:

The aircraft probably flew there on autopilot to escape the incompetence here.

this?

At the beginning of 2015 the government started the review of occupational regulation within the building and construction sector and we still haven't seen anything from it. The Federation believes these two examples alone show incompetence that is putting up barriers to the progression of our industry.

We know Hon Nick Smith doesn't like problem identification or criticism without solutions so here is our solution:

- Put the processes and procedures in place that allow the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board to govern the industry as an Industry Board not as a consumer protection Board.
- Let the industry decide what is best for it, govern in a manner that will develop and progress the industry, and still meet the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.
- Get people on the Board who can relate and speak for the industry. There are some there now who in recent times have stepped up and listened to the industry - and look at the changes that have occurred over the last 12-18 months.
- Get the Board positioned so it can speak for the industry and go to bat for what it believes is right. This will help avoid total mess like the Gas Certificate regime which was implemented by bureaucrats and four years later is still not understood by the industry. It has always been said that if the end user can't understand the legislation, process and procedures then it is poor legislation and the Government and its departments have failed.

We implore the Minister to communicate and meet with industry representatives to set in motion improvement for the industry so the fighting and war of words can stop and efforts can be directed to improvement.

We want to progress but bureaucrats are putting up barriers and imposing excessive costs. Perhaps the Government should look at what happened to the Roman Empire where they started more wars than they could handle, it had greedy leaders, wasteful spending, Government tyranny and unpaid debt – that is starting to sound very familiar....

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