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IN OTHER NEWS

Where is the source of the problems?



The main column outlined a number of problems and the source of the problems seems to point towards the Government and politicians and the legislation they have imposed.

Somewhere, there's a tree working really hard to make oxygen so the politicians can breathe and we feel the politicians that are turning a blind eye to the plight of our industry should go and apologise to it.

When you read the main column ask yourself, how many of the issues are in the control of the tradespeople? (The answer is NONE). Yet it is the tradespeople who are expected to carry the burden of getting everything right and pay for and correct problems created by others.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 Under Review

Thank you for your feedback!
Your opinion is important to us.



As we have discussed a number of times before, the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 should be well under way.

It would seem some submissions have been made. Should this review ever get to the stage of asking the industry about CURRENT problems, perhaps the issue of the public employing non authorised people should be covered off in the Act?

There have been a lot of discussions about cowboys in the industry and it

has always been the tradespeople who have been targeted with discipline and licensing.

Well how about hitting the problem at the source, the customer? Take away (or prosecute) the people wanting to do cash jobs or wanting to get cheap jobs done by circumventing legislation and then the problem will largely disappear.

Look at this advertisement off the internet:

Plumber for cheap reno (toilet, cylinder, tapware install)

General Plumbing — Phillipstown, Christchurch

Just doing a reno so need some plumbing done, cheap job not looking for big company rates. • Toilet needs installing. Old ones has already been removed, replacement just a simple one from Bunnings all ready. • Vanity tap install.

This is exactly the type of person who will get an unauthorised person to do the job simply because they don't want to pay "big company" rates.

What are big company rates? Are they the \$600.00 plus an hour you pay to go to a lawyer, or the \$200.00 for 20 minutes to get a tooth removed, or the \$65.00 doctor's appointment where you wait 30 minutes because they are running late, see the doctor for five minutes and go back in two weeks to see if their guess has worked?

People belittle the trades and believe they are workers who can't do anything else, yet they want their sewage taken away, they want dry homes, they want heat in the winter time, they want a ready supply of hot and cold water, all this and they don't want to pay "big company" rates!

What's it going to take for all the bullshit to stop and for real work to be done to revive the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry.

There are people out there in organisations that are saying all is well but those looking to the future who are not employers have varying views.

As long as self interest is put ahead of industry interests then nothing will be achieved apart from money and resources being wasted for an inferior final product.

Access to money and time seems to be ruling the direction of the industry. Individuals who have the knowledge are generally excluded as they don't have the money or time to attend the countless time wasting meetings the bureaucracy demands.

We simply don't understand why the Government and Politicians continue to ignore the problems and make the practitioners in the industry pay for others incompetence.

New Zealand has the opportunities and currently the knowledge to create a progressive long term plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry of well trained tradespeople but instead we seem to be going backwards as the abandoned industry.

We have heard it time and time again from the politicians that it's up to the industry to help its self but how can that occur when we are funding the correction of their mistakes and when the legislation is stacked against the needs of the industry.

Does the government expect the industry to continue to

They create the market and the problem for the industry and then it is left up to the authorised tradespeople to police the behaviour with no benefit, and all the costs.

The source of the problem should be held accountable, those knowingly employing "cowboys" should be prosecuted and pay the price, with their fines going to the policing of the behaviour i.e. the PGDB's coffers clearly marked for discipline purposes, not into the Government slush fund.

So while the Government is reviewing the Act, why not direct the funds from fines etc into the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers bank account to bring industry fees and levies down? This seems very fair to us given that we pay to police our industry unlike our colleagues in the electrical industry.

The review of the Act is **critical** to the advancement of the industry so why is it taking so long? In the Federation's opinion it is because of the review of occupational licensing, where the Government is simply looking for ways to keep their costs down. It has nothing to do with the protection of the public or about making the industry better - it's ALL about money and definitely not about efficiencies or economies of scale.

The Tax Risk



We all get hit with taxes but for those in trades consumers want us to risk it all for their benefit. They take no risk by offering to pay "cash" for jobs but expect huge discounts if they do pay cash.

These consumers have an instant defence of "I paid for the work. It's not my responsibility to declare tax for the work done" and they are right, so tradespeople need to take responsibility and say no to the discounted "cash" job.

Imagine if we went to McDonalds or one of the other fast food chains and asked for a discount for paying cash, we would get laughed out of the joint - so why let customers do it to tradespeople?

Why doesn't the Government alter legislation to make it an offence to knowingly assist in tax evasion – take away this elusive black market of cash jobs and actually police it?

Emphasis should be put on "attempts" to make such deals and in that way if someone asks for a "cash" job the information can be handed on to the Inland Revenue Department.

It's always the tradesperson that gets the blame for tax evasion etc., what about the person wanting to pay cash to get a cheap job; let's make them accountable as well.

Take away the problem at the source – the consumer. Yet again it's the tradesperson at the bottom of the list so we cop liability for others who create the problem.

pay the annual \$4M for a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board whose sole purpose is to protect the health and safety of the public?

Does the Government expect the industry to fund a real industry Board to look after the professional support needed by the industry?

The Federation believes the industry is being forced into a situation of continuing to support failing legislation and systems or simply turning its back on the regulation of the industry.

The only blame that can be placed on the tradespeople is that they don't care what happens any more. Decades of absolute bullshit regulation where individual interests have ruled the direction have stained the patience of all.

All that appears to be happening at the moment is that every time legislation is looked at the Government and Bureaucrats look for, and find new ways to screw the practitioners.

Perhaps if they put as much energy into improving the situation instead of covering their own arses improvements would be made.

The Federation has not been shy about the tactics it has used such as protesting, identifying incompetence to the public and of course using the resources of the land such as the Regulation Review Committee and the Ombudsman to prove a point.

There is still room to escalate activities but AT THE END OF THE DAY will there be anyone left in the industry to reap the

I'll Supply My Own Material



How often do tradespeople hear the customer say "I want labour only, I'll supply the material"

They go out and purchase their own sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying gear from one of the many plumbing

suppliers and hardware stores – all in the name of saving money. This actually costs the tradepeople money in that they make no profit from materials.

Yet again the Government has the tradesperson held accountable in that the legislation states the tradesperson must make sure the material is fit for purpose and the current Minister has stated it's the tradesperson's responsibility.

No one seems to know how long it has to be fit for purpose but you would have to hazard a guess it would be a number of years (15 years rings a bell), depending on what the item is.

This is another situation where the customer benefits and the tradesperson takes the risk and is held responsible.

Let's get the legislation altered here as well and make it an offence to sell sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying products to non authorised people.

How do you think we would go if we went to purchase some anaesthetic, sutures and scalpels to have an operation performed? We don't think the surgeon would be having a bar of that.

It's an offence to smoke cannabis so it's also an offence to purchase or possess cannabis.

It's an offence to do sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and draining if you are not authorised to do so – so why isn't it an offence to purchase and possess items for performing sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying?

Training



In the 70's and 80's we had training provided through block courses where everyone in the country was taught from the same syllabus. People were taught on courses and practiced in the workplace. Well trained tradespeople were produced that were

responsible and accountable for their work.

benefits? The time line to save the industry is very short – much shorter than some would believe.

When those wanting change stop pushing and step aside nothing happens and the industry will fade into oblivion. It may sound dramatic and depressing but sometimes the truth has to be said.

If small business and tradespeople reject the regulation regime what will the Government do?

The latest bullshit trend is companies saying you must get a Contractor Health and Safety Prequalification before they will employ you. This requires you to go to their nominated prequalification specialist and pay them to do a health and safety assessment on you.

This is no better than the protection rackets from the gangster days where if you didn't pay them you didn't get any work. As the prequalification industry grows how many assessments with a company need to do to get work?

It's at the stage where we spend the time learning the trade and then once we qualify we have to pay the government annually for a license to say we can do the work and now we have to pay a company to say we have the safety processes in place so we can get work.

Soon it will cost more to get permission to do work than the money we will make from working.

Along came the 80's and the advent of the Craftsman Qualification. This changed the playing field, and added another level of qualification.

This was the start of the downhill slide. As the years have passed the responsibility for training has shifted to the employer. Not only has the responsibility for training shifted, but the price for that privilege has also increased.

The money the government is claiming they are spending on training is being spent on overheads and wages for the ITO's.

Yet again the tradespeople are left to carry the burden by supplying the majority of the training at an increased price.

It does beg the question as to whether the ITOs are actually needed because they are only supplying minimal training.

It's almost as if someone has decided to teach practical hands on skills by way of lots of theory.

How can there ever be consistency in training throughout New Zealand if the majority of the training is left up to the employer? Consistency in assessment means nothing.

We have to ask the question - why after all these years the training is behind where it was twenty years ago? Perhaps there are too many levels of control and no one is actually taking control.

Where does the real accountability for the training actually lie? Every organisation seems to be focused on numbers to meet government targets so they get paid, but no one seems to care about the standard of training or if there is in fact REAL training.

This is what ITO's are tasked with doing:

- *developing and maintaining skill standards to be listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards and used in the assessment of trainees*
- *developing and maintaining arrangements for the delivery of industry training that will enable trainees to achieve the relevant skill standards*

Too much Mickey Mouse bullshit instead of focused consistent training.

It takes years for people to write the bullshit bureaucracy that we are expected to believe and train from. Experienced Tradespeople would be able to get REAL training organised within months which would be far better and far cheaper.

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