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IN OTHER NEWS

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor

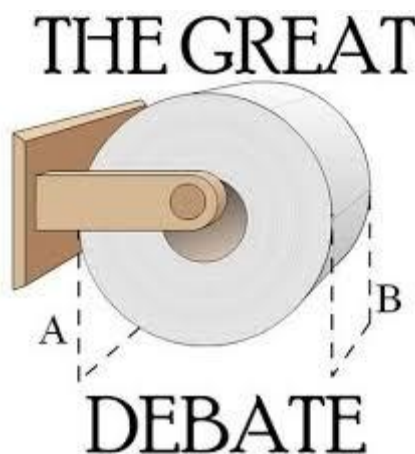
Re: It's Election Year

I had a bit of a laugh at your article on election year but I believe it does have a very serious note.

If a Minister or the Government continue to ignore the needs of an industry then surely the individuals in that industry will be looking at who they support and where their allegiances lie.

If the Government ignore too many groups then they will be cutting away at their support base the same as if we as business owners ignore our customers - we lose them to someone else.

Qualifications (The Design Discussion)



the codes, regulations and legislation?"

Last edition we asked for feedback from our readers about the application of "design" in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying qualifications. The common thread for feedback formed more of a question than a solution. That question was "is it design or is it the application of knowledge and experience, along with

As we showed in the last edition - nowhere in the definition of sanitary plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying does the word "design" appear. We believe this is because we are a practical, hands on trade where we apply our knowledge and skills to practical activities with practical solutions.

Design work is more than applying knowledge and skills to such a degree that when "Restricted Building Work" came into effect a specific Licensed Building Practitioner Class was created for design.

From 1 March 2012, Restricted Building Work came into effect. This applies to most residential building or renovation work and only a Licensed Building Practitioner can undertake or supervise the work. Licensed Building Practitioners include: designers, carpenters, roofers, external plasterers, brick and blocklayers and foundation specialists. Professional engineers, architects, plumbers and gasfitters are treated as Licensed Building Practitioners and can carry out SOME restricted building work.

It would seem to us that some in our industry are attempting to create a qualification for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers that is already covered by legislation. If design is included in our qualifications - will it actually mean anything and what will be the ongoing ramifications of insurance and liability? Will it also comply with the legislation or will it require another visit to the Regulations Review Committee?

A Design LBP can design any category of building, but must only undertake the work they are competent to do, and recognise when other skills or supervision is required. A Registered Architect or a Chartered Professional Engineer are already treated as if they are licensed in Design AoP 3 and therefore cannot apply to be licensed in Design.

I haven't heard of any support or seen any leadership from Maurice Williamson or Nick Smith. It appears their terms as Ministers of Building and Construction have been a total waste of time.

I agree with you that if the Government won't make the changes we need then they should give us the power to do it.

Ed:

Yes it's very disappointing when those in positions of authority fail to perform but continue on as if they are doing a good job.

We would have more respect for them if they manned up, admitted they got it wrong and asked for help to correct the situation.

For us to have to continually criticise them in an attempt to force action is unproductive.

As they are the Government who can we go to in order to complain about their actions? We have already seen how ineffective the select committee process is when members of parliament can make one decision at the committee stage and then go into the House of Representatives and vote against their own decision. In our industry we would call them backstabbing bastards!

Trust, honesty and integrity seem to be principles missing from the Government process.

Dear Editor

Design licences are based on building categories. Category 1 is Single household dwellings with low-or medium-risk envelope design. Category 2 is single household dwellings with high-risk envelope design, or the buildings with a building height*less than 10m. Category 3 is all buildings 10m or greater in building height*, except single household dwellings.

So if design is included in our qualifications, will it need an amendment to the Building Act to cater for different levels of design for plumber's gasfitters and drainlayers and to what category of building is it going to apply to? Is every Certifying Plumber (or gasfitter for that matter) going to be qualified to Category 3 - All buildings over 10m or greater in height?

The Federation believes that if practitioners wish to get into design then they need to apply for a LBP Design License. For those that provide advice, based on their knowledge and experience, following the codes, legislation and regulations that we work under, to designers and architects we warn you to be careful of your public liability insurance and your professional indemnity insurance.

Discuss this with your insurance company or broker BEFORE you give any advice. Remember professional indemnity insurance responsibilities don't always end when you move companies or retire – some require tail off insurance. What is covered by professional indemnity insurance? If you are alleged to have provided inadequate advice, services or designs to a client, professional indemnity insurance provides cover for the legal costs and expenses in defending the claim, as well as compensation payable to your client to rectify the mistake.

There are also errors and omissions insurance. Errors and omissions insurance (E&O) is a type of professional liability insurance that protects companies and their workers or individuals against claims made by clients for inadequate work or negligent actions.

Imagine the coverage required if your design in a high rise building is wrong. Also if you are an employee giving this advice, check if you are covered by your employer – because you may not be. Don't assume, check and get an answer in writing.

As an industry our qualification should reflect our primary functions all the "nice to haves" should be exactly that. Those that have been in the industry for years who now claim to be designers that are pushing for the inclusion of design in Level 5 (Certifiers) need to think carefully about what they are getting future practitioners in to.

Also they need to take heed of what they are getting their employees into.

Looking at the qualifications the following is a comparison of the wording of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Boards competencies.

Hunt for the Review

Perhaps our Politicians are overworked and don't get paid enough to effect change and provide leadership.

It appears that we are getting further and further into an environment where it is very much a case of "do as we say not as we do."

It's a dangerous environment when the rule makers believe they are above the law.

I've been told that even if the Review of the Act was to be found that nothing would be done before the elections in September 2017. Is that correct?

Ed:

We haven't wasted our time researching this to the letter of the law but in general terms issues generally go to select committee for a period of six months for consultation.

In this case it would appear the Changes to the Act have not even been tabled in Parliament as the Minister has been waiting for reports from his secret squirrels in MBIE. It's rumoured they reported once but he didn't like the outcome so he sent it back to them for another answer.

We attempted to find people in MBIE to speak to about the reports and recommendations but MBIE failed to get back to us.

We will be looking into this further by way of Official

Competencies Preamble

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
The applicant must demonstrate knowledge and, have the experience and practical ability to install, test, commission, fault-find and maintain sanitary plumbing systems by means of the following competencies.	The applicant must demonstrate the ability to design, manage the installation of and verify sanitary plumbing systems by means of the following competencies.

How can a tradesman install, test, commission, fault find and maintain sanitary plumbing systems if they don't know how to plan, deal with installation issues and authenticate installations. This is our expertise, it's what we do. The expectation of a qualified practitioner is a combination of both statements.

Competency 1

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
1. Trade calculations and trade sciences	1. Trade calculations and trade science used in the design and installation of sanitary plumbing systems

Is this a step up to Certifying or is it simply a division for the sake of a division. What trade calculations will be taught at Certifying level that isn't already required/used at Tradesman level? Yet again its training for one qualification.

Competency 2

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
2. Limitations and applications of materials used in sanitary plumbing, including material protection and jointing methods	2. Selection of materials; their properties, applications and how they are used in the design and specification of sanitary plumbing systems

We would expect a practitioner qualifying as a plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer to be able to select materials and know their applications and properties. This competency implies that after completing their apprenticeship they won't know how to do that.

Competency 3

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
3. Drawings and specifications for sanitary plumbing	3. Drawings and specifications for sanitary plumbing

No difference in the competency here. Drawings and specifications are the same at all levels of construction. Workable plans.

Competency 4

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
4. Installation, testing, commissioning, faultfinding and maintenance of water services for sanitary plumbing	4. Design, specification and verification of water services for sanitary plumbing systems

In this competency it's expected a practitioner install, test, commission, fault find and maintain without knowing about specifications and verification. In our opinion this is one competency for one qualification.

Information Act requests.

Has MBIE got so big that there are sections within the organisation that aren't up for public scrutiny?

When organisations fail in their promises to get back with the information within 3 days and don't, then what do they expect?

Do they expect us to accept their failures; well if they do they are expecting it from the wrong people. The Federation is sick of back room deals and activities occurring that affect the entire industry and will expose such activities.

Dear Editor

If the Member of Parliament doesn't know what's going on with the Review of the Act and is going to pass the newsletter on to the Chair of the Select Committee when the review hasn't even reached the select committee stage then what hope is there?

If those elected to Govern fail to do so then we are all up the creek without a paddle.

It's all very well for the Members Of Parliament to say for us to get involved and make submissions and go along and eyeball the committee members but who pays our wages and feeds our families while we spend time fighting numb nuts ideas.

Ed:

Yes it's a very one sided system where only the rich

Competency 5

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
5. Installation, testing, commissioning, faultfinding and maintenance of foul water systems for sanitary plumbing systems	5. Design and specification of foul water systems for sanitary plumbing

This is the same as we have commented above where in this competency it's expected a practitioner install, test, commission, fault find and maintain without knowing about specifications and verification. In our opinion this is one competency for one qualification.

Competency 6

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
6. Access to, and application of, relevant documentation relating to sanitary plumbing to meet compliance requirements, and an understanding of the regulatory environment	6. Access to, and application of, relevant documentation relating to sanitary plumbing to meet compliance requirements, and an understanding of the regulatory environment

No difference here. One competency for one qualification.

Competency 7

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
7. The effect of the installation of sanitary plumbing systems, or its components, on the integrity of structures; including weather tightness considerations as they relate to penetrations to the building envelope	7. Management of the effect on the integrity of structures relating to the design and installation of sanitary plumbing systems; including weather tightness considerations as they relate to penetrations to the building envelope and the coordination with other services

It appears in this competency that it's expected a practitioner install sanitary plumbing systems without knowing the effect on the integrity of the structure they are working in.

Competency 8

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
8. Responsibilities relating to health and safety	8. Responsibilities relating to managing health and safety

This is one competency as all practitioners and people are required to know their responsibilities and that may require them to manage situations during their apprenticeship.

Competency 9

Tradesman (Licensed) Plumber	Certifying Plumber
9. Limitations on persons who do, or assist in doing, sanitary plumbing work	9. Responsibilities relating to the oversight and/or supervision of persons who do, or assist in doing, sanitary plumbing work

This competency is branching out into management and supervision neither of which falls into the category of plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying. The Auditor General reported on this issue and warned these issues need to be looked at carefully if they were made part of a qualification.

It appears a lot look at the two qualifications as all being part of an

can afford to have a voice.

That's why the Federation was established in the manner that it has to give those that want to speak up the voice. We also considered packing a cut lunch for the MP that doesn't appear to know what is going on in Parliament and send her on a quest to find said Select Committee. If nothing else it would have been entertaining to watch.

Dear Editor

I'm an apprentice and I really am wondering if it is worth my while finishing my apprenticeship. I was never told when I started that at the end of my apprenticeship I wouldn't actually be fully qualified.

I've spoken to a lot of tradesmen and it's actually hard to find two that have been through an apprenticeship under the same scheme. How many schemes have there been?

I'm spending a lot of money to get this qualification and at the end of the apprenticeship all I'm getting is a certificate that tells me I can work under someone else's supervision.

So why persevere on low wages so I can stay on low wages under someone's supervision - where's the incentive?

In addition the training is absolute shit if you would call it training. You go on course which isn't a course and all the apprentices have been taught different ways by their bosses and then you are assessed on something totally

apprenticeship but it simply is not. The level 4 training up to Tradesman (Licensed) level is funded as an apprenticeship. The training to Certifying level is "user" pays. Currently it is approximately \$12,000 paid by the apprentice to qualify as a Tradesman but those who qualify are not deemed competent enough to operate unsupervised. This seems like a move to hold people at a partially qualified stage.

Did you realise that in less than a decade the industry has gone from paying \$3,000 for an apprentice who would get structured workshop training twice a year (6 weeks) to paying \$12,000 for assessments every 17 weeks?. A 300% increase in cost for a 90% decrease in training and service. This is the portion the apprentice or employers pays, there is another portion paid to Skills by TEC that is taxpayer money. Around another 60% we understand.

The Federation is still of the opinion there should be one qualification upon completion of an apprenticeship and that those that qualify are work place competent. We will not support anything else.

Fight for your rights



Throughout the years people have commented on the way the Federation operates and not everyone agree with its tactics but in reality we are concerned only what our member's think. We want to get a job done and we don't want to wait for decades for change.

The job is getting:

Fairness and Equality in Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying Regulations and Legislation

While everyone is sitting around tables exchanging false compliments and eating free lunches, the workers are out there putting up with the inadequate qualifications, regulations and legislation.

There is too much self interest going on and others are suffering. It's time for the "others" to step up and help those fighting the fight. Join the Federation or one of the other industry organisations that are standing up.

different. It's bloody stressful.

I don't hear of other trades having these issues.

Well I've said my piece - now what can be done about it?

Ed:

Well said young man. We need more people to say it the way it is instead of accepting the shit that is thrown at us. Stand up for your rights.

There have been a number of different "versions" of the apprenticeship – ranging from three week block courses and correspondence to the weak system we currently have. You need to speak up and get your employer to speak up as well. Skills are there FOR industry, not the other way around. We need to tell them what we want, NOT the other way around. You have a voice in this industry, rally your apprentice colleagues together and use it.

No more excuses or leaving it to others to do - have your say or give your vote to those who are trying to get the change needed.

The Federation has a proven record for getting things done for the industry and practitioners so give them your support and donations.

Contact Wal Gordon on 0276564811 or wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz for more information or to get added to the list of supporters already fighting for change.

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Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation 6
Tacoma Drive, Totara
Park, Upper Hutt 5018 Ph
(04) 5277977 Mob
0276564811 Fax (04)
5277978
information@pgdf.co.nz