



Fellow Practitioner Issue 332 Dated 28 April 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006](#)
- [Occupational Regulation](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

Jobs ads up 1.3 per cent in March

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment last week released its March 2017 Jobs Online report. Findings from the latest report show:

- *The All Vacancies Index increased by 1.3 per cent in March 2017, compared with average monthly growth of 0.8 per cent since March 2015. In the year to March 2017, online vacancies increased by 14.2 per cent.*
- *Vacancies increased in six out of eight industry groups. The biggest contributors were hospitality and tourism and sales, retail, marketing and advertising (both up 1.6 per cent).*
- *Vacancies increased in all*

Review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006

**Helen Waite
is our
Communications Manager
If you want an answer
Go to Helen Waite**

A couple of months ago The Federation approached the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) about the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers

Act 2006. We were told they would get back to the Federation in around three days. Here we are a month and a half later and we receive this from MBIE ...

Good afternoon Wal

I understand you contacted MBIE in February about the status of the review of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006. I am sorry for the delay in us responding to your query.

While Judith Burney used to look after the Act here in our policy team and I believe you may have had some contact with her, she has now moved on and I have recently picked up the work. The review of the Act is still ongoing. We have appreciated the submissions from the industry that were made in 2015, including the comprehensive submission you made on behalf of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation.

We are considering the issues and concerns that were raised in submissions both in terms of potential amendments to the Act and in the wider context of occupational regulation across the sector. When we get to a stage where we can share the direction of our recommendations more widely, we'd be grateful if we could talk further with the Federation to confirm the perspective of the tradespeople who operate in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry. I acknowledge the review has been going on for some time – I will be sure to keep you updated on progress.

Imagine if we took as long as the Government Departments to make our business decisions, or to decide how to do our daily work – what a shambles the country would be in. Maybe if the people making the decisions were passionate about the industry things would be done

occupation groups. The largest increases were for technicians and trade workers and sales (both up 1.3 per cent).

• Vacancies increased in all skill levels. The largest increases were in skilled (up 1.5 per cent), followed by highly skilled and unskilled (both up 1.3 per cent) occupations.

• Vacancies increased in all ten regions. The biggest increase was in the Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough/West Coast (up 3.0 per cent) region.

Jobs Online measures changes in online job advertisements from three internet job boards – SEEK, Trade Me Jobs and the Education Gazette. The trend series is used as the primary indicator as it reduces the month-to-month volatility.

For more information on MBIE labour market analysis, visit our website.

MBIE is again gloating about the number of ads increasing.

Shouldn't they be ashamed there aren't enough tradespeople to fill the positions?

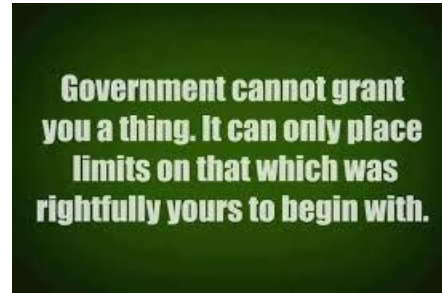
It's all very well having lots of positions available but the reason those positions are available is that there are no suitably qualified people to fill the positions.

There is a huge impact of not

quicker instead of having people who are paid to procrastinate. We consider MBIE's handling of the Review to be a "FAIL".

No disrespect to Ms Waite, but policy analysts seem to have a Degree in procrastination. Just what have they been doing, and where are they going with this review – the joke is by the time they Review the Act, the Review of the Review will be due!

Occupational Regulation



According to the Government Occupational Licensing aims to ensure that people in the building industry that are responsible for the work done are competent and accountable, so that homes

and buildings are designed and built right first time. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) administers occupational licensing in six construction areas:

- Licensed Building Practitioners,
- Electrical Workers
- Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers
- Registered Architects
- Chartered Professional Engineers
- Engineering Associates.

MBIE states "Occupational regulation is regulation, in addition to the general law, that provides for setting, MONITORING and ENFORCING of competency, and possibly behavioural or ethical, standards for activities or services carried out by others in a professional capacity." They claim they are making incremental improvements to the occupational regulation regimes which is bringing them closer to best practice.

MBIE have taken this so seriously that they established an Occupational Regulation Experts Group. Apparently they identify best practice to rule making, continuing professional development and dispute resolution. They also seem to identify opportunities for standardisation across occupational regulation and last but not least, they identify opportunities for achieving economies of scale.

We thought this was all very interesting so we hit the world wide web to see who is in this Occupational Regulation Experts Group and what they had produced so far - and alas all we found was one reference to the group and that described what they do which we outlined above. No reports, no appointments, no recommendations, NOTHING!

having people available to fill the positions.

Occupational regulation across the sector



Is the manner in which regulation is imposed on us stressful?

Look at the recent changes to health and safety where it is all threats of prosecution if you don't follow the bureaucracy.

Fatigue can be bought about by stress and worry and is a workplace hazard because it affects your ability to think clearly and act appropriately.

Fatigued workers are less alert, don't perform well, are less productive and are more likely to have accidents and injuries.

People who are fatigued are not good at recognising their own level of impairment, and can be unaware that they are not functioning at their best.

In the worst case scenario they can drop off to sleep in the middle of a task, which can have fatal consequences.

A lot of stress is placed on practitioners by Government Regulation or lack of it but stress isn't covered by ACC.

The Government is forever commenting about the stress of farmers if there is a drought or floods but do they ever mention

How do you become an expert in occupational regulation? Perhaps all you have to do is recommend things the Minister want to hear and find ways to save the Government money. It seems to us to be an "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff" mentality. Experts to hold people accountable but what about experts to train people to avoid situations where they are liable and accountable by doing the job right in the first instance?

Benjamin Constant is quoted as saying "Every time government attempts to handle our affairs, it costs more and the results are worse than if we had handled them ourselves." Is that the case now? It seems that innovation and training isn't as cool or as convenient as regulation so we get punished and pushed around by more regulation. The Government appear to be doing everything arse about face. How about trying a new concept of decent training? How about people qualifying as being workplace competent?

We are not stupid people but look at where we are letting the Government invest our money. It's all going on bureaucracy and regulation. We believe there should be a redirection of priorities, for example more money into suitably qualified people and not into them continually having to prove their competence.

Here's an example – the Paul Gee case cost the industry around \$240,000 and nothing was achieved. What could that \$240,000 have done for training apprentices? You would have to ask the question of Skills about how much of the money paid to them actually goes on training apprentices and how much is sucked up in high wages, flash buildings and unnecessary travel. You might be both surprised and dismayed at the answer you get. By our reckoning it's a 60/40 split.

Back to the question of who is on the Occupational Regulation Experts Group – a chocolate fish is available as a prize to anyone that can get the list of people who make up this Group! Simply send us the list and the chocolate fish will be on its way to you!

So the Government is investing in regulation and not education. In July 2015 Dr Nick Smith signalled his intention for MBIE to lead a review of occupational regulation in the building and construction sector. The high-level review examining how occupational regulation within the sector is delivered was to focus on the way that core functions, such as registration, complaints and discipline are organised across the occupations within the building and construction sector.

The review is aimed at ensuring that the way occupations are regulated is simple, clear, flexible, easy to understand, and equitable across the different occupations.

about the stress on tradespeople? No they don't.

Look at the article above where MBIE stated *"We are considering the issues and concerns that were raised in submissions both in terms of potential amendments to the Act and in the wider context of occupational regulation across the sector"*

They went on to acknowledge the review had been going on for some time.

Do they not think this is stressful on the industry waiting years for anything to happen?

Are we reaching the stage where the cost on our health is starting to outweigh the benefits of being self employed?

Architects and engineers copped flack from the Canterbury earthquake reports and inquiries and their regulation has been under review, and even licensed building practitioners at level 3 Design are getting mentioned in the reviews. Yes that ugly word DESIGN rears its prickly head again and the reports and recommendations smack of a repeat of the leaking building debacle where trades people were blamed and had to undergo continual professional development - and we all know how that ended up.

So now that reports into engineers and architects have identified issues with their performance, the rest of construction gets sucked into the rescue package to save them. How does the Government fund the rescue package – they get those that aren't really a problem to join in the regulation of the engineers, architects and designers. Remember the Occupational Regulation Experts Group looks at identifying opportunities for achieving economies of scale.

Yet again those in the construction industry that don't have a voice are forced into following those that do the likes of IPENZ (who our minister is a member), NZ Institute of Architects, Registered Architects Board, and the Licensed Building Practitioners and Electrical Workers Registration Board who already come under the control of MBIE.

The Federation has never taken lightly to being pushed around for the benefit of others and this is yet again a case of the people in the Governments "Boys Club" making decisions that impact on the way we as an industry operate.

You would have to be a special kind of stupid to think heavy handed regulation is more cost effective than real industry training. Proper apprentice training gets people to a workplace competent stage, where they are confident, professional and proud of their workmanship. A place where there are less mistakes and the public are protected as a matter of course. A place where the industry regulates its self through its pride in its technical abilities.

Simple question: is the investment to be in regulation or education.

Send us your thoughts.

You are receiving this email as a member of PGDF or because you signed up online.

[Edit your subscription](#) | [Unsubscribe instantly](#)

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