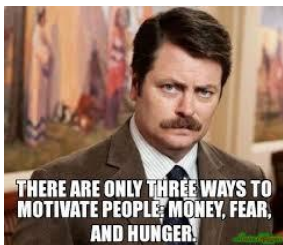


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IN OTHER NEWS

What's our WHY?



The Federation has been asked “why we do what we do” and we respond “why do you do what you do?”

There are reasons behind everyone's “WHY” and the main column has outlined a lot of things that are wrong so our WHY is that if it is wrong we want it changed as we are sick of “more of the same”.

Why live in an environment of fear? We daily live in the fear that if we do something wrong, either on purpose or by accident, that we will be investigated and possibly prosecuted.

Our authority to work in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry is at risk daily and most have very little support to get through that daily risk.

So why do we take that risk? Most people respond that

Ushering in a New Era - Consider the Possibilities...



There are a lot of different opinions about the state of the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry at the moment, and everyone is entitled to their opinions. The Federation has decided to start a fresh campaign to improve the passage of

information and get the opinions of the industry as we consider change is needed to move us forward.

Historical events have shown that our industry isn't progressing willingly but is being pushed in different directions for the self interest of those doing the pushing. A lot of pushing has come from the Government by way of direction through their Ministries, and up until more recent times by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Politics now is all about branding and not much about substance. Look at how our industry is being ignored by the Minister of Building and Construction and the Government. They simply know they can do what they please because there is not ONE single entity representing our industry to stand up to them. It's a continuation of the industrial exclusion we have been putting up with over the last decade or so. We get bullied into doing what they say because they are in control of our employment and income.

We don't seem to fall into any policy or group for advancement that is discussed with the industry. It's just more of the same procrastination by the Government and the Minister of Building and Construction. Look at the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006. It was supposed to be reviewed three years after it was implemented because there were so many contentious issues within the Act.

The Commerce Committee stated:

Review of Legislation

“We recommend requiring the administering Department to review the operation of this legislation three years after it commences and report to the Minister, who will present the report to the House. We are aware that aspects of this legislation are contentious, and a review will allow monitoring and the consideration of further possible amendments”

they don't know and then say it's not a risk unless you do something wrong.

But what about if it is accidental like the fire we have discussed over the last few weeks – an accident and a business owner left alone to fight for his business?

What about Paul Gee's case where he was victimised and left alone to fend for himself. Even the industry group he was part of abandoned him with no assistance whatsoever? He stepped forward to help an investigation after an explosion and found himself the main target.

So WHY did he step forward – because it was the right thing to do, and yet it still cost him dearly but at least he can stand with his head held high knowing that he was right and those that victimised him can live with the shame forever.

The members of the PGDB who were on the disciplinary committee who heard the charges mostly did the right thing by finding Paul Gee not guilty of 42 of the 44 charges but failed to follow through to find out why 44 charges had been laid and who had committed the offences. They must have had a reason WHY but no one seems to know what it was. Did they look in to the poor quality of the investigation which led to some pretty far fetched charges? Did they review the case after the fact and make improvements so this would never happen again? We simply don't know!

WHY were three members of the Institute of Professional Engineers of New Zealand

Duration of Practicing Licence.

"We recommend amending clause 93(2) to extend the maximum duration of a practicing licence from two years to five years so that it is consistent with our recommended amendments concerning electrical workers in the Energy Safety Review Bill We were concerned by the introduction of licensing requirements for tradespeople in the later years of their profession, who after thirty or forty years of plying their trade will be required to pass competency tests. In the event that there are no outstanding or obvious complaints against these practitioners, we ask that the Board gives special consideration to how they deal with the renewal of ongoing licenses in these cases"

What has the Government done about those issues?– and look at this little gem - where yet again it is all talk and no action.

"The National Party appreciates that there have been improvements to the original bill but remains concerned about the compliance costs relating to the actual implementation of the whole system"

Here it is July 2017 and the Act was implemented in 2010!

The review should have been in 2013. It has supposedly been started but to be FOUR years down the track and nothing has been achieved is an absolute disgrace! It just shows the arrogance and incompetence of the Government – how can they be so behind? All the information they may have collected is all old news. By the time it gets to Parliament, drafted into law, debated and then implemented nearly a decade will have passed unless it is all done under urgency and we as an industry have already fallen victim to these actions.

As a collective "industry" what we have put up with from those in authority has been deplorable and no one stood as a single representative for the "whole" industry until the Federation was formed. We read a comment from a politician asking how a previous Chairperson of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board escaped being sacked along with the Board. It is rumoured it was very simple – a close friend of the Chairperson warned him of the pending action. This person was a politician and was in the know.

The then Chairperson apparently created a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Chief Executive position and slid across into it so when an entire Government appointed Board was sacked needlessly as the sacrificial lamb, to save face for the Government, he was safe.

When we continue on looking at what has happened over the years we have endured Government appointed PGD Boards that have ruled with an iron fist, imposing illegal legislation on the industry, discipline cases to impose fear on tradespeople, money has been taken unlawfully from the industry, millions of dollars have been spent on needless CPD, and the Government has put through retrospective legislation to cover for their appointed Board to make legal that which wasn't.

You could ask any of the people who put in historical complaints and not one of them would say their case was dealt with appropriately. Even though most proved their cases and the independent reviewer

given Certifying Qualifications without doing exams or apprenticeships? This just happened to be under the same Chairman and Chief Executive that were in place during the Paul Gee case.

As can be seen, we as an industry and tradespeople have no control over the WHY but what we can do is take control of our own destinies by putting in place the mechanisms to help protect us.

We are part of a regulated industry and that regulation is in place to protect the public and that's what the Government demands and pushes for, but they fall short and don't spend enough money and time protecting us as an industry.

What protection do they afford to the industry that is there for them 24/7? They put legislation in place that puts a noose around our neck and then we pay for the judge, and the hangman and if there is any money left over they chase the unqualified.

Then they tell us the benefit of being in a regulated industry is that people unqualified can't do the work and we know that's a joke. People do what they want without fear.

WHY used to be a question but now it is a reason and the Federation reason for wanting change is that we want the fairness and equality we deserve as an industry.

We all work hard to get our qualifications so we want qualifications that actually

agreed and reported to the Board, the Board of the time still did nothing to make right the wrong doings. There was no one to help these people or represent them.

The case of Paul Gee is another example of wrong doing which has never been put right. Forty four charges laid and only two proved. An investigation where an individual was targeted, there was false evidence, lies, evidence withheld, evidence manipulated, defamatory letters sent out and the list goes on. Forty two offences committed and the Board never revisited the case to find the people who actually committed the offences. Of huge concern to the whole of industry is that nearly \$250,000 of our money was spent on an investigation which demolished a tradesman's life to find him guilty of two charges (that's \$125k per charge). The people who did this were never held accountable by the then Chairperson and Chief Executive and now the Board does not want to revisit this horrific abuse of power.

So what has all of the above achieved for the industry?. We have an industry with some resentment and suspicion, we have supervision issues, we have apprentices completing their apprenticeships who are deemed not work place competent, we have tradespeople who do not trust the Board or the Government, we have legislation imposed on us which we don't agree with and we have a failing training system.

We could go on with further examples and we acknowledge that there have been improvements over the last two years but this is due to efforts and personalities of those who knew that change was needed before there was a total collapse of the regulation of the industry. As an industry collective we have no say in our own direction – in fact we aren't even given the opportunity to apply for positions on the PGD Board any longer, yet we fund that Board in its entirety.

What the Federation believe is needed is a representative organisation whose Board is voted on by the industry. The organisation would provide Governance and representative political clout for the industry. It is time for us to be representative of ourselves and not accept others will imposed on us.

At a recent presentation to the Social Services Committee in the Beehive the Federation put forward the notion of a independent Governance Board for the industry that could work alongside the current regulatory PGD Board.

A new model and direction for the industry at a minimal cost based on shared resources. As it stands the industry pays 100% for the Regulatory Board and its chief executive and secretariat so why not appoint a Representative Board and use existing resources.

The new Board would be representative of who we are as an industry and would be our voice. It would develop and push our industry vision and needs. They would come up with the strategy for the new direction of the industry working in conjunction with the regulatory Board and Chief Executive who would now have a dual role supporting both Boards.

The strategy would be representative of industry needs which would complement the needs of the Government and Regulatory Board. A strategy and vision that all stakeholders believe in.

mean something.

We want real training that will help forge our way into the future – it's the least our apprentices deserve.

We want to stop the loss of experience in the industry.

We want all in the industry to be proud of what we do as tradespeople.

We want to lead by example and not follow what others do overseas – we want to be our own people.

We want value for money from our investment in protecting the Public.

We don't want to be motivated through fear, money or hunger - we want to be motivated through pride, fairness and equality.

We want a sense of ownership of our own industry.

The main column has outlined a fresh start for the industry and this side column has outlined a few reasons why. It is now up to us to make it happen.

Please give us your feedback and voice so we can stop living in fear and progress into the future to claim what is rightfully ours.

A professional, innovative and respected industry that contributes to the health and safety of New Zealanders is probably a good starting point and would require a Board that supports the industry by working with the industry to create an environment that is positive and well skilled.

The Representative (Governance) Board would need a strategy that provides:

Representation – so the industry can respond to emerging events and the needs of the Regulatory Board and Government

Influence – so the Board can provide leadership to the industry and voice industry needs to other stakeholders

Skills – whereby the Board can negotiate for innovative training both on the job and off site to meet the needs of the industry and Regulatory Board

Industry Image – renew the focus on professional standards so we can attract new people to the industry and regain the respect of the public

Participation – so the industry participates in ensuring the industry gets fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying legislation and regulation

Accountability – so all decisions are based on industry needs not the needs of individuals or organisations for their self advancement

This may seem a bit daunting to some but by keeping it simple a great deal can be achieved. The main issue is to get a Board that represents the industry and that is voted on by the industry. Everyone in the industry should have the opportunity to be on the Board and there should be no over representation of industry groups (so spelling it out we mean there should be representation of/by apprentices, tradespeople licensed and certifiers across all trades, and business owners and employees).

If the existing PGD Board operates on a profit then based on existing fees and levies the new Board should be able to be funded at existing rates from that surplus.

This is a huge change in direction for the industry and a big step into the future so please send us your thoughts. The Federation is happy to champion this move into the future by working with the existing Board to make it possible.

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