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## IN OTHER NEWS

**Jobs Online monthly data release – December 2017**

Is this release from the bureaucrats to do with job vacancies good news or bad news?

*The All Vacancies Index increased by 0.7 per cent in the month of December 2017.*

*Vacancies increased in six out of eight industry groups.*

*The largest contributor was the hospitality and tourism industry (up 2.2 per cent).*

*The biggest fall was for the information technology industry (down 1.5 per cent).*

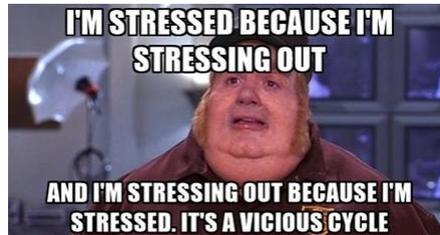
*Vacancies increased in seven out of eight occupation groups. The largest increases were for labourers (up 2.7 per cent) and machinery drivers (up 2.1 per cent).*

*Vacancies increased in all five skill levels. The largest increases were for unskilled (up 2.0 per cent) and semi-skilled (up 1.5 per cent) occupations.*

*Vacancies increased in eight out of ten regions over the month, with the biggest increases in Bay of Plenty (up 3.1 per cent) and Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough/West Coast (up 2.1 per cent).*

*Over the past year, online vacancies*

## The Vicious Circle



Welcome to a new year where hopefully we can make change that will influence the industry and the country. The environment within the industry has resulted in a

vicious circle of events. This hasn't been caused BY the industry but more by the way we have been legislated and it's not so much the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 but all the other legislation we get hit with.

We all know that Governments over the years have treated tradespeople and trades poorly, yet have relied on them to be the backbone of the country. The compliance with the Government's wishes have been imposed on the tradespeople at an ever increasing cost to the tradespeople and their industries.

The cost of administering compliance is the same for a few workers as it is for hundreds, so on the economy of scale the small to medium sized businesses are far worse off than the big businesses who have the most incidents requiring the legislation in the first place, yet they support the Government!

In a lot of ways the Government and education system have denigrated the trades to a point where the youth of today look down on trades and want bigger and better things. This has left a huge shortage of skilled tradespeople.

This lack of experienced staff puts pressure on management and supervisors and takes them away from the important aspects of running safe productive businesses. This hinders development and puts pressure on staff.

The vicious circles are not cost effective and leave the trades at the bottom of the food chain. For example the Government wants workers protected, so they implement legislation to do that, but it's the trades people who have to foot the bill for the training as well as the loss of income whilst training, then the business has to buy the equipment which all costs money. All these issues take money away from wage increases for staff.

The prices have to go up to cover the training etc and the consumer bitches and moans about the price increases so they hit the black market for a cheaper deal so the legitimate tradespeople loose out to the cowboys, who then have accidents, because they are not

*increased by 7.6 per cent.*

So does this mean there are more jobs or does it mean there are no suitably qualified people around to fill the vacancies?

We know in the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry there is a huge shortage of qualified tradespeople and this has resulted in over 2,000 people working in the industry under exemptions.

The amount of money being spent on advertising for tradespeople is astronomical and it's not so much to get newly qualified people but more to poach from other businesses due to the lack of available staff.

This is simply a merry go round of staff looking for a better deal.

### **350 Issues of the Fellow Practitioner.**

It's a bit of a mile stone for the Federation in that we have now published **350 Issues of the Fellow Practitioner!!**

It's amazing we have reached that number because we initially thought that by bringing to light the infectious attitudes in the industry that problems would be resolved within a year, but alas no they weren't, and here we are still fighting.

Perhaps it's time for a real cost benefit analysis to be done on the benefits of fighting for change. Your thoughts are welcomed.

### **From the Media**

We take our hat off to this politician who has real morals.

*A British government minister has quit his job in theatrical fashion after he was left "thoroughly ashamed" by his*

training and the legitimate tradespeople foot the bill again and so the circle begins again.

The large volume of compliance legislation is forcing construction prices up as we have seen some businesses imposing charges on their invoices to cover compliance.

We saw it with gas certification where it went from \$25.00 to over \$150.00 for a gas cert and the risk imposed on the tradespeople. We saw it when fuel costs went up that tradespeople started to charge vehicle costs. We have seen it with Health and Safety and with professional development.

With the 300% increase in apprenticeship fees in the last ten years - what choices does the employer have – charge more for an inexperienced apprentice, charge a fee or simply don't employ an apprentice and save all the other issues that go with it?

The lack of experienced staff is seeing prices go up as it is simply supply and demand, but this adds health issues into the mix with stress and over working of existing staff.

New legislation requires a cost benefit analysis to be done and the latest hazardous substance legislation imposed on us is no exception. This is what we found on it:

**1.3.1. Benefits** *The proposals in this document are intended to improve the hazardous substance legislative framework. Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) notices will provide clearer, more targeted requirements for the users of hazardous substances.*

*At present, some hazardous substance requirements are spread across a number of legislative instruments. The new notices will consolidate a number of existing requirements from the different instruments. This consolidation will allow the public and companies to understand, and comply more easily, with their obligations in relation to hazardous substances.*

*These proposals are designed to provide stronger alignment with international best-practice standards for classification, labelling, SDS and packaging. Overall, the proposals should protect the users of hazardous substances from harm by facilitating operational improvements to simplify the HSNO regime and improve its interface with the new HSW regime.*

*We also consider it important to align our regulatory system more closely with the Australian system. There are two reasons for this. First, the proposals for regulation of hazardous substances contained in the MBIE discussion document Developing regulations to support the new Health and Safety at Work Act are based on the Australian WHS legislation.*

*Secondly, closer alignment should assist with progression towards harmonisation and mutual recognition for chemicals under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA). Chemicals are currently subject to permanent exemption provisions under the TTMRA because the regulatory systems of the two*

late arrival to Parliament for a debate.

Michael Bates, a Conservative MP who works as an international development minister, was clearly left mortified by his tardiness in getting to the House of Lords, and expressed regret at not living up to "the highest possible standards of courtesy".

His apology was addressed primarily to Baroness Ruth Lister of Burtersett, a member of the Labour Party who had asked a question that he was best equipped to answer.

A colleague was forced to answer in his place, and Lord Bates arrived at the latter end of the session eager to make clear just how sorry he was.

"I want to offer my sincere apologies to Baroness Lister for my discourtesy in not being in my place to answer her question on a very important matter at the beginning of questions," he said.

"During the five years in which it's been my privilege to answer questions from this dispatch box on behalf of the government, I've always believed that we should rise to the highest possible standards of courtesy and respect in responding on behalf of the government to the legitimate questions of the legislature.

"I'm thoroughly ashamed at not being in my place and therefore I shall be offering my resignation to the Prime Minister with immediate effect. I do apologise."

He then stood down from the dispatch box and walked out

countries do not align (including in respect of adoption of the GHS).

This means the overarching TTMRA principles of mutual recognition, aimed at removing regulatory barriers to trade between New Zealand and Australia, do not fully apply. Aligning our hazardous substance regulatory system with those of our major trading partners is expected to lead to the following benefits:

- facilitation of trade with countries that have adopted the GHS
- harmonisation of labels and safety data sheets with overseas requirements, which could lead to a reduction in the cost of products; cost reductions that may be able to be passed on to consumers through a reduction in the price of products and earlier introduction of newer and potentially safer products
- less confusion with the classification of the hazardous properties of substances, leading to a reduction in harms
- consistency between workplace classification of hazardous substances and the rules for air, land and sea transport of dangerous goods
- increased sharing of chemical evaluation reports, and involvement in work-share arrangements, leading to the early introduction of newer and potentially safer products and a reduction in associated costs
- greater transparency when comparing classification results between New Zealand and overseas
- increased efficiency in chemicals management and increased effectiveness of the HSNO Act
- continuation of New Zealand's use of international best practice in the area of chemicals regulation
- decreased compliance costs for regulators and industry.

Further specific benefits of particular proposals are discussed later in this document.

**1.3.2. Costs** The EPA recognises that there will be a one-off cost from the promulgation of the proposals contained in the notices.

A firm estimate of what this cost may be cannot be provided, but it could be significant for some affected parties.

To mitigate this cost, a transitional period is proposed to give industry sufficient time to make the changes. However, we consider that over time it is likely that costs for users, industry, and regulators will reduce.

The use of notices to set hazardous substances' requirements will enable the framework to be updated more readily to reflect current conditions and best practice in promoting safety.

*of the chamber, to howls of protest from politicians from around the House.*

*Baroness Lister said despite being on the opposite side of the political divide, Lord Bates is the last minister she'd want to cause to resign.*

*"I made the point that he was one of the most courteous of ministers when he's answering questions at the dispatch box. Many ministers show us much greater discourtesy by evading the questions we're asking, whereas he always tries to answer them," she told The Guardian.*

*"The response from our benches was a sort of spontaneous 'no'. I'm not sure we'd respond to many other ministers in that way."*

*Baroness Lister said she hoped Lord Bates would reconsider his resignation.*

**Look at that a politician leading by example. Now there's a new concept.**

*Further specific costs of particular proposals are discussed later in this document.*

As you can see there was only one sentence that had anything to do with the tradespeople *"Overall, the proposals should protect the users of hazardous substances from harm by facilitating operational improvements to simplify the HSNO regime and improve its interface with the new HSW regime"*. The rest of the analysis was to do with trade and following others such as the Australians.

When it comes to the cost on the tradespeople they didn't know so that gets a big **"IT DOESN'T MATTER"**. We seem to recall similar attitudes when it came to the changes in the gas certification scheme, the continued professional development scheme and the implementation of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, **which incidentally was to be reviewed three years after its implementation and here we are in 2018 and it still hasn't been done**, and why's that – simply because the Government don't give a shit as they have the industry so screwed with legislation we can't do anything.

We wait for action from the new Government who hopefully will realise that if the vicious circle continues the industries contribution to society will break down putting the health and safety of the public at risk.

Do we have solutions to this – yes we do:

Any subsidies for training need to go to the employer's of apprentices rather than the ITO (who are already grossly over funded and a heavy administrative beast)

We need a review of the huge "business" of health and safety. For example some training establishments are falsely telling people they need to renew their training on things like working with heights, confined space, elevated work platforms when in fact these are unit standard based training and once you have the unit standards you **DO NOT HAVE TO GET THEM AGAIN**. You do need to renew the training if you **DO NOT FEEL COMPETENT** carrying out the activities – so it isn't every two years, or three years. For some people it could be yearly, for others once is enough. Competency is the key here.

Government need to engage with industry – not just one membership body.

Ensure fairness in the cost recovery of discipline and prosecution. We are not being treated in the same way as our colleagues the builders and electricians.

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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](mailto:information@pgdf.co.nz)