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Get it right

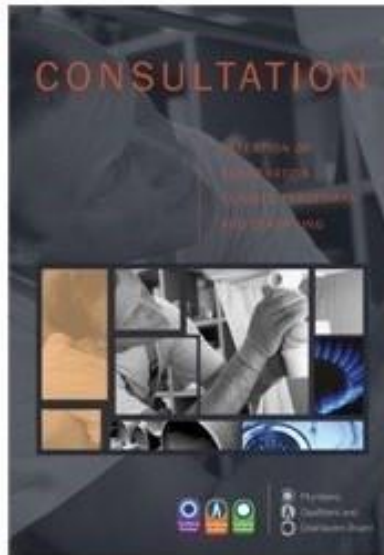
Let's get a few facts straight. The Federation has been established to ensure OUR industry gets treated in a fair and equitable manner. It's about fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying regulations and legislation. We represent anyone in the industry that shares our views, silent or vocal.

We can't be any more direct than that. We say it the way we see it and are not beholding to anyone for our actions except to our members.

We want our industry to be independent and to get it right every time.

Our push for one registration helps that happen but as part of that push we have also looked at transitions for those who have already started apprenticeships and feel our system can be easily adapted to pick up not only those in apprenticeships

Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Consultation



Just to remind you of what the latest consultation is about. In brief there are currently two classes of registration for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers who have completed their apprenticeship and passed the appropriate registration exam.

On completion of an apprenticeship, an individual can apply for registration into the Tradesman class once they have passed the Tradesman registration exam.

Two years after being registered (and licensed) at a Tradesman level, and having passed the Certifying registration exam, an individual can apply to register into the Certifying registration class.

The practical difference between the two registration classes is that a Tradesman must still work under the supervision of a Certifier. The level of supervision a Tradesman requires will generally be minimal given their level of experience and qualification, however, the supervising Certifier remains responsible for ensuring that the Tradesman is supervised to such a degree that the work they carry out is performed competently, and the Tradesman cannot work in their own right without a supervisor signing off for them.

It's too important for us to hold back



For far too long some in the industry have tried to hold practitioners back to make them feel comfortable about doing nothing.

but also those who are journeymen or those want to re-enter the trade.

We have stated it time and time again that it's about TRAINING so we need to ensure the training is being administered correctly and is appropriate for the industry and also that it is being delivered correctly.

If what we have now is not providing that then we need to change it. This is not a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board responsibility, it's ours and the Government.

As an industry we need to get out and chew the ears of the politicians for assistance. We can't rely on Master Plumbers to help do this as they are share holders in The Skills Organisation.

We don't want to see the debacle we had with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) where those making money out of it ruled the direction of the industry. Look at how many hundreds of thousands of dollars and unproductive time were wasted on that.

We know it's not right that we as an industry pay 100% for the regulation of the industry and the Government needs to talk to us now and change legislation before it is too late.

As the Government doesn't seem to want to put any urgency on dealing with the industry then perhaps it's time to put pressure on them again by way of

Practitioners have held their breath and self destructed while others have sat back and watched the flames.

Over the last few years the Federation has attempted to say its piece in such a manner that it could get on with others but this time around the consultation is so important that the Federation cannot hold its breath.

Those out to make a profit from the industry and its practitioners seem to rally together to get what they want and the Federation believes the current consultation is no exception. You need to know what we know.

Back in 1976 the two registration system was invented. This was an attempt to stop practitioners qualifying and leaving their employer to go in competition with them - so what better way that to start a partial qualification. The excuse was used that too many people were failing in business so they created the Craftsman Registration where practitioners had to learn about accounting, employment law, contracts and such like but there was very little in the way of ADVANCED plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying.

This two tier registration system continued in silence for few decades and no one seemed to be monitoring the damage it was doing to the numbers of fully qualified people in the industry and it's only now the full impact of the damage is being realized.

It was later found that the imposing of training and restrictions of registration was illegal if it wasn't directly related to sanitary plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying. Needless to say the system has stumbled along ever since with varying versions but never a real pathway.

The Federation bought this up in the Review of the New Zealand Qualifications where the goal was to reduce the number of qualifications and duplicates. No one listened and they carried on developing a level five qualification which they are trying to push through now. That level five is the Certifiers Qualification (the old Craftsman qualification). We have never had a level 5 before.

If this goes through we will have a situation where apprentices are qualifying at level 4 but will not be deemed to be workplace competent and will require supervision until they get the Certifiers qualification.

An apprenticeship stops at level four and the level five, for want of a better term is an advanced course but that advanced course has the effect of holding those at level 4 in a constant flux of "Under Supervision" even after years of experience. It is simply a barrier to being fully qualified and you will have to apply for that advanced course. It is not part of the apprenticeship so probably only The Skills Organisation and the Polytechnics will benefit from it. As a practitioner it is an unnecessary cost being imposed on you as it has never existed before.

This stupidity can be stopped very easily by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board deeming there to be only one Registration

complaints.

We don't want to waste people's time but if it is the only way to get their attention then we will use relevant complaints to get action.

When Labour was in opposition we met with Phil Twyford and with Mark Robinson but where are they now? Where is their sympathetic ear?

Where is the Social Services Committee now?

The wheels of Government seem to have stopped as far as our industry is concerned.

We have made mention a number of times about gaining people's attention and how difficult it is to get help.

Over the last few nights we have seen protesters on the news for various reasons and the Federation has protested a number of times but no one really cares - so why not hit them where it hurts, the pocket.

People always take note when prices increase or there is a threat of increases.

We get labelled as money grabbers anyway so why not become the money hungry beast we are accused of being.

Use our prices to force them to talk and likewise with apprenticeships. If they won't do it our way then why should we employ apprentices?

level and upon completion of that level the apprentice is fully qualified and does not require formal supervision - but we all know supervision continues after an apprenticeship as the experience and knowledge from those already qualified is passed on.

You will hear or read some of the following.

- Master Plumbers will claim they represent thousands in the industry. This is bullshit. They may employ thousands but they can't claim their voices to gain a majority. The Government and Board should realise this and listen to the rest of the industry as well.

- Some will claim they won't be able to get apprentices to sign up for 5 years as recommended by the Federation. We say it's better to sign up for 5 years and qualify workplace competent than to sign up for 4 years remain under supervision for ever and a day or until you pay for the Certifiers qualification.

- Some of the old chaps will claim they did a 10,000 hour apprenticeship or even more to get to the Certifying level. Put simply the current system takes over 12,000 hours with more registration exams than they had to sit.

- Others will claim there needs to be an out point in the industry. There is an out point and that is at completion of the apprenticeship and if they fail the exam they can do the same as now and become a journeyman. Why provide an opt out point? Why waste money and time training them so they can opt out; we say get committed people who want to be in the industry who will raise the skill level. Cater for those people not the opt out people.

- Some will claim the level 4 and level 5 points can't be done in five years which is exactly right so dump the level 5 and raise the standard at level 4.

- Some will claim level 4 is not an appropriate level and push for a level 5. We all need to remember we are a hands on industry and it's about knowledge and skills. Level 5 is about analysis.

- Some are claiming the new level 5 involves a step up in design. That's all well and good. The builders have a totally separate qualification for design but ours states it is design but not to a level of the builders. Yet again a partial qualification.

- Of course there are those who will claim one registration will dumb down the industry. It's not the length of the apprenticeship that dumbs down the industry, it's the training and the application of the training.

- Some claim not every apprentice wants to go through to Certifying level. This is simply a choice. Have only one registration and take away that choice. Commit to the job or find an industry you don't have to commit to.

- We hear at meetings how some employers don't want to pay a lot of certifiers and they are happy supervising tradesman registration practitioners. What are those tradesman registered people going to

If Skills won't listen and do it the way the industry want it, not just Master Plumbers, then get an Industry Training Organisation that will.

We have the power but need the representation that will take us in the right direction.

do; go and do cashies to supplement their wages thus holding down the overall rates in the industry.

There's a few of the arguments off the top of our head. Very soon we will have the Federation submission ready for those that want to use it. As always, whether you agree with all we say, some of what we say, or none of what we say – make sure you put in a submission – make sure your voice is heard and don't hand this decision over to a few.

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