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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Dear Editor**

Last week in your news letter you made mention of total action by practitioners in your article "Trust and Confidence will advance the industry."

What is "total action by practitioners"?

**ED:**

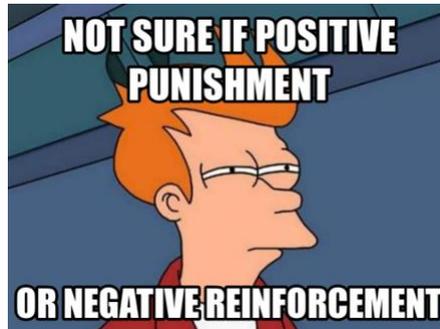
We feel total action by practitioners is when practitioners get involved and support that which is best for the progression of the industry.

In previous years most have just gone with the flow, where now we need them to use their voice or support those who are using their voice for the advancement of the industry not individuals or organisations.

**Dear Editor**

Thanks for the information on where we stand in the world

**PERFORMANCE PUNISHMENT**



When was the last time the Government actually did anything for us as an industry? It appears that because we pay for our own regulation and in general don't make waves for the Government then they ignore us, and if we do make waves they can

always blame the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

The Federation believes the Government has a view that that as long as the industry is protecting the health and safety of the public as stated in the legislation, and not costing the Government a cent then why do any extra for us. They just bundle us in with construction trades with the one policy fits all regime.

"Once Upon a Time" in an era when common sense prevailed, we were under the Department/Ministry of Health and when you think about it, it was and is logical. Construction is all about pipes from point A to point B and following the plans. We do so much more than that! So you say, what do we do for the health and safety of the public?

This is where our industry gets more technical when you start talking about the provision of potable water, providing heat in the cold months, ensuring waste is removed in a risk free manner, ensuring there are no cross connections or backflow and the list of items goes on and on.

We believe it is obvious we do more for health and safety than construction. When we look at the risk to people in our industry we are reminded of when there was the bird flu pandemic. The Federation wrote to the then Minister of Building and Construction and asked what was being done to protect our industry from exposure to the pandemic. Was any advice going to be provided and were we going to be put on the priority immunisation list? No response was received.

Doctors, nurses and health care providers were immunised and precautions were taken to protect them from exposure. Remember it is believed to be transferable by body fluids. Nothing was done and no warnings were given to plumbers or drainlayers dealing with body fluids in drains etc. It has been said that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers do more for the health and safety of the public than

rankings for wages.  
"Countries with the highest-paid workers in the world".

I agree that tradespeople are undervalued. When you look at a sole trader in our industry not only do they have one to three trade qualifications but then they have their supervisory skills and business management skills as well.

They have to make money in order to spend it, not like people in Government departments who only know how to spend money to stay within their budget.

Tradespeople have to know about Occupational Health and Safety, debt collection, supervision, contracts, training, and there is a wealth of other knowledge that it is just expected they have.

To all the other tradespeople out there; you are better and more skilled than most people give you credit for so stand up for yourselves as you are not a dumbass who can only use tools.

**ED:**

Well said writer.

Tradespeople have been put down for years by the people with University Degrees wearing suits who believe because they can analyse issues and write about it that they are superior.

It was said to me the other day that suits are the uniform of thieves. They steal time, ideas and other people's efforts.

That was one person's opinion and there may be some truth in it however everyone has a role to play in the work environment but when their opinion of themselves exceeds that others think of them then

anyone else and we pay for that privilege – we are in fact the victims of performance punishment.

Last week the Prime Minister speaking to business leaders said: "As we enter into a period of discussion and debate, I hope it's guided by the overriding goal of fairness, and building an economy and system that works in the best interest of New Zealand and its people." We certainly hope this principle is applied to our industry.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING (VET) REVIEW



This week the Government announced proposed changes to reform vocational education. This is a portion of what was announced:

*A new national body will take over all of New*

*Zealand's 110,000 polytechnic students and 140,000 apprentices and industry trainees in a massive shakeup proposed today.*

*The proposed NZ Institute of Skills and Technology will take over programme design and administration for all campuses of what are now 16 separate polytechnics.*

*It will also take over enrolling and managing apprentices and industry trainees from what are now 11 industry training organisations (ITOs).*

*The ITOs will be replaced by new "industry skills bodies" which will be led by employers. They will become "bookends to the vocational education system", setting standards and checking that trainees have been well trained, but losing the role of managing training to the new institute.*

A consultation document has been released and submissions are required by 27 March 2019 so there is some urgency being applied to this issue.

The Federation will be making a submission and urges ALL practitioners to do the same. Use your voice and effect the change that is needed. If you feel you don't have time then call Wal Gordon on 0276564811 and briefly outline your views which will be included in The Federation's submission.

Try to take the time to read the review document which can be found at:

[www.conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/have-your-say/](http://www.conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/have-your-say/)

There is no doubt there will be a lot of patch protection going on we have already noticed comments such as:

*"The proposal would undermine industry training organisations,*

issues can arise.

#### Dear Editor

Your article last week about “what’s fair” got me going a bit.

We need the industry to be regulated and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board does that so I really don’t see what the issue is.

Imagine if everyone was out there doing their own plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying. What a shambles that would be. We live in a world of user pays so pay up and get over it.

#### ED:

Thanks very much for your opinion writer.

The question asked in the article was “Why should we continue to participate in unfair regulation?”

**UNFAIR REGULATION** and regulation are a lot different. If we had a situation where you get taxed at 50% and others got taxed at 18% for doing exactly the same thing what would you say about fairness? Would you be asking the question “**WHY**”?

“Why” is the question we need to be asking.

*reduce employer’s involvement in their staff’s learning and increase risk to business.”*

*“Through close relationships with thousands of employers and trainees, ITO’s (Industry Training Organisations) have an essential part in bridging the communication gap between industry and learning institutions.”*

*“Employer engagement in industry training is essential to its success – the proposed new model puts this relationship, the responsiveness of training programmes to business needs, and the employment opportunities of thousands of students in jeopardy”*

As an industry we need to be wary of those protecting their patch and look at what has been provided to us and see if it matches the claims made.

**Now is the time for change so let’s make it happen.** The Federation will keep you informed of views submitted. Remember we want to know the good AND the bad.

#### A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

Great to see all the Letters to the Editor coming in this week – keep sending them, we love getting them and sharing your thoughts with the rest of the industry.

Yesterday during a radio interview the Chief Executive of Skills stated the Industry Training Organisation’s were doing very well and go and ask the industries or words to that effect. The Federation would welcome the opportunity to talk to the media about The Skills Organisation performance and communication, or lack of, in our industry.

Remember we are still looking for executive committee members, so if you are interested, contact Wal Gordon on 0276564811

“Not only is there no God, try to find a plumber on a Sunday”

(Woody Allen)

We reckon you might have trouble on a Saturday too!

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