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**IN OTHER NEWS**

**IT'S NO JOKE**

We have to wonder how much money is being wasted on this latest idea by the Skills Organisation.

Apparently Skills is looking for employers in the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry to participate in SpeedMeet 2019.

They are advertising this as being the perfect opportunity to meet talented and motivated secondary school students who are ready to start their career in our industry.

This is what they say: *"SpeedMeet brings together jobseekers and employers. Based on the concept of speed-dating, employers meet with each student for six minutes to find out about each other. Each then notes whether they'd like to know more. Matches are then put in touch with each other after the event and - if all goes*

**YOU'RE NOT BEING ATTACKED YOUR BEING HELD ACCOUNTABLE**



You don't have to be a smart person to know about accountability. Some people say that systems revolve around proof and that opinions don't matter as everyone has opinions - but perceptions do matter. Show the proof and you have accountability but that isn't always the case as sometimes the proof is distorted by **BUREAUCRATIC ALTERNATE TRUTHS.**

When there is no accountability then there is generally no responsibility and that leads to a distrust of the system. We believe this is the case with the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

The perception is that the Board is not really accountable to anyone within industry, even though it is 100% funded by that industry. They are not alone as the Skills Organisation seems to also not be held accountable to anyone within the industry either, and its funding comes from taxpayers (which is us) and apprentices and employers. This leaves the industry, and when we say industry we mean the entire industry, not just the people the Board recognise, in a bad place.

We have no option but to licence and abide by the legislation which in part means we have to put up with issues whether we like it or not. The only course of action open to us is to leave the industry, and over 50% of registered qualifications have opted to do that, or to put up with what feels like a dictatorship.

There have been a lot of issues over the years that have affected practitioners. So you need to ask yourselves who was it that:

- Held the Board to account for unlawfully taking around \$2 million from the industry?

*well - job offers made!"*

We believe this latest venture has the potential to end up like Skills online feedback forum - which was a huge failure.

It seems to us that Skills must have a department of "Silly Ideas".

## **STAKEHOLDER LIAISON GROUP UPDATE**

A response to our Official information Act request asking for the Board minutes and report recommending the expulsion of the Federation was received on Tuesday this week 24 working days after it was submitted. The report and minutes show no mention about Federation membership.

So we are left pondering the thinking behind the Board's decision and what information was presented to them.

The reason we were given is that we have no members and therefore are ineligible to be a part of the Stakeholder Liaison Group. This is simply untrue. If the Board's decision was made based on false or misleading information then what should be the consequence as the action would undermine the credibility of information being supplied to the Board and their decisions.

If a practitioner makes a mistake they are hung out to dry through fines, costs and loss of reputation, so what happens to Board members and the

- Went to the Ombudsman's office and forced the Government to take action. Albeit that they then shafted the industry?
- Forced change in the polices regarding privacy issues?
- Held the Board to account for a scheduled trip to Germany to a trade fair?
- Recommended and pushed for professional investigators to be employed after the Boards abysmal investigation into Paul Gee?
- That has been pushing for justice for Paul Gee after the wrongdoings by the Board?
- That forced the implementation of memorandum accounts for discipline and enforcement fees so the money didn't disappear into other Board activities?
- Pushed for change to the CPD to make it more meaningful and to stop the waste of money at practitioners expense?
- Held the Board accountable for unlawfully implementing CPD under the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 1976?
- Has continually been laying pressure on the Ministry Of Business Innovation and Employment for the review of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006?
- Has been pushing the Skills Organisation for proper training for apprentices?
- That has been ensuring the Board lives up to its responsibilities as a Registered Charity?
- Held the Board accountable for using collection costs and bad debts, a practitioner road show, a fees review, an infringement notices project, and a debt collection project to calculate the disciplinary levy?

It was the Federation that did all that and it has held the Board accountable for being legally compliant and cost effective. It is only of late that they have chosen to push the limits and have now put the trust and confidence that was built up over recent years at risk.

The Federation believes there will never be legal compliance as long as the Board believes they are not accountable to the industry and the law.. There will never be cost effectiveness as long as the Board is not held accountable by the industry and the Government, and there will never be trust and confidence as long as the Board uses devious tactics and is not transparent.

It would be fair to say the Federation has influenced more change than any other organisation, or even the Board. The things listed above are things that industry has been entitled to but were not getting.

Secretariat if they get it wrong. Who holds them accountable?

Accountability rears its ugly head again. Some due diligence should have been performed to determine the Federations membership status.

The Federation knows it has members and the files containing the applications forms are safe and sound.

You would have thought that with all the combined knowledge of the Board and the legal expertise of the Chief Executive and lawyers employed by the Board that they would have known that to be an incorporated society there is a need for members and membership forms.

Just because we don't charge a membership fee doesn't mean there aren't any members.

An incorporated society is a group or organisation that has been registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 and, when incorporated, is authorised by law to run its affairs as though it were an individual person and they do have to follow certain rules.

The Board's decision to expel the Federation is a direct attack on the Federation's credibility and reputation as a plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying membership organisation (an industry stakeholder).

Now that we have the response from the Board we will be reviewing what

The industry has put up with expenditure which has been questionable and its legality is only put down to interpretation. As an example look at what is termed to be Fact Finding Missions where the cartel of Master Plumbers, The Skills Organisation and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board went on at least three expeditions overseas to look at training.

This is how it was reported in the Boards Annual Report. 'The target was "Continuing engagement with the Skills Organisation and industry to improve training." It was claimed this objective was achieved. "17 meetings (Skills and Master Plumbers including Master Plumbers Conference). Two research tours attended with stakeholder organisations"

So it looks like the stakeholder organisations are limited to the Skills Organisation and Master Plumbers. Recent expulsion of the Federation from the Stakeholders Liaison Group due to an apparent lack of members, is further proof of the Boards exclusion attitude.' All this travel overseas using industry money and what has been achieved?

This month the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board sent three people to Australia for a 15 minute presentation by the Chief Executive Martin Sawyers to the World Plumbing Council. What is that going to do for the regulation of the industry in New Zealand? How does this correlate to the Board's objectives in terms of using practitioner money for protecting the health and safety of the public (presumably they mean the NEW ZEALAND public?)

Accountability starts at the top so the Minister of Building and Construction should be holding the Board to account, the Board should be holding the Chief Executive to account and the Chief Executive should be holding the staff to account, but that doesn't appear to happen.

The Federation have attempted over the years to hold people to account but as there is no accountability from anywhere else then the Board has simply excluded the Federation. They also exclude the Auckland based NZ Plumbers, Drainlayers and Gasfitters Assn Inc. It is believed this is because of a long running conflict between them and NZ Master Plumbers and NZ Master Plumbers threatening in the past not to attend meetings if an association representative attends.

We need to remember the Board is not there to help the industry progress or prosper, it is simply there to regulate and ensure competence which brings back the age old question as to why the industry must fund them when the regulation of other trades is funded by the Government.

Ten years ago the Federation asked the question "Do we need a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board in its current form?" We remember the response for Master Plumbers which was along the lines of "if we don't have a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board then we would lose influence". Perhaps that wouldn't be such a bad thing. Maybe this question needs to be revisited.

action to take from here but we do feel that the industry is entering into a period of SEPTIC TANK POLITICS where everything is green and lush on top but full of shit underneath.

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR



#### Dear Self

Well don't we have a conundrum!

If the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board have deemed the Federation doesn't have any membership then is the Fellow Practitioner being written to only me?

This actually works out pretty well as there would be no conflicting views and with that I can say what I want without receiving those threatening letters of defamation action from some of Wellington's top law firms. (Yes over the years we have received a few letters pertaining to defamation action for comments we had made or others had made and we were held to account).

The loss of trust and respect of the Board is going to have a lasting effect.

**ED:** No comment I think I'll take a **NAP**.

#### IS IT TIME TO NAP?



Is it time to NAP? When we say NAP we don't mean put your weary head down for a quick shut eye we mean to tell people you are "**Not Actually Participating (NAP)**"

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board in their

action of expelling the Federation from the Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) have made it clear they are not interested in the views or in liaising with those who are associated with the Federation or oppose them. This means apprentices, tradespeople, administration people – and certifiers all working in NZ plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying businesses.

They also don't have representation from the NZ Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Association based in Auckland so the SLG ends up as a supporters group for the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

This action leaves a very unbalanced view of issues. We know that the bureaucrats believe that if people don't respond to consultation then it is deemed that they agree with what has been proposed or consulted on. The Board have taken this same stance in the past so is it time we stood up for ourselves?

It appears the Board are happy to exclude those that disagree with them so perhaps when there is consultation those in the industry should use their vote and simply respond to the Board you are taking a NAP (not actually participating) and that way they can't use your vote to support their activity.

We wonder how this target will be reported in the next Annual report when parts of the industry make it known to others that they don't participate in consultation with the Board.

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