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IN OTHER NEWS

FORCED REGULATION
(Continued)

Before looking at the options we need to remember we need to stay legal. This is vitally important for your credibility. If there is a cost involved in keeping up your legal status then hand that cost on to the consumers as after all we as an industry are paying to police them as well as ourselves.

Some of the forced activities are continuing professional development (CPD) and paying annual licensing fees. As stated - hand on these costs.

We have mentioned a formula used by some in the industry as a six to one ratio so here it is again just to refresh your memory.

If you spend \$1.00 on a pen it will take you \$6.00 in turnover to cut even.

When you look at CPD

CONGRATULATIONS

#PARTYTIME



Congratulations to Colleen Upton who last week won the Helen Tippet Award which is for advancing and furthering the interests of women in the construction industry. Colleen is passionate about the industry and the future of the young people in it. She is one of the unsung heroes who work for a better industry for all practitioners.

She has worked tirelessly for the Federation, her apprentices and the industry in general and recognition of her achievements is long overdue. The Federation is lucky to have a person of such calibre working on the executive committee.

Congratulations Colleen on behalf of Federation members.

THE FEDERATION VISION

The Federation has been around for a decade now and even though the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board does not recognise us as a

training where it may take 5 hours it will take 30 hours of turnover to cut even on that down time. In dollar terms based on a charge out rate of \$90.00 per hour that would be \$450.00 of down time to attend the CPD training and a cost of \$2,700.00 of turnover to cut even for your attendance.

For licensing and discipline based on two licenses the fees are \$465.00 x 6 = \$2,790 in turnover to cut even. If you are not self employed then it is simply \$465.00 out of your wallet for no gain.

For a business of 10 people that pays for CPD and Licensing this is a total of around \$54,900.00 in turnover annually.

Getting back to forced activities we say stay legal but the regulation of the industry can't force you to participate in consultation, can't force you to upskill, outside CPD requirements, and can't force you to take on apprentices.

The Federation encourages practitioners to upskill and to take on apprentices however for an industry to perform well the practitioners need to believe in the system and trust it. This boils down to what expectations the practitioners have.

At the moment practitioners upskill and take on apprentices voluntarily but get nothing in return from the Board or the Government and if the industry does these things the Government and the Board claim great success.

stakeholder we have still had a massive impact on the industry and in particular the practitioners in the industry that haven't had a voice.

We don't claim to speak for them all but what we do provide is a forum where their views are appreciated and they can voice their issues without condemnation. Their vote counts with us and we have stuck to our word that we would operate at minimum cost to the practitioners.

We stated when we started that we would hold the powers to be accountable and we have given it our all, and more. We also stated we would survive on donations and would not be beholden to any sponsors or corporate contributors. There have been offers, and we do thank those that did offer, but we have respectfully declined as nothing is free in the corporate sponsorship world.

We are not stirrers, but if we hadn't held the Board to account then who would have gone to bat to get a better deal for the apprentices, the tradespeople, the sole traders and the small to medium size business owners? These people are a fair reflection of the diversity of our membership

Some people say we are overly critical of Master Plumbers but in reality we think they do well for their members. Where we think they let the industry down is that they put their member's priorities in front of the remainder of the industry The industry is affected by their influence on the Government and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

There is still a large portion of industry that do not come under their umbrella that deserve to be recognised. There is a danger that this portion of industry are not having a voice when one player is overly dominant and there is no forum to bring together all the players and come up with a consensus.

Over the next few issues of the Fellow Practitioner we are going to outline the Federations Vision for our industry, and the problems encountered to achieve what at times seems the impossible.

THE MORAL COMPASS



Colleen Upton's achievement above is a prime example of someone heading in the right direction and having the moral standing and leadership ability to help others.

Colleen and Nick Fleckney were the two Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers

Board (the Board) members absent when the Board resolved to exclude the Federation from the Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG). We don't know who proposed the resolution or who seconded it

These practitioners can walk around with their heads held high that they are doing the right thing by the industry.

We mentioned in a previous edition of the Fellow Practitioner that people who do not wish to participate in the Boards or Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) consultation should respond to the consultation by say you are talking a NAP (not actually participating).

The reason for this is that all non responses are deemed to be supportive of whatever the Board or MBIE decide.

Most people probably didn't notice but in the Board's Annual Report 2019 they claimed that the appearances by the Boards Chief Executive/Registrar and Chairperson at the CPD training sessions was deemed to be "stakeholder liaison". 'Did you take this opportunity to speak to them and pass on any views you had?

To us giving a ten minute talk at the start of a training session to a captive audience, saying that you are available is not a stakeholder liaison meeting. Most practitioners value the CPD and have taken time out of their busy schedules to attend to gain the knowledge and skills but would not necessarily attend a stakeholder meeting.

Perhaps next year if this occurs and you are not interested you may want to consider simply turning your chair around and turn your

and we don't know who voted for the resolution and who voted against it as the Board minutes do not record this. This displays a certain lack of transparency.

In fact they put nothing of value in the minutes and there is no way in the future that a reconstruction of discussions or content could ever be made. No one in the future would be able to know why certain decisions have been made. The Board operates on the methodology that the majority rules and any decision is expected to be backed by the entire Board. No Board member has the ability to speak out against the decisions made and the industry does not get to see who supports certain issues and who is against them. This allows majority groups on the Board to hide in the shadows and use their influence whilst retaining their anonymity.

This brings us to the question - does the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board moral compass need a reset - the Federation believes it does.

Moral values such as integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and respect etc should be inherited by every individual and organisation. Moral values help us distinguish between what's right and wrong, good or bad.

What we need to remember here is that the Board are REGULATORS and they are not representative of the industry or the industries best interests, this is not their legislative role. They do not have a governance role over the industry - and it is coincidental that at the last meeting of the SLG that the Federation attended the Federation stated that the SLG had the potential to develop into Governance Group.

The Federation has been pushing for a Governance Group to help move the industry forward while representing the entire industry – this would be a game changer but is not widely favoured by other industry organisations at this stage. It would provide an impartial leadership model where EVERY member of industry was represented in discussions with the Minister, with ITO's and with other industry organisations covering off apprentices, tradespeople and certifiers. The legislative model at present does not allow the PGDB to undertake this role, but the SLG would have been a good starting place.

When an organisation or industries moral compass is headed true North, they will know they are on the right path to ethical decision-making. The moral compass is the sense of right and wrong and offers a framework to guide actions.

The components of a moral compass (comprised of principles, values and beliefs), goals (including purpose and wants) and behaviour (through thoughts, emotions and actions) interact together to form moral intelligence.

Some people believe that the increase in moral corruption in organisations shows that society is losing its moral compass. When people and organisations lack conscience then the roll on affect to others they influence is wide spread and can be devastating. We

back on the speaker.

This is simple silent protest that you are not participating with them but you are staying legal by participating in the CPD.

We wish to reiterate that we are forced to abide by the law and legislation but we don't have to enjoy it and we don't have to participate except for the activities which keep us legal.

The Office of the Auditor General wrote this in their summary of their investigation into the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board:

There is a great deal of writing on the importance of voluntary compliance in regulatory systems. In any regulatory context, it is too hard to achieve high levels of compliance through force or coercion – effective systems depend on people choosing to participate and follow the rules. For people to want to comply, they have to trust the system and see it as providing an overall benefit. The evidence this inquiry gathered showed that many tradespeople do not have this view of the Board at present.

If more people drop out of the regulatory system or choose to ignore it, the system will not be effective in protecting public safety.

Of course as an organisation we have no control over how the Board operates, but we do have aspirations for where we want our industry to be, and we do believe in applying common sense to those aspirations. We will

believe that this is the place our industry is in. We believe that the Board is in danger of making the same mistakes that they made a decade ago which were reported in the Office of the Auditor General's report.

When you see legislation manipulated then it indicates poor legislation, but more importantly it shows the morals or lack of morals of the people enforcing that legislation. What we note is that the Board will not admit making mistakes and don't admit any liability what so ever. This is possibly under instruction from their insurers but it still places into question their morals.

The Paul Gee case is a prime example where the Board as an organisation got a huge amount wrong which resulted in a 72 page report outlining the faults with the investigation. They never admitted any wrongdoing or any liability. They never pursued the individuals who actually committed the offences – they simply brushed aside the 42 offences they couldn't find Paul Gee guilty of.

Guilty people got off without paying the price that the innocent man of Paul Gee paid. There was no accountability for the wrongdoings done by the Board. It was a case of take it to court to fight for compensation and the Board will use industry money to defend itself and this was after it had already wasted over \$200,000 on a failed investigation.

Even now the Board is wasting industry money before the Courts arguing over exam questions that were wrong and affected an individual's results. The outcome may be that the Board will legally win, but morally will be defeated as the legislation is written in such a way that the Board cannot be held accountable for their actions.

Remember there is an accountability agreement between the Minister of Building and Construction and the Board, but the Board write the agreement for the Minister to sign. The current agreement was signed by the last Minister of Building and Construction under the National Government so we can only presume the current Labour Party Minister agrees with what the National Party was doing with regard to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Here's a few adjectives that in our opinion Board members regulating our industry and its operations should have - reliability, responsibility, solidity, tried-and-true, true, trustworthy, trusty, esteemed, law-abiding, reputable, respected, upstanding, worthy. It is up to you to decide if these adjectives fit the entity and its members.

What can the Federation do to correct the situation? Members can consider putting themselves forward via their Member of Parliament or applying when positions come up.

We are disappointed that we have been denied the opportunity to work as part of the SLG and present some alternative opinions, so really at this stage it is up to the Government to look at their appointments to the Board and whether they want a regulated diminishing industry or a progressive industry.

continue to let the PGDB know when we think they are not performing and we will continue to put forward our thoughts and ideas.

It is very difficult to put forward positive ideas and solutions when barriers are placed in the way but we will keep trying. Getting rid of forced regulation is as simple as creating a regulatory environment that is not corrupt and is respected and trusted.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“I believe we have a responsibility, even if our job is to lead a nonprofit organisation, as private citizens to be good citizens and to make our voices heard.”

~ Jerry Falwell, Jr.

All the Federation can do at the moment is keep a watchful eye and continue to hold the Board accountable.

FORCED REGULATION

We mentioned in the main column about the Federation’s vision which is in part forming a Governance Board or Group to help direct the industry in to the future.

We outlined the issues with the moral compass of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and how that affects progress of the industry.

We also reminded you that the Board is a REGULATOR. A statutory board that isn’t responsible to anyone. The industry relies on their moral compass to do what is right.

The Minister of Building and Construction can’t tell them what to do and can only appoint and dismiss the Board members.

The majority of the industry has no say in anything the Board does so we are in the position of being forced to participate in the regulation of the industry if we want to keep our status as plumber’s gasfitters or drainlayers - however we do have some options.

(Continued in the side column)

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