

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **400th EDITION OF THE FELLOW PRACTITIONER: LIES AND LEGISLATION**
- **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

IN OTHER NEWS

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (Continued)

We look at the balance of representation from the industry on the Board and find four (67%) of the tradespeople on the Board are members of the same industry organisation and the remaining two tradespeople (23%) are made up from the rest of the industry. Does this promote wide ranging thinking – only time will tell?

We have referred to percentages because this industry organisation only accounts for about 5.5% of registered tradespeople in the industry but yet they have such a huge influence on the Board. The other two people are from the remaining

400th EDITION OF THE FELLOW PRACTITIONER: LIES AND LEGISLATION



Well here we are at the 400th edition of the Fellow Practitioner and what a ride it's been!! A great deal of work goes into getting accurate information out to members of the Federation and we hope we have succeeded in keeping you informed.

A decade ago the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation was established to advocate the positions and

viewpoints of our members to ensure fairness and equality in regulations and legislation imposed by the Government on plumbers gasfitters and drainlayers.

We wanted to help influence regulatory and legislative outcomes and educate our members on developments regarding affirmative action and related regulatory changes and do anything necessary or helpful to the above purposes.

The Federation had hope there would be change and with that hope came enthusiasm. For a while there we felt that we contributed well and made a big difference.

We felt that we were instrumental in persuading the Board to consider a realistic upskilling programme rather than the "points system" of old. We actively contributed feedback on the strategic plan and the stakeholder group, and then we were excluded.

We still feel that we have a lot to offer. We have a group of diverse members from apprentices, to administrators, tradespeople, and certifiers, those who work on wages and those that own businesses. When starting the Federation we were warned we were wasting our time but we lived in hope for change.

We remember the Office of the Auditor General in their report talked about the importance of voluntary compliance in regulatory systems and for people to want to comply, they have to trust the system and see it as providing an overall benefit.

94.5% of the industry.

We look at other industry membership organisations and they have zero representation on the Board.

How can we address this imbalance?

One way is to continue to put ourselves forward when vacancies arise in the hope that someone will recognise that what they have been doing for decades is affecting the productivity of the industry.

We encourage you to continue to express an interest and keep on applying.

Each government will have different agendas when making these appointments.

All we want to see is the best people for the job to ensure that the governance of our industry is being judiciously looked after.

We also want people with open minds and different ways of looking at problems and solutions. We have to guard against a “one mindset” mentality.

A DEVOTED TERM

Over the years the Federation has not

The inquiry showed that many tradespeople didn't trust the Board. The report stated *“If more people drop out of the regulatory system or choose to ignore it, the system will not be effective in protecting public safety”*. We believe the Board have again lost that trust and practitioners now tolerate the Board but don't participate with them. It has a reputation like the Inland Revenue Department where you only deal with them when the legislation imposes it on you.

Covid-19 will bring challenges to the industry. Some practitioners in various regions will be struggling. Economists tell us that the recession is here and that regions are not all feeling it the same.

Those in areas where work has dried up or are reliant on the tourism sector will be hurting. How will this affect them come licensing time? Will we see an increase in the cash economy for some tradespeople, will others be forced to work illegally and unlicensed, will some not worry about supervision and just try to eke out a living.

These are all challenges facing our industry and they are challenges that would be better faced by encouraging a wide approach to a solution. This wide approach means engaging ALL sectors of our industry – even those who may have differing views.

Others may have a different perspective but if lies and legislation are being used to exclude practitioners from participating then that is not negligence but simply acts of bad faith.

The Federation will not be deterred by the Board's exclusion and will simply change tact however we will continue to keep a watchful eye on the Board's activities and will complain to the relevant organisations such as the Office of the Auditor General, the Regulation Review Committee, and the Office of the Ombudsman if it is deemed necessary. This is entirely the Board's loss, not ours, because there is no law to say we must participate with the Board.

So going forward there is a change in tact and it's never too late to participate so we need to hear your views on this as we shape our plan to go forward for the next twelve months.

If you are an apprentice then your views are particularly welcomed as we do not believe you have any other voice. Does the ITO represent your voice around the table with government or do they represent their own?

You are the future of the industry – your part of our industry is facing the most change under RoVE (Reform of Vocational Education). You are the people that are having block courses delayed and this will have an effect on your income and the length of time it will take to complete.

Tell us what you think. This is the beauty of how the Federation operates because you don't have to wait to attend a meeting you can simply contact us electronically while everything is fresh in your mind.

Moving forward we still see that there is work to do in regards to the idea of one qualification, apprenticeships and RoVE, WDC's (Workforce

commented on Board members leaving the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board but feel the effort of one departing Board member requires special mention.

On 31 August 2020 Colleen Upton, a founding member of the Federation completed her second term on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Colleen has completed five and a half years on the Board and it hasn't always been plain sailing for her and this is a testament to her devotion to the industry.

We want to place on record our thanks to Colleen for consistently maintaining her high standards, along with the values of the Federation.

From time to time we noted that the Board minutes showed that she was asked to leave the meeting when issues pertaining to the Federation were discussed. This is normal conflict of interest management, but we have never seen it noted that Master Plumber members have had to leave when an issue pertaining to that organisation has arisen.

Development Council) and who sits on them.

The Government is very much promoting a PC (Politically Correct) environment rather than the best person for the job in some areas – to this end we would encourage you to read and respond to the latest survey around the appointments on WDC's

https://mcusercontent.com/5ad2d3447d4669db9615dc57f/files/383d28d7-d855-4d22-a364-ccad56a239ac/280820_Construction_and_Infrastructure_Workforce_Development_Council_feedback.pdf

It makes for VERY interesting reading and will give you some idea of where the Government is headed in this space.

Do we want the best people for the job – or do we want a quota system? Each of us will have a different view point on this – but whatever your opinion it is important that it is heard as it will have a huge impact on our apprentices and the training system going forward.

This is a prime example of where industry representation is needed but alas we don't have a united front and some groups, because of previous reputation, influence outcomes for the entire industry when they are only a minority.

This is not entirely by invention but is because the bureaucrats see it as an easy way of ticking the "industry consultation" box. A prime example of this is the Board where they claim the talk by the CE or Chairperson at the start of CPD training is "Industry Consultation" and claim it in their Annual Report as being an outcome achieved.

There is change ahead for the industry and the Federation is determined to help the industry get the best deal it can and increase skill levels, enthusiasm and productivity.

The Federation Executive is looking at change and wants people involved. We will move forward and all are welcome to get on board with us. For those that want to hinder progress and use lies and legislation to prevent participation then they should prepare for a fight.

We'll keep you informed of progress.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board announced in the "Info Brief" the new appointments to the Board.

This process has been a long and drawn out and the Federation has a lot of questions about the appointments and the fairness of the process.

There was one vacancy empty for nearly a year. It's a bit hard to believe that this industry, or indeed the whole New Zealand public did not have a suitable candidate for 12 months!

We could use a term such as tirelessly, to sum up Colleens efforts but we believe the terms trustworthy and honesty sum it up better. Colleen has stood by her principles and those of the Federation.

We will be asking the questions of the Minister of Building and Construction and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment regarding the process and the benefit to the industry.

In the end though the responsibility sits clearly with the Minister of Building and Construction to make appointments, however she does not seem to have a lot of time for our industry at all.

Continued on the side column

It was a shame the Board didn't choose to thank her publicly for her service they simply stated in the last Info Brief *"Further appointments fill two existing Board vacancies and replace one member, Colleen Upton, who's tenure came to an end in August"*.

From the Federation perspective we want to say well done Colleen for being the one and only Federation member to sit on the Board, and likely be the only member ever.

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