



Fellow Practitioner Issue 401 Dated 10 November 2020

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IN OTHER NEWS

PAYING FOR NOTHING

Why do plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers fund 100% of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and to prosecute those that choose to do their own plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying without authorisation?

The answer is simple, because the legislation forces us to do so. That legislation being the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 which still hasn't been reviewed to see what impact it has had and if it is operating as intended.

Is section 32 of the Act, which was put in place for the protection of practitioner's being used appropriately?

As we stated in the main column there are a lot of questions to be answered and a lot of issues to be dealt with but that's going to require accountability and trust, not exclusion.

The majority of the industry has been excluded and the influence of the minority has

AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED



Over the last decade the Federation has been pushing for the Government, the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and influencers in the industry to make the most of opportunities as they have arisen.

We have wanted to progress the industry and practitioners forward but alas it all appears to be stuck in an expensive rut that is harming the industry and practitioners.

Everyone should be concerned that achieving the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 is getting more difficult and expensive, and no doubt the next review of fees and levies will highlight this problem.

The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board will want more money from the industry to regulate the problems that the Board have created - such as supervision.

We only need to look at the recent article released by the Board regarding discipline where they have stated discipline issues are on

ruled the direction of decisions affecting the industry.

Practitioners have to abide by the demands of the Board backed by lies and legislation. It seems the Board, like others, ignore the majority of the industry and claim industry consultation by appearing at CPD training sessions where practitioners are forced to be.

For there to be any positive effect on our future, practitioners need to be encouraged and listened to.

As an industry we have no say about our future and most practitioners only participate in the regulation of the industry so they can retain their jobs.

In a recent speech to business owners in Auckland regarding the Governments to do list the Prime Minister stated:

"No matter where you sit on the political spectrum, I'd like to think we can agree that a strong democracy requires a few pre-conditions.

"Citizens that believe in their system, and participate in it; political parties that believe and support the system too; and, perhaps this last point is a little more debatable, but I've increasingly come to believe that we have to find ways that strong views can be held, and expressed, but without the accompanying partisanship that stops us from working to build consensus where it really matters."

the increase as are prosecutions of non authorised people.

Remember the enforcement costs fall on practitioners by way of fees and levies, yet practitioners have no control on the reduction of those costs. Apparently we have to trust in the integrity of the Board to do right by us but does that trust exist?

We have no doubt practitioners believe in the purpose of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006, but belief in the purpose and trust in the manner in which it is regulated are two different things. We feel trust in the Board has fallen to levels below that which existed before the report by the Office of the Auditor General a decade ago.

What is the advantage to a practitioner if they report other practitioners to the Board, or non authorised people to the Board? Ensuring compliance is important but for there to be good outcomes there must be practitioner buy in and support. There must be an advantage to the practitioner as it is not just about the reputation of the industry.

Every day that we as practitioners go out to do our jobs we are paying to be in a regulated industry and risk everything we have worked for and for what? We constantly have the threat of disciplinary action against us even if it is a genuine mistake.

The number of people who can work in the industry unsupervised is getting smaller and the population in New Zealand is getting bigger, so the need to get along is more pressing than ever. For example in the year ending March 2012 there were 6,928 people holding one registration, 4,339 holding two registrations and 1,388 holding three registrations being a total of 12,655 people holding 19,770 registrations.

Licensing that year showed there were 7,837 Certifying qualifications licensed, out of a total of 15,760 licenses issued. That's one Certifying qualification to every 2.01 other licenses issued. Moving forward to March 2020 there were 8,973 licensed Certifying qualifications out of 23,410 licenses issued. That's one Certifying qualification to every 2.6 other licenses issues. That's about a 30% increase in supervising requirements.

The 2012 Annual report shows there were 15,760 Authorisations issued. Of these 10,257 were issued to registered practitioners. The remaining 5,503 authorisations were issued to 3,156 trainees, 2,045 others including exemption holders, and 302 provisional holders.

Jump forward to the 2020 Annual report which shows there were 23,410 Authorisations issued. Only 13,049 of these were issued to registered practitioners. The remaining 10,361 authorisations were issued to 7098 trainees, 3,132 others including exemption holders, 125 provisional holders and 6 employers licenses were also issued.

The frightening figures are the 53.2% increase in the number of exemption holders and a 30% increase in the number of people

As we see it she wants the exact opposite to what our industry has endured for decades. So if she has this belief then is she going to hold the new Minister of Building and Construction accountable to ensure that belief is supported.

As it stands the majority of the industry has no belief in the system, the politicians do nothing to support the industry and those practitioners that have ideas are excluded.

The new Minister is up against a non inclusive system where practitioners have lost trust in the regulatory Board, the Industry Training Organisation and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

Probably of more concern is that a lot in the industry have lost the will to participate due to the suppressive tactics that have been used in the past and the lack of change.

Decades of the minority ruling the future of the majority have taken their toll.

Decades of the same mistakes being made have taken their toll.

Decades of no one listening to the needs of the industry have taken their toll.

Decades of no industry representation have taken their toll.

People not wanting to participate in a non progressive regime is

certifiers must supervise. This means a huge increase in the supervision requirements imposed on Certifiers and this is reflected in the Boards latest Info Brief where there are a lot of charges laid regarding supervision!

It needs to be remembered that the Certifier figures mentioned above are the numbers of registered qualifications, not the number of people. As at October 2020 a search of the Board's web site showed there were 3,968 people issued with authorisations at certifying level for plumbing. There were 1967 Certifying Gasfitters and 3097 certifying Drainlayers. This would indicate there are only about 4,000 people holding the 8,973 certifying qualifications.

You may recall that supervision was a condition imposed on Certifiers due to the two tier registration regime of Certifiers and Tradespeople. No one that we are aware of has any formal instruction in supervision and in fact it is a management function and is not sanitary plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying as defined in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.

The Federation believes discipline action will increase due to the poor training the industry has endured over the last decade where the courses have simply been assessments and there has been very little passage of practical skills and knowledge, at times delivered by tutors who do not meet the requirements under the C&M arrangements, yet who have continued to be able to teach and assess our apprentices because SKILLS do nothing about it.

Construction bodies are now saying they need more and better training and that is exactly what the Federation has been saying for years but the industry has been stuck with the Skills Organisation as its Industry Training Organisation and they have ignored our pleas. Their performance has been absolutely pitiful and there has been no accountability to industry or the Minister.

A minority dictate the direction of the regulation and training the goes on within the industry. A huge proportion of the industry has been excluded from participation in regulating and training the industry. Their only participation is funding the forced regulation of the industry.

The Board have put more emphasis on excluding people and listening to a minority rather than working on keeping standards up. Regulation and legislation are only part of a big equation that maintains an industry and it would seem all else has stopped.

It appears there has been no real accountability from the responsible Ministers and the replacement of the latest Minister of Building and Construction takes the total to three in the last decade that have listened to the minority and have let an imposed regulatory environment run rampant to the detriment of the majority of what could be a productive progressive industry.

How can we become free from the unnecessary suffering and misery imposed on us simply because our chosen profession is part of a

probably one of the biggest challenges facing the new Minister of Building and Construction.

It is simply not going to be enough to say practitioners have the opportunity to participate because that has occurred before and was a total waste of time as ideas fell on deaf ears.

Trust and respect will have to be established and the current tactics of only listening to the minority will need to change.

The new Minister will need to hold the Board accountable for their actions, policies and procedures as some of the industry has already turned its back on the Board.

regulated industry?

Does the Government's responsibility to the public and the industry simply stop by imposing legislation establishing the regulation of the industry?

Have responsible ministers and ministries simply ignored the industry and put it in the too hard basket to such an extent that practitioners now ignore them and the regulation of the industry?

There are still a lot of issues plaguing the regulation and progression of the industry and the Federation has no confidence or trust in the regulatory and administrative regimes in place.

Will a change in the Minister of Building and Construction make a difference after a decade of inaction by ministers? Read the side column for more thoughts on the issue.

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