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IN OTHER NEWS

WHERE'S THE HELP?

We picked up in the news last week that the Government has made good on its promise to inject a further \$55m into supporting the news media – with a new, three-year fund to pay for public interest journalism.

The fund will offer \$10m this year, then \$25m and \$20m in following years. In part it is a pushback against 'fake news' and the misleading of the public on important issues.

We wonder if the Fellow Practitioner can get a slice of the pot of gold as that's the service we provide.

WORKING CONSTRUCTIVELY

The Federation has mentioned a number of times about people wanting us to work constructively with them but to us this has to be a two way street.

Sometimes you need to lay

THE TEAM OF FIVE MILLION



In the news we hear about the "Team of Five Million" with regard to the protection the government is providing in the Covid-19 Crisis. The Government has done well in reaction mode to deal with the pandemic, and long may their progress continue, but life must go on.

While vaccines play a critical role in preventing the spread of disease, plumbing, gasfitting and

drainlaying practitioners continue to protect the health of the nation but the government seems to have forgotten the importance of the sanitation our profession provides.

Billions of dollars are being pumped into the Covid19 crisis to protect the public however the government doesn't even lift a finger to help plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying practitioners protect the same five million people - every hour of every day.

Industry practitioners are expected to take all the preventative measures to keep the public safe from illness and disease, to keep them supplied with the resources for drinking, cooking, heating and to get rid of their waste.

Plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are protecting the "Team of Five Million" but what help are we getting to do it? What has the government and previous governments done to help practitioners make our industry more productive and fair?

When was the last time there was a public meeting with practitioners – we believe it was in Napier - during the era of Minister Maurice Williamson and Alan Bickers, late 2011. Yes - nine years ago!

What would it cost the government to communicate with practitioners to find out the issues facing the industry in 2021?

the blame and hammer the incompetence until the situation is resolved or until you say “bugger it” and walk away.

A couple of weeks ago we noted that Master Plumbers CEO had appeared on television regarding lead in the water systems.

We know this has been a hot topic with Master Plumbers for years and where has working constructively with the government departments responsible got them? The issues still exists. Good on them for trying but there does come a time when you have to draw a line in the sand.

Any fitting or tap ware etc that contaminates the water obviously isn't fit for purpose as it endangers the health of the public.

Remember a previous Minister for Building and Construction said they would hold to account any tradesperson that installed anything that wasn't fit for purpose. Yep lay it on the practitioner again rather than stop the problem.

It seems to the Federation that Government Departments are paying lip service to the protection the public and the power of the dollar is ruling.

Has the time come for practitioners to draw that line in the sand and actually say NO this isn't good enough and if practitioners are being held accountable

Has the government and previous governments been procrastinating too long with our industry issues and have they left their run too late to take corrective action?

WHEN THE VOICES GO QUIET



Is there really a sound of silence? You have probably heard the saying and never really thought of its meaning so hopefully we are about to enlighten you.

Imagine a noteworthy silence, like an empty trade

training workshop where there are no apprentices, or the absence of qualified practitioners to take on apprentices or to work in the industry. These are sounds of silence, especially if they are signifying disapproval or lack of enthusiasm.

Imagine the deafening silence if there were no sounds of birds, crickets and mosquitoes, the everyday sounds we are so used to. Apparently the brain creates noise and looks for it to fill the silence. Much the same as bureaucrats patting themselves on the back creating noise to make it appear they are achieving good things

When silence is so loud because words aren't necessary it usually means that something was left unsaid. This is perhaps the situation practitioners find themselves in now, where there is a gap in communication with the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board so practitioner silence replaces words. Practitioner's silence and non response is a response in itself and it's a powerful one.

For over a decade the Federation has been voicing the opinions of a section of practitioners. This has been a rollercoaster ride of protesting, legal battles, working constructively and working hard to get the Board, the Skills Organisation, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Government to listen to the views of practitioners.

If a question from any of these people is met with silence by practitioners, there is often an answer in that silence. If practitioners are silent then perhaps they are sending a powerful message that communicates that they don't agree or are not going along with what someone is saying.

Perhaps we have reached the stage where we are wasting words on people who deserve our silence. Maybe saying nothing at all is the best thing to do and let the FAILURES be theirs.

Just because we don't react doesn't mean we don't notice and people shouldn't take our silence as approving their bad behaviour and decisions.

then why shouldn't other's such as suppliers, importers and such like?

We do know of some practitioners who are protesting in their own way by stopping dealing with suppliers whom they believe are doing harm to practitioners and the role they play in protecting the public.

It seems to be that practitioners carry the burden when it comes to protecting the public and suppliers and others don't. For example the subject of public having access to fittings etc. If they can't buy the items they can't use them. You can't buy explosives without the appropriate licences so why materials from our industry?

What damage can a cross connection or backflow issue cause? How many people could get sick?

Practitioners are the front line of defence and we are not getting any help. Legislation doesn't protect the public the practitioners do.

Has the time for real silence arrived? To refresh your memory this is what was said by Lyn Provost, Controller and Auditor-General in her report regarding the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board dated 28 July 2010.

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.

No one wants to see the above happen but it seems communication with practitioners only occurs when it's convenient for the Board and others and it is generally when the legislation requires it as a tick flick exercise.

It seems there are a lot of reports but very little real action. Here we are a decade after the report and there is no real difference and the legislation is being manipulated and the practitioners exploited.

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