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WHO REPRESENTS THE INDUSTRY?

IN OTHER NEWS

NOT AN EASY DECISION

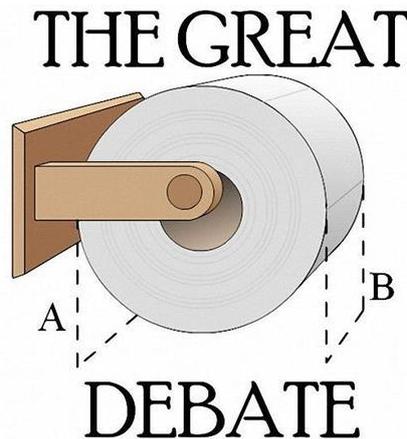
Those that are left on the Executive Committee of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation have been contemplating the direction of the Federation.

Over a decade ago there was a need for the Federation to hold people and organisations to account for their decisions and actions taken for the regulation of the industry and for training.

We have attempted to work with relevant people and organisations and have always been outspoken.

Unlike others we have not been

WHO REPRESENTS THE INDUSTRY?



At the end of the last issue of the Fellow Practitioner we listed a few questions about industry representation. Those questions were:

- Who speaks for the industry?
- Who has the right to influence the actions that impact on the

industry?

- If there is no representation what options are left to the industry and practitioners?
- Are we in a take it or leave it situation and is it time to leave it?

This issue of the Fellow Practitioner we look at each of the questions and give our view of who is representing or not representing the industry and practitioners.

Who speaks for the industry?

There are a lot of organisations and people who claim to speak for the industry and represent them. Due to the longevity of the claims this is accepted by the government, ministers, and their minions in the government bureaucracy. Perhaps the question should be “Who has the **RIGHT** to speak for the industry?”

The Federation believes the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry is a divided industry which has no real democratic representation and as such no one has the right to speak on behalf of the industry. There are certainly people out there with good intentions, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions and it is not enough to simply mean to do well, you must take action

beholding to anyone. We have survived on donations and always been frugal with our expenditure spending annually that which others spend in a day to run their organisations.

Most on the executive committee have been there since the start of the Federation and have donated tens of thousands of hours to help the industry with the simple goal of making it better but the time has come for them to gracefully retire from their pursuit of a better industry.

The Federation faced those causing problems for the industry and found themselves being attacked from behind and excluded.

The Federation and its supporters can walk with their heads held high saying they have done all they can do.

Those decision makers and influencers that are affecting the industry and practitioners are not in that situation.

In the decade since the Federation started very few of the CEO's, Registrars, Chairmans, Board

to do well. A good intention is meaningless unless it is followed by a good action.

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and that right includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference, but does it give them the right to dictate that which impacts on others.

For over a decade the Federation has attempted to hold people and organisations accountable for their actions. We have always pushed for industry representation democratically appointed, but this has failed.

Who has the right to influence the actions that impact on the industry?

You have people and organisations who because of their longevity in the industry have a huge amount of influence with decision makers. This influence is claimed to be on behalf of the industry and is accepted by the people and organisations that impose their will on the industry and practitioners.

Some claim representation of the industry but is it representation for the industry or simply to influence the gains they can make for their sector of the industry. The division in the industry seems to be used by others to divide and conquer for political, government, personal, or group gains.

Where is the leadership from the Government that allows the entire industry to have a say in its direction and the actions of the regulatory board? When was the last time there was meaningful consultation that allowed practitioners to voice their opinions on the direction of the plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying industry?

If there is no representation what options are left to the industry and practitioners?

The Federation believes there is no real representation of the industry and practitioners at every level, so **WITHOUT REPRESENTATION** describes a situation where decisions and actions are made and implemented on practitioners that are then required by law to follow that which is imposed on them, but have no say in the matter.

If there is no representation, there are very few options particularly if those who want to oppose decisions are excluded. No trust in the regulation of the industry or the people/organisations doing the regulating makes the situation even worse.

Members or Ministers will be remembered for the good things they have done for the industry. Those that have done good have been excluded.

The Federation has been strong in its resolution for a better industry and walking away is an attribute of the strong, because of the sheer difficulty of it.

Not achieving the change needed is not seen as failure on the part of the Federation but is the failure of those in control of the regulation and training of the industry.

A decade ago the Office of the Auditor General reported that the regulation of the industry would fail if people walked away and that's what is happening.

A situation has been left that bureaucracy has taken over from practicalities. A well-trained hands-on trade has been replaced with a supervision dominated bureaucracy that holds the honest to account and takes very little action on the thousands of illegal jobs done by non-qualified people every week.

Are we in a take it or leave it situation and is it time to leave it?

Take it or leave it is simply described as a situation that is non-negotiable and that those imposing the decision or action are indifferent to others reaction to it. This is our current situation and has been for decades.

In our case practitioners are forced by regulation and laws to take what is given to them. They either accept against their will or reject at a cost to them and that cost is to either break the law or to simply walk away from their chosen trade.

Neither of these choices are appealing but in reality, are the choices left to practitioners because of qualifications, regulation, training, and standards. We are left funding a situation which a lot oppose and those imposing the regulation and training on the industry take the stance that silence is golden, but it is not, as silence can be deafening. The sound of footsteps walking away are seldom heard.

Final Thoughts

We have limited representation of employers and businesses through a membership body but it is concerning that particular parts of our industry are never heard and are definitely not represented.

What we do not have is representation of the employees and in particular apprentices. Apprentices have NO voice. They rely on their employer to speak for them, and at times this voice may be in contradiction to what the apprentice thinks. This has become particularly disturbing during the ROVE transition.

Apprentices are not being well served by the TITO (Skills Org) and do not yet have the protection of the WDC or Te Pukenga. In previous times we have had Apprenticeship Board's whose sole job was to ensure apprentices were going to good employers and they were being looked after and trained properly. Perhaps it is time for the Government to consider investing money into similar institutions as our apprentices are at risk of having their livelihoods affected by the poor transition that is taking place with our TITO.

It seems like everyone is aware of it, but no one is doing anything about it. Apprentices are CERTAINLY aware that they are facing a elongated apprenticeships, delayed ability to lift a certifying ticket and poor quality delivery by

There will be more to follow on the subject of the future of the Federation in coming weeks. If you have any suggestions, please send them through to us.

Lastly, if the Federation was to walk away and closedown, what would you think would be a worthy charity for the money reserves to go to (not a charity like the PGDB, a real one!)

We welcome your thoughts.

institutions who are more interested in making money than teaching a good quality curriculum.

This is a call to arms for apprentices – you need to make your voice heard!! If you don't then at this present moment there is no one else going to do it for you.

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