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IN OTHER NEWS

ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED

Here is a list of issues that have not been addressed that need addressing. Some are historical, some are current, and some are looking forward.

The transfer of apprenticeships in 1976 from 10,000 apprenticeships to 8,000 apprenticeships without notification of the impact of having to obtain an additional qualification to be fully qualified (Craftsman Registration).

The imposition of a business exam to reach Craftsman Status which was UNLAWFUL as it didn't fall into the definition of plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying as defined in the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act.

TIMES UP



Think back a decade and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation Incorporated was formed by industry practitioners with the goal of improving the industry. It was formed BY the industry FOR the industry. As a non-profit organisation we survived solely on donations and have not been beholden to any individual or any organisation.

Back then the Federation questioned the need for a Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, and the way it was established and was operating.

When asking that question of the industry some organisations wanted it retained because they had an influence over it, others wanted it as a status symbol for them individually, and the PGDB themselves backed by incompetent Ministers and Government departments, believed they did a good job of regulating the industry.

Have things changed for the better or have things got worse? Part of the Auditor General's overview in the report by the Office of the Auditor General stated in part:

Steps that need to be taken to rebuild trust in the Board If the Board members keep going with the improvements they have already initiated, and address the additional matters we have highlighted in this report, they will achieve a lot. However, they also need to pay explicit attention to the underlying problem that many in the trades have lost trust in the Board.

The imposition of Continued Professional Development for gasfitters under the 1976 Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act which was proved to be unlawful and was a condition of licensing.

People persecuted by improper investigations by the Board. A case in point is the Paul Gee case where over quarter of a million dollars (that's \$250,000 of practitioners money) was spent on a Board investigation and hearing where relevant information was withheld, where the accused was found not guilty on 42 out of 44 charges, where the Board did not pursue the real offenders and where the Board did not accept or apologise or compensate for their wrongful actions and those of their investigator and his lawyer. This was one of the most shameful times in the Board's history.

CPD courses as a condition of licensing that did not fall into the category of plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying. These courses were later scrapped after years of enforcement.

Businesses not being able to conduct CPD to the betterment of their practitioners unless the courses were accredited by the Board.

Having to attend CPD training as a condition of licensing when the subject

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. In our view, the Board needs to maintain a clear overall focus on the need to build and maintain trust in the Board. To build trust, it needs to behave fairly and reasonably at all times, and make sure that this is apparent to all those interacting with it.

In the Federations opinion this hasn't been achieved and as a result **TIME IS UP**.

The executive committee has made the decision to cease being an Incorporated Society and cease activities. In affect we are turning our backs on the regulation of the industry and walking away. In line with the Federation's rules all residual funds will be donated to a national charity.

This decision has not been made lightly and we are all full of regret having tried all avenues of working with others in the industry and the regulators only to be excluded because our views did not match theirs.

The onus is now on them to make things better but history since 1976 has shown this is not likely as will be outlined in the closing review by the current Federation Chairman Wal Gordon.

FEDERATION CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING VIEW

It is with a sad heart that we are ceasing the activities of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation Incorporated (the Federation) and as the name suggests **THE PLUMBERS GASFITTERS AND DRAINLAYERS FEDERATION**, was formed by practitioners for practitioners and the industry.

It is an organisation belonging to the practitioners unlike the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board and the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the ACT) that have no ownership or control by the practitioners.

I have been proud to have worked with the executive committee and supporters of the Federation. To have had people who were committed to bettering the industry was

matter did not fall into the category of plumbing gasfitting or drainlaying. This is historical AND current. Taping up gumboots and overalls and vaccinations are not a requirement of competency for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers. This year's CPD is one of the worst to date. It does make you wonder if it is more about the PGDB fulfilling their requirements to Mico for sponsorship than it is about upskilling an industry.

Industry Training Organisation (ITO) meetings for a greenfield approach to training only to have the group closed because the group didn't agree with the ITO.

Employers employing apprentices struck problems where nearly every time the apprenticeship version changed, and requirements were different. Absolutely no consistency.

The Board unlawfully taking money from the industry and then claiming they would be bankrupt if they had to pay the money back and then the Government implementing retrospective legislation to cover the Board's unlawful activities.

No real practitioner representation on the Board.

inspirational and helped me get through the dark times of exclusion, threats of legal action by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (the Board) and others, and the manipulation of the training and regulatory system.

Turning our back on the regulation of the industry is not an easy decision and can have severe consequences so I encourage you to stay legal.

This closure of the Federation doesn't stop action where necessary, and individuals can still lay complaints with the likes of the Regulation Review Committee, especially if regulations aren't followed with the likes of non-plumbing gasfitting and drainlaying issues being put as a condition of our licensing and that's what I'll be looking at doing.

We have taken the step of ceasing the Federation's operations because we believe that the regulation of the industry is unjust and that justice in the current system is unaffordable. A system where the honest and legal who make a mistake are hammered and those who purposely do unlawful acts are not pursued.

We have chosen to give up the fight as an environment has been created where registered practitioners haven't been listened to for over a decade, an environment where apprentices have no say, an environment where there is limited or no consultation with practitioners from the Board, the Interim Industry Training Organisation and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment. (MBIE).

The Board, MBIE, the Minister and the IITO are so disconnected with the industry and there is so little trust in them that the industry long ago stopped communicating with them.

Being given the opportunity to communicate is totally different to communicating with the industry. If people choose to not communicate then there is a deeper issue with trust and respect that needs to be addressed.

The Board, MBIE, the Minister of Building and Construction (the Minister) and others claiming to represent the industry should hide their faces in shame and be embarrassed regarding the lack of progression to make us an all-inclusive industry.

For the first couple of years or so, I was in a state of shock at the incompetence of the Ministers, MBIE and the Board but now it has become their standard and their incompetence just rolls over year after year.

No apprentice representation ANYWHERE.

Exclusion tactics used at all levels when people do not agree with the Board, Minister, or other influential groups.

Five Ministers in a decade that have failed to hold the Board to account.

The reason for poor response to the limited Board's two consultations over recent years.

Government Ministers making recommendations as part of the Regulation Review Committee and then walking into the House and voting against their own recommendations.

MBIE being discriminatory against applicants for positions on the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

The fact that regulation of the industry is funded by the industry 100% and the industry has no say in how that regulation occurs.

Overseas trips to conduct CPD for selected groups.

Overseas Board funded trips for selected people to attend the World Plumbing Council meetings which has no benefit to the industry at all.

Overseas trips funded by the Board to look at

Huge opportunities to create a cohesive and co-operative industry have been missed. A feedback loop from industry to these organisations would have much improved regulation and training.

Within the dense smoke caused by the propaganda of the regulators and their supporters, the truth is there are a lot of influencers who are out for personal gain, and I believe it shouldn't be this way. The industry should be regulated for the good of the public AND all practitioners and apprentices - not just selected groups.

For those who have worked on the Federation's Executive Committee, supported by the Federation members, we have a right to walk away and should not be ashamed of the effort we have put into fighting for a better industry that is well trained, well qualified, and well regulated.

We must remember that practitioners don't make the final decisions as that is left up to the so-called specialist and professional boards and organisations.

Forced compliance and pitiful training systems cause extreme strain and stress on the industry and practitioners. Relevant skills and qualifications are in danger of perishing. If it continues in the current state, the consequences in the industry and on the public are dire.

The Federation has put in a lot of effort fighting for competence and accountability of those training and regulating the industry and their cronies. This in some ways, is an old gangster protection racket imposed by the Government. It's very much a case of play by our rules or don't play at all.

There is little transparency into how certain positions are appointed and sometimes it appears that it isn't the best person for the job but the person who most fits the current PC requirements of the associated government department.

The Government won't change as it would cost them money and we are the suckers tolerating the protection racket and paying to do the job in this SEMI regulated industry with a system of partial qualifications.

As the **NEARLY** too late stage has arrived it will be their fault when there are insufficient **FULLY** qualified people to do the job.

The Board, IITO, Ministers and others won't be remembered for the good they have done but more for causing practitioners to turn their backs on the regulation of an

training. Nothing achieved.

The lack of targeted investigations into illegal activities which are rife and supported by the regulation of the industry.

The problem of supervision in the industry which the Board created by having a two-tier qualification system being certifying and tradesman.

The Board prosecuting individuals for not supervising non-qualified people based on their own guidelines which are not regulations and don't have to be adhered to. The Board created the problem of supervision and now qualified practitioners are paying the price.

Apprentices looking for supervisors so they can change employers.

Apprentices not qualifying to a level where they are responsible for their own work and the protection of the public.

A take it or leave approach in the regulation and training of the industry.

No practitioner input into the regulation and training of the industry.

As an industry we shouldn't be paying for the privilege of protecting the Public.

industry. Let's face it, we haven't had a decent Minister in charge of our industry for years. It's a sad day when then Minister Maurice Williamson looks semi competent.

I remember in Napier the Minister of Building and Construction and the Chairman of the Board of the time took offence to being called a bunch of clowns, they should have taken note because if you don't like clowns, you don't support the circus.

For me it hasn't been about status or thanks its been about getting a better industry. I haven't worried about making friends as it's been about forcing change to a corrupt system and people.

The side column lists a few of the issues that you may want to read to give you a reminder of what has and is happening.

As I turn my back on the regulation of the industry (but stay legal) I won't turn my back on practitioners and will do what I can personally to hold the Board and Minister to account.

Thanks to the Federations Executive Committee for their efforts and to all those practitioners out there that have supported us.

I will continue to be available to help with advice to anyone wishing to take up arms to continue the fight for a better industry.

FROM THE FEDERATION EXECUTIVE

A huge thank you to Wal Gordon who has given up hundreds if not thousands of hours fighting for industry. He has achieved much and those that have come in contact with him know what a good, honest and hugely intelligent man he is.

Thanks Wal – we got some wins but unfortunately, we didn't make it all the way. Still there is much to fight for and hopefully others will take up the cudgels.

A final administration point to note is that if you are still making donations to the Federation please stop as the bank account will be closed in the next few weeks and the residual money will be donated to St Johns Ambulance.

In addition, we have determined that all documentation the Federation holds will be in digital form for future use should it be needed.