

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Substandard Plumbing Products](#)
- [Apprentices as a Resource](#)
- [We have to do our part](#)

IN OTHER NEWS



Dear Editor

You have been pushing a lot lately for more involvement from practitioners. I think you'll find the young aren't interested and the old are too beat up to really care anymore.

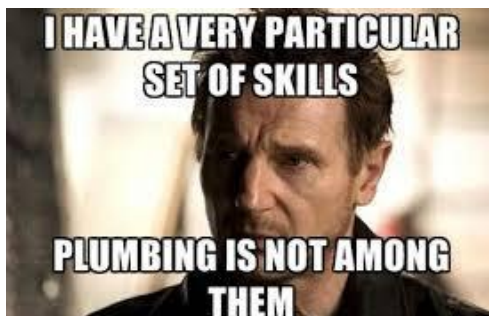
I've been in the industry for 40 years and nothing has changed for the better in that time.

Ed:

We understand where you are coming from but if we don't do something then we are just going to become like a septic tank, green and lush on the top and full of shit underneath.

What other organisation gives apprentices and certifiers the same voice, business owners and

Substandard Plumbing Products



There has been a lot of talk over the last couple of weeks about substandard plumbing products. Media coverage has been vast and there has been a great deal of discussion about whose

responsibility it is to ensure products are suitable.

The Minister of Building and Housing Dr Nick Smith said his officials had found no evidence of problems with substandard plumbing products in new homes. (The interesting question then would be have they gone looking for it, and if so how, or are they basing that on a lack of reports). On the other hand some organisations are saying there are no legally enforceable standards for pipes and fittings in New Zealand, and half of all new houses had plumbing that would fail performance tests in Australia. (So we ask where the Building Code comes in here).

Apparently the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment had made inquiries but found no major problems, but they say that about everything, even their own payroll system.

Dr Smith advised anyone with evidence of poor-quality plumbing products to talk to the government but we think that only applies to the public, because he told Morning Report plumbers were responsible for deciding whether the products they installed met New Zealand standards. It was reported he said:

"Every single piece of plumbing work has been certified by a plumber, and if that work is found - two, three or five years hence - to be substandard, that plumber is in the gun and potentially has his registration up for loss if he has not met those Building Code requirements."

The public should be wary of claims about substandard foreign products, because it could just be local companies trying to reduce competition.

It's just never ending isn't it, tradespeople are legislated to protect the public's health and safety and now we are expected to pay for it

employees the same voice? C'mon people – your opinions count – let them be heard!!

Dear Editor

We recently had a temporary employee who told us his last job was in Auckland. It was his job to supervise the 15 apprentices who were in vans doing the work for an unsuspecting public and a lot of Housing NZ work. There were apparently 5 tradesmen in the office. It was this tradesman's (journeyman only) job to help correct the cock ups the boys made.

Now this is only hearsay and we have no proof of this but what an anecdote! What a blight to have this in our industry.

You and I both know that this will be a common scenario in New Zealand. The seat of the pants and No 8 wire training mentality of Kiwis. It is maybe an essential part of self education. Plumbing isn't rocket science after all. However it comes with what cost? To the employer. To the public. To the contract. To the Public Health.

So throw in the ITO model of non training assessments and what will that leave us with in 20 years time? I shudder to think. You can blame the Minister, the ITO and the Polytechs but at the end, all plumbers have to take responsibility for the how our future tradesmen turn

as well. The Government continues to implement legislation that takes money from tradespeople, the latest Occupational Safety and Health legislation is a prime example where we are expected to outlay for it to happen, but make mention of putting up your rates to cover that cost and you get told you are too expensive.

Now the Government seems to be implying that crappy products can come into New Zealand, the importer can make money, the government can make money through import taxes etc, the customers can save money, houses can be built cheaper, but don't worry because if anything goes wrong the blame will go on to the plumbers and all the trade agreements will be safe. It is a sobering thought for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers to be EXTREMELY mindful of what they are buying and from whom. If it seems cheap and too good to be true, chances are that it may end up being too good to be true. We should also consider refusing to install product that the customer has supplied, as we will be responsible for that too. You cannot contract out of these responsibilities either.

You can imagine the laughing in the halls of the Beehive with those who are elected to provide leadership and look after our interests saying "We have laid the responsibility for products onto the plumbers, gas fitters and drainlayers and if it goes wrong we don't even have to pay to prosecute them and hold them accountable because they are self funding. What a great model - let's do it with all trades!!!"

For our industry, the Federation believes it's time for tradespeople to start protecting themselves and their interests.

It is a simple equation for trades people. If the regulation of the products falls back on tradespeople in the manner the Minister says then it is very important that the tradespeople cover themselves. It is very likely public liability insurance won't cover issues as it will be too high a risk so that only leaves one thing to do, and that is increase rates so sufficient can be made to save for the inevitable, and refuse to install product you haven't supplied yourself!

If the manufacturers and importers know we have been given the hospital pass and quality isn't their responsibility, some may maximise their profits by skimping on quality and products and the situation may get even worse than it could be now.

How long are tradespeople going to be able absorb the costs to protect the public? We feel the Government should be helping us with the task - NOT just imposing the liability on us. Perhaps the Government should get their Ministries and Ministers to talk to tradespeople and not dictate to them, after all we have a particular set of skills they will never have.

out.

Keep hammering away
PGDF.

Speak up fellow
tradesmen.

Ed:

Yes we as tradespeople need to take responsibility but we are on the back foot when it comes to resources such as time and money.

An effective, efficient TRAINING system is what is needed. Something we can be proud of and showcase to other industries whose systems are starting to fail the way ours has.

We agree with you that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers need to speak up – we need to make it clear what we think is best for our industry and not have it dictated to us by people in suits that sit behind desks all day.

Trouble is we aren't good at speaking up BEFORE hand, and only complain AFTER the fact.

Let's not be the moaners, let's be the shapers, the architects of our own destiny. Use the Federation if you don't want to speak up individually, or make your views known to the ITO and Minister – but don't sit silently.

Dear Editor

Well the news is full of them this week.....a camera man leaves a tape

Apprentices as a Resource



Last week we concluded the news letter by saying that apprentices should be looked at as a resource to be developed not as slaves and that Aristotle once said:

"If every tool, when ordered, or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it ... then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master workers or of slaves for the lords".

We believe it will be a long time before we can tell tools to go and clear a blocked drain or to climb up in Mrs Jones ceiling space to change a ballcock, so it looks like we will need to keep on developing our greatest resource - being people.

Have you ever thought about how important people are to an industry like ours? John J Bernet once said "Men are more important than tools. If you don't believe so, put a good tool into the hands of a poor workman". That's very true and if you remember the old saying of "a good tradesman never blames his tools" you get the idea that it's all about people.

We need to give our apprentices the knowledge and skills they need to perform functions competently, and we ask if the training system is providing that - and we would say it isn't. Around \$20,000 in apprentice and Government contributions is spent on each apprentice, and on top of that you have employer costs in resources and time. Surely too much money is being spent on bureaucracy and assessments rather than on actual training?

Should the responsibility for training be placed on the employer or is the employer mostly there to practice and polish the skills taught to an apprentice on off the job training? If the onus is placed squarely on the employer to provide 90% of the training then shouldn't they be compensated? The current system relies on employers doing it out of the goodness of their hearts and the industry relies on the few that want to give something back.

As an industry we not only have to train the apprentices but we also need to educate ourselves about the benefits of looking after apprentices and other staff.

If you were given \$60,000 to make your life easier each year what would you buy - a digger, a new Ute, a trencher or would you invest in people? Let us know.

We believe the Federation is the only collective voice that apprentices have. We are not an employer organisation but a membership organisation that gives apprentices the same value voice as business owners. Apprentices are the most vulnerable

recorder next to two politicians in a café having a cup of tea.....the cameraman gets accused of doing this purposely.....he thinks he is due \$1.25 million dollars and the PM is willing to settle out of court....

I wish I was a cameraman, not a gasfitter....I can prove not only was I set up and framed and lied about, but that the guilty walked free after nearly killing someone in an explosion.....oh to be a cameraman, they are so integral to the running of NZ....so much more than plumbers and gasfitters.

Why are we shat on whenever they like?

ED:

Maybe we get treated the way we do because we provide a free service for the Government. Through the registration of the industry we are effectively enslaved labour (legally bound to and oblige and serve)

We attend to the health and safety of the public and the Government claim the gratitude.

people in our industry – they are often afraid to speak up for fear of losing their job or being black listed.

Some are working without employment contracts, are not provided freely with health and safety PPE, are not paid while on block courses, are being charged for a pre-trade and then for a full apprenticeship – even though they have already gained the unit standards for some of the apprenticeship. No discounts are forthcoming when this situation arises, and yet no one says anything on their behalf. The large employers of apprentices (the group employer schemes) , while certainly providing all the gear that they need to, and paying most of the fees, still do not give apprentices their own voice.

We have to do our part



The Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board are doing their part to help the industry by holding non authorised people to account for their actions and as an industry we need to help.

The Cowboys are causing problems in the industry and must be stopped so we encourage you to download the R.A.C app and let your fingers do the talking.

Report it with the R.A.C app

Get action quickly!

R.A.C is the quickest and easiest way to make a complaint.

Download the R.A.C app free from the App Store and Google Play or get it from the Boards website.

Don't moan about it - report it.

You are receiving this email as a member of PGDF or because you signed up online.

[Edit your subscription](#) | [Unsubscribe instantly](#)

Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation 6
Tacoma Drive, Totara Park,
Upper Hutt 5018 Ph (04)
5277977 Mob 0276564811
Fax (04) 5277978
information@pgdf.co.nz