



Fellow Practitioner Issue 365 Dated 8 February 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Trust and Confidence will advance the industry**

IN OTHER NEWS

Countries with the highest-paid workers in the world

We thought you may be interested in this section of an article on the internet this week. Where did New Zealand rank in countries with the highest paid workers?

19th) New Zealand It might be a long way from anywhere, but New Zealand rewards its workers well for staying put. Service professionals here have an average \$44,174 (£32,829). Management earn an average \$165,093 (£122,695).

15th) Australia It's not just the weather that attracts workers to Australia. The financial rewards are good too and management receive three times what service professionals receive, a lot more equitable than elsewhere. Service professionals here have an average gross annual income of \$51,497 (£38,272). Management are earning an average of

Trust and Confidence will advance the industry



The Labour Coalition has been in Government for a year now and there is a lot of policy movement in a great many areas that affect the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry.

The Federation has been watching carefully and waiting to see what is going to progress the industry, but to date there hasn't been a lot. It seems that most issues lack two fundamental ingredients - TRUST and CONFIDENCE.

We would have thought by now that the powers to be would have recognised that there is no use implementing anything unless the industry trusts and has confidence in the issue being implemented.

Time has shown us that it is very hard to trust when all you have from the past is evidence why you shouldn't. Unfortunately for all practitioners in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry we feel we have no power to control our own destinies and are reliant on the actions of others.

We are forced to trust that they will do the right thing, but evidence shows us that in a lot of cases self interest and organisations profits seem to rule their actions. It's been a long time since we have seen anything original being produced by the high paid people sitting in offices dictating the direction of our industry and training.

We see a lot of tripping around overseas getting other people's ideas which are then adapted to meet the need of the individuals but not necessarily the needs of the industry. It appears consultation is done with those who it is believed will agree with the subject matter.

\$165,581 (£51,497).

Joint 9th) UK It might all change after Brexit but, for now, the UK is in the top 10 highest-paying countries. Service professionals here earn an average \$45,691 (£33,957). Management earn an average \$230,721 (£171,469).

Our question is “why is there such a big gap between management and service workers?” Without service workers the managers wouldn’t have jobs and without managers the service workers may not have anyone to administer their employment.

Seems like both are needed but the value needs to be looked at as service workers are undervalued or managers are overvalued.

For example look at the value put on the trades. Practitioners are mostly viewed as people who can’t make it academically and the consumer wants to pay less than \$80.00 an hour for their services, yet those same consumers are happy to pay an IT Person \$150.00 an hour to get them back on the social web, or a lawyer \$600.00 an hour to argue in a language the lawyers have developed.

It seems like the basic needs of life and health only warrant a basic income, yet the perks in life warrant the high incomes.

It’s up to practitioners to change this by increasing the perceived value we add to people’s lives.

If we question the powers to be such as Skills (the ITO), MBIE, the Board and such like, we get ignored or excluded from discussions. The ITO is a prime example of this. A couple of years ago they disestablished an industry leadership group because it asked too many questions regarding the direction of training and provided valuable feedback which was not well accepted by Skills. The Federation hasn’t received any formal communication from them since then and this is one of the organisations that are legislated to communicate with the industry.

We would be willing to bet a large sum of money that Group Schemes have the ear of Skills while the individual employer who has apprentices is left as a lone voice in the woods. Is this fair? Is it good business? We don’t think so. Perhaps once the Vocational Education Review that the Government are currently undertaking will “encourage” Skills to talk to industry (and that is ALL of industry) a bit more as they will no doubt want to gain support in a Review that could fundamentally change the apprentice and training landscape.

To get accountability practitioners have to fight for it and that takes a long time, going through the likes of the Ombudsman office, the Office of the Auditor General or even the Regulations Review Committee. It all costs money and time and if lawyers are involved it can run into tens of thousands of dollars and the worst part of it is that, if it is legal action, we pay twice.

Yes we pay twice because not only do we pay our lawyers but we also pay for the other parties’ lawyers by way of our licensing and prosecution fees, apprenticeship fees, taxes and even if we win, the chances are all we will get is a “Sorry” if you are lucky.

“Sorry” works when a mistake is made, but not when trust is broken. Forgiving is easy, but forgetting and trusting again is sometimes impossible and yet that is what is expected of practitioners. Look at the apprenticeship scheme we are supposedly to trust. There have been over five schemes in the last 15 years and even the latest scheme has changed already. All those great ideas from overseas and other industries failing after one attempt.

Where does all the money come from for the failed attempts - the practitioners!! . Do the organisations or individuals failing get held accountable? We don’t think so and the trust and confidence diminishes every year.

The Federation believes as long as there is no trust and confidence there will be no justice and fairness in the governance or regulation of our industry. All there will be is the continual resource redistribution and political positioning which will remain more important than a progressive industry.

It seems to be that the powers to be are searching for a magic wand, unicorns and stardust and they just don’t get what is needed by the industry. Practitioners know there is no quick fix and they need to let the Minister know that and stop others from controlling our

What's Fair?

Have you ever noticed that plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers have to follow the rest of the country in the Government imposed "one policy fits all" regime?

Let's use training as an example where the rules are set by the Government for the Qualifications Authority, the Tertiary Education Council, the ITO's etc.

Our industry comes under the same rules as the rest of the country for consistency but what happens when it comes to financing Regulation Boards?

We are still the only industry 100% financing its regulation Board and policing regime.

It seems the Government forgets it imposes the same rules on us as everyone else but forgets the fairness when it comes to money.

Why should we continue to participate in unfair regulation?

direction and wasting industry resources.

The current situation has been decades in the making and only practitioners pushing for accountability and original ideas will sort the situation out.

We were taught to think before we act; so if we slap the shit out of someone and criticise their actions you can rest assured we have thought about it and are confident about our decision. We know what we bring to the table... so trust us when we say we are not afraid to eat alone.

If you agree with what you have read then get involved either nationally or locally. This is a "take no prisoners" year for the Federation so we are seeking people to join our executive committee. This is mostly done electronically to keep costs down. We also seek people who are prepared to go to their local Member of Parliament to put our case forward.

We are always looking for people to recruit others and to research both nationally and locally. We need to know what is happening and what the issues are that are affecting practitioners.

This is the Federations year to step it up. Enough of the political game now it is the time for total action by practitioners.

Things of interest to us in 2019:

The VET (Vocational Education Training) Review – we need to ensure the voices of employers and apprentices is heard.

Skills poor communication channels – this needs to change and quickly

One qualification for our industry – when workplace competence means just that, and an apprenticeships trains you to practice you craft without the need for ongoing supervision
Supervision

Feel free to add to this list and let us know what you want us to work on for you in 2019!

If you want to help contact Wal Gordon at wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz.

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