

Board of Professional Engineers v C

This was a disciplinary proceeding brought by the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (“**Board**”) against a registered professional engineer (identified as “**C**”) in the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal (“**Tribunal**”).

Disciplinary Ground

The Board alleged that C had behaved in a way that constituted unsatisfactory professional conduct in the design of a shed.

C’s Background

C was a registered professional engineer.

Conduct of Engineer

C was engaged by a builder to provide, and did provide, designs and a structural certificate in relation to the design and construction of a shed with a standard attached skillion roof on all sides.

Significant design inadequacies were apparent in the designs drawn and certified by C, including that:

- they lacked detail and clarity and were of a poor standard;
- they failed to specify adequate structural support for the intended building and were unsupported by sound engineering judgement. In particular:
 - the specified roof purlins and veranda rafters were under-designed, causing significant overstressing under the design loads;
 - the columns were under-specified, causing significant overstressing;
 - the specified connection between the knee brace and the building columns was unsuitable for the intended structure and was inadequate to transfer design loads for the knee brace;
 - the building’s bracing was inadequately specified and unsatisfactory for the subject building.
- C failed to respond to concerns raised by the Board and others as to the structural adequacy of the building in a manner and to a standard expected of a RPEQ.

What the Tribunal Said

The Tribunal considered that the significant design inadequacies demonstrated a lack of care and complacency which should not be present in an engineer’s workplace. The Tribunal also considered that C’s conduct demonstrated a lack of objectivity and openness to other’s views, which was similarly inappropriate behaviour of a RPEQ.

Consequences for C

The Tribunal found that the C’s conduct was serious and that the deterrent effect of any orders or penalty would need to reflect the importance of upholding the objects of the Act.

The Court ordered that C be reprimanded, imposed a monetary penalty, and ordered that C pay the Board’s costs.