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LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PUT ON NOTICE TO EMPLOY REGISTERED ENGINEERS

Queensland's 77 local governments have been put on notice by the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (**BPEQ**) to only employ or procure engineering services from registered professional engineers following a recent ruling from the anti-corruption watchdog.

The Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland (**CCC**) received a complaint about the conduct of some engineers employed in local government and subsequently formed the view that the carrying out of professional engineering services by unregistered persons or without the direct supervision of a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (**RPEQ**) is corrupt conduct under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.

In Queensland, the practice of engineering is regulated by the *Professional Engineers Act 2002 (PE Act)*. The PE Act requires that professional engineering services be carried out by or directly supervised by a practising RPEQ.

The carrying out of professional engineering services by unregistered persons or without the direct supervision of a RPEQ is also an offence against section 115 of the PE Act. This offence carries a maximum penalty of approximately \$130,000.

Both the CCC and BPEQ have written to all local governments stating that they take appropriate action to address activities contrary to the PE Act and make inquiries to ensure that staff engaged – internally or externally – in the provision of professional engineering services to local government are appropriately registered or directly supervised.

The ruling from the CCC comes ahead of amendments to the PE Act commencing 1 March 2021 that will expand BPEQ's investigation powers.

BPEQ has undertaken a comprehensive engagement plan with local governments across the state – contacting all 77 councils with information about the PE Act and RPEQ system and holding seminars or meetings with all but 10 of them. While education and engagement is the preferred option to ensure compliance, BPEQ will use its new powers to investigate professional engineering services not carried out by or directly supervised by a RPEQ.

For more information visit www.bpeq.qld.gov.au.

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