

A photograph of two women in a professional setting, leaning over a table to examine a large technical drawing or blueprint. One woman is pointing at a specific part of the drawing with a blue marker. The drawing includes various lines, curves, and text, including the acronym 'AARP'. A laptop and a mouse are visible on the table. The image is framed with white geometric lines and a blue gradient at the top left.

INTRODUCTION TO THE  
**BOARD OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
ENGINEERS OF  
QUEENSLAND**

# INTRODUCTION

The Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (Board) is an independent self-funded statutory body established under the *Professional Engineers Act 2002 Qld* (PE Act) and administers the PE Act on behalf of Queensland Government.

Established in 1930 as the first engineering regulatory body in Australia, the Board is responsible for regulating the vast and multi-faceted engineering profession across the state, through a fair and consistent set of standards, designed to uphold the highest engineering conduct.

## Overview

The PE Act along with the *Professional Engineers Regulation 2019* set out the Board's functions and laws relating to the practice of engineering in or for Queensland.

**Strategic direction** is provided by a seven-member Board and **operational matters** are managed by the Registrar and a team of 24.

The Board's core function is to provide for the **registration of individuals as Registered Professional Engineers of Queensland (RPEQ)**. Registration helps safeguard the public and distinguishes qualified, competent and experienced professional engineers. Registration numbers continue to grow and in October 2024 have surpassed 22,000 active RPEQs. The four largest engineering areas are: civil, electrical, mechanical and structural.

The Board also **investigates complaints about and take disciplinary action** against RPEQs whose conduct fails to meet the high standard of professional conduct; investigate and prosecute breaches of the PE Act; and provide advice to government about matters related to engineering.

Building stronger relationships with our stakeholders and registrants is critical to delivering the Board's role and the Board continues to **strengthen engagement efforts** across all sectors.

The Board **supports the Queensland Government objectives for the community** by:

- providing responsive and efficient administrative, registration, compliance and engagement services
- encouraging and supporting the delivery of infrastructure projects across Queensland
- promoting the value of registration to ensure safety of both people and the environment
- enhancing our governance and decision-making processes.

## Objects of the PE Act

**Section 3** of the PE Act outlines the main objects as:

- a) to protect the public by ensuring professional engineering services are provided by a registered professional engineer in a professional and competent way; and
- b) to maintain public confidence in the standard of services provided by registered professional engineers; and
- c) to uphold the standards of practice of registered professional engineers.

**Section 4** of the PE Act explains that the main objects are to be achieved primarily by:

- a) providing for the registration of individuals as registered professional engineers under this Act; and
- b) providing for the monitoring and enforcement of compliance with this Act; and
- c) imposing obligations on persons about the practice of engineering; and
- d) establishing the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland.

## Functions of the Board

**Section 80** of the PE Act describes the functions of the Board as:

- a) to assess applications made to it under this Act;
- b) to register persons who are eligible for registration and issue certificates of registration;
- c) to conduct, or authorise, investigations about the professional conduct of registered professional engineers and contraventions of this Act;
- d) to approve a program to audit registered professional engineers under part 2B;
- e) to keep the register;
- f) to advise the Minister about -
  - i. eligibility requirements for persons applying for registration, or renewal or restoration of registration; and
  - ii. the suitability of entities to be assessment entities; and
  - iii. the operation of this Act in its application to the practice of engineering.
- g) to review the eligibility requirements mentioned in paragraph (f) (i);
- h) to perform other functions given to the Board under this or another Act;
- i) to perform a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (h).

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

## Strategic direction

The Board's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan outlines the vision, purpose, principles and the strategic priorities of the Board.



### Our Vision

Driving a higher standard of professionalism of engineers for a safer tomorrow



### Our Purpose

To protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession by upholding the highest standard of engineering



### Our Principles

#### Professionalism

We drive a high standard of professionalism and pursue opportunities to continuously improve

#### Accountability

We make informed and objective decisions in a transparent manner and we are accountable for our actions

#### Respect

We are honest and ethical and treat everyone reasonably, equally, and with respect

#### Collaboration

We work as a unified team to create effective outcomes and build relationships with our stakeholders

The Board's current **strategic priorities** are:

1. Drive a high standard of professionalism in engineering
2. Leadership through collaborative engagement
3. Strong corporate governance

## Performance agreement

**Section 99** of the PE Act requires the Board to enter into an agreement with the Minister within one month after the end of the financial year.

This performance agreement

- must identify the Board's strategic direction for the current financial year and the two following financial years
- may include other matters relevant to the Board's functions and agreed to by the Minister and the Board.

The 2024-2025 Board Performance Agreement is with the Minister for consideration.

## The Board

The Board consists of seven members and include the following representatives

a RPEQ who is academic head or representative of a school of engineering

- **Professor Maureen Hassall** to 30/06/2025
- Deputy Chairperson

a RPEQ who is representative of Engineers Australia

- **Ms Suzanne Burow** to 30/06/2025
- Chairperson

a RPEQ elected by their peers

- **Dr Emma Eriksson** to 30/06/2025

a RPEQ who is based in regional Queensland

- **Ms Suzanne Brown** to 31/03/2027

a lawyer with at least 10 years' experience in building and construction

- **Ms Kirsty Smith** to 31/03/2027

a construction contractor with at least 10 years' experience

- **Ms Loren Hickey** to 30/06/2025

a person who is not a RPEQ (community representative)

- **Mr John Anderson** to 31/03/2027

The Department is responsible for managing the appointment processes for all Board members.

**Section 92 (1)** of the PE Act outlines Board Meetings must be held at least once every two months at the times and places the Chairperson decides.

**Section 107A** of the PE Act allows the Board to delegate its functions under the PE Act. Many of the lower-level administrative decisions have been delegated to the Registrar and other staff members. This enables the Board to concentrate on major decisions e.g. outcome of disciplinary investigations and strategic issues.

The Board is supported by a **Risk and Audit Committee (RAC)** which was established in June 2022 to act as an independent advisory body reporting directly to the Board on accountability and audit related matters.

## Funding

All costs to Government associated with the regulation of engineers, including the costs of administration by the Board, are met from fees received from registrants under the PE Act.

RPEQ registration requires annual renewal as the registration period for RPEQs mirrors the financial year. Registration must be renewed during the annual renewal period of 1 April – 31 May.

All Board fees are set and indexed in line with Government regulation.

## Our team

Currently, the Board employs 25 staff, including the Registrar who is a public servant (reporting to the Executive Director, Building Policy) and is responsible for managing the Board's administrative affairs.

Board employees are direct Board appointments.

All Board employees are covered by the *Public Sector Act 2022 Qld* and entitlements are in line with the *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2023*.

The Board has formally adopted the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service and works consistently with the Queensland Government values in addition to the Board's principles included in the Strategic Plan.

We are an equal employment opportunity employer and committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We promote a respectful workplace culture that is free from all forms of harassment, workplace bullying, discrimination and violence.

To help employees balance work and life responsibilities, the Board offers flexible work arrangements including flexible start and finish times and a hybrid working environment.

As an organisation, we are committed to a healthy and safe place of work for all employees and proud to be a recognised Skilled Mental Health First Aid Workplace.

# REGISTRATIONS

The PE Act gives RPEQs the exclusive right to provide professional engineering services in or for Queensland. In return for this right, RPEQs have the responsibility to practice competently and ethically.

The PE Act requires that only engineers who are registered as RPEQs are permitted to carry out professional engineering services in Queensland or for Queensland. The Board can investigate and prosecute individuals for breaches of the PE Act, including practising while unregistered and claiming to be or misusing the protected title of RPEQ when not registered. An unregistered person may perform engineering services unsupervised in accordance with a prescriptive standard.

The PE Act defines **professional engineering services** as “an engineering service that requires, or is based on, the application of engineering principles and data to a design, or to a construction, production, operation, or maintenance activity, relating to engineering, and does not include an engineering service that is provided only in accordance with a prescriptive standard.”

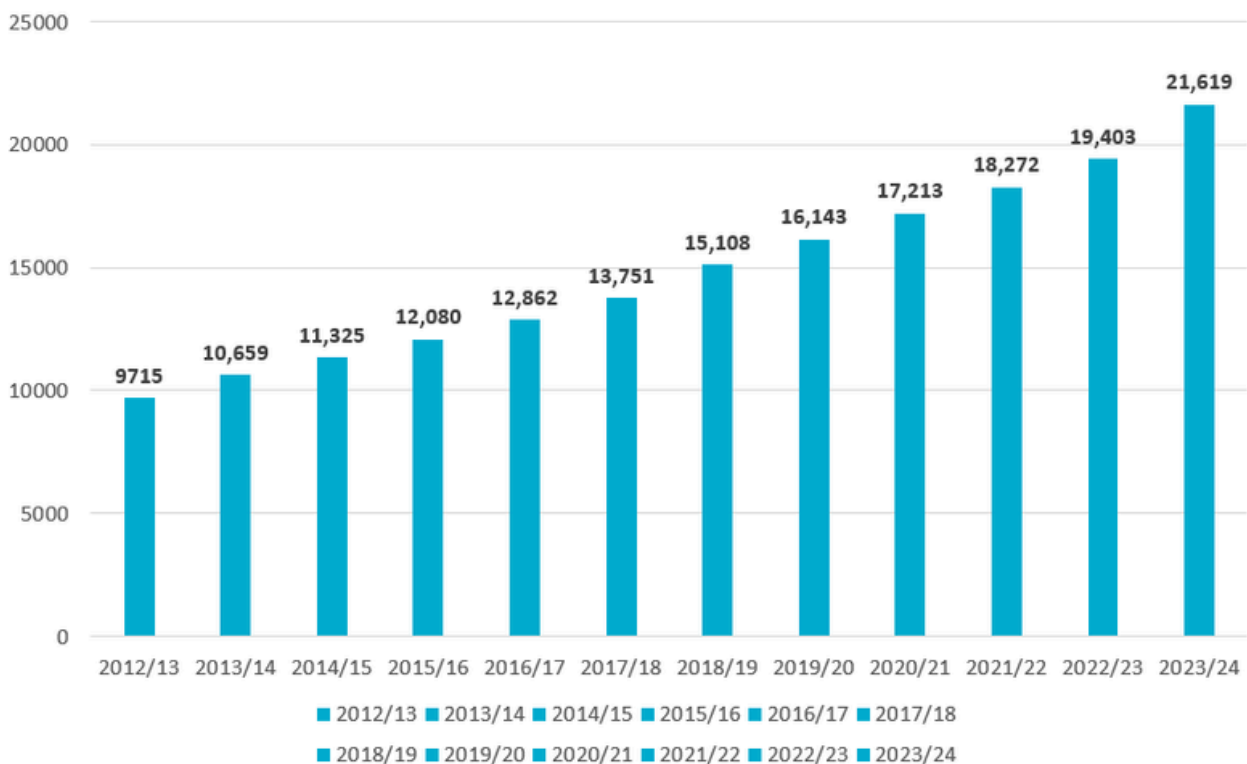
A **prescriptive standard** is defined as “a document that states procedures or criteria for carrying out a design, or a construction, production, operation, or maintenance activity, relating to engineering and the application of which does not require advanced scientifically based calculations.

A person who is not registered may carry out professional engineering services only under the **direct supervision** of a RPEQ who is responsible for the services.

RPEQs are registered in an **area(s) of engineering** related to their qualification and competency. RPEQs must only practice in the area(s) of engineering for which they are registered in (e.g. structural) and also only within their area of competence (e.g. the design of plumbing systems).

The **total number of RPEQs** continues to increase each financial year. During 2023-2024, the Board passed 21,000 RPEQs for the first time and also celebrated registering our 30,000th RPEQ. In ten years, the number of RPEQs more than doubled, as illustrated in the graph below. As of October 2024, there are currently more than 22,000 RPEQs.

## RPEQs by financial year



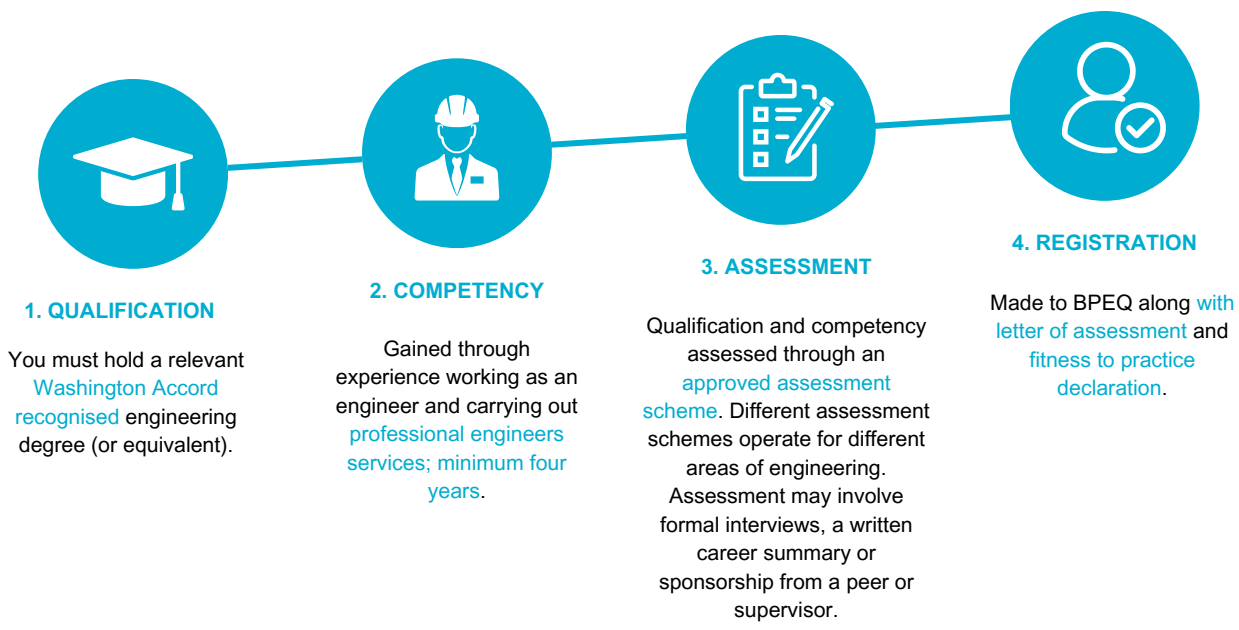
# RPEQ registration process

There are *two types of registration*:

**01** **Practicing RPEQs**  
Practicing RPEQs are permitted to carry out professional engineering services in their area of engineering and competence without restriction.

**02** **Non-practicing RPEQs**  
Non-practising category was created for RPEQs who are on a career break (e.g. parental leave). Non-practising RPEQs are not permitted to carry out professional engineering services but can keep their RPEQ status.

There is a **four-step registration process**:



## Co-regulation and assessment entities

The Board operates in a **co-regulatory environment**, which is a joint administration of the registration process by the engineering profession. The amendment to the PE Act in 2008 introduced the appointment of two assessment entities to assess the qualifications and competencies of engineers applying for registration. These two assessment entities were Engineers Australia and the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. Currently there are 11 entities approved to assess engineers' qualification and competencies on behalf of the Board.

An entity may apply to the Minister for the approval, renewal or variation of an assessment scheme. On receiving an application, the Minister must refer the application to the Board for assessment. The Board must consider the application and provide a written report to the Minister, recommending whether the Minister grant the application and any recommendation by the Board that the Minister impose conditions on the scheme. The Minister is ultimately responsible for making the decision to grant or refuse an application from an entity for the approval, renewal or variation of an assessment scheme.

The approved assessment entities and the areas of registration they have been approved to undertake assessment in are:

### **Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating — AIRAH**

- Mechanical engineering

### **Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy**

#### — AusIMM:

- Environmental engineering
- Metallurgical engineering
- Mining engineering
- Geotechnical (Mining) engineering

### **Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers**

#### — CIBSE

- Mechanical engineering
- Electrical engineering

### **Engineers Australia — EA**

- Aerospace engineering
- Inspection of amusement rides and devices
- Biomedical engineering
- Chemical engineering
- Civil engineering
- Electrical engineering
- Environmental engineering
- Fire safety engineering
- Geotechnical engineering
- Information, telecommunications and electronics
- Mechanical engineering
- Mechatronics engineering
- Naval architecture
- Petroleum engineering
- Structural engineering

### **Professionals Australia — PA\*\***

- Civil engineering
- Information, telecommunications and electronics
- Mechanical engineering
- Structural engineering
- Electrical engineering
- Chemical engineering
- Geotechnical engineering
- Environmental engineering

### **Institution of Civil Engineers — ICE**

- Civil engineering

### **Institution of Chemical Engineers — IChemE**

- Chemical engineering

### **Institute of Civil Infrastructure**

- Civil engineering

### **Institute of Public Works Engineering, Australasia, Queensland — IPWEAQ**

- Civil engineering

### **Institution of Structural Engineers — IStructE**

- Structural engineering

### **Royal Institution of Naval Architects — RINA**

- Naval architecture

### **Civil Aviation Safety Authority — CASA\***

- Aeronautical

*\*CASA regulates Australian aviation safety. CASA personnel who hold an Instrument of Authority from CASA may be eligible for registration as a RPEQ in the area of Aeronautical engineering*

**\*\*Renewal application is currently with Minister for review**

## Eligibility criteria

In order to uphold the very high standards of engineering in Queensland, under section 80 of the PE Act, the Board must, at least once every two years, review the eligibility requirements included in the Act for all persons applying for, or renewing, or restoring and advise the Minister about these.

At its meeting on 7 December 2023, the Board has reviewed the eligibility requirements and has agreed to require the following for all applicants and advised the Minister accordingly:

### Qualifications



### Competencies

1. a minimum of **four years' experience** working in the industry post-graduation.

## Annual renewal and continuing professional development (CPD) requirements

RPEQs must **renew their registration** every year to ensure they continue to meet the standards required to be a RPEQ (between 1 April and 31 May).

The PE Act provides for a period following each registration year during which those previously registered engineers who did not renew their registration can apply to have their **registration restored** (between 1 July – 31 August).

Engineers carry out highly complex work, so it is important they maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills. To continue to be eligible for registration, RPEQs must comply with continuing registration requirements.

As per **section 16** of the PE Act, **continuing registration requirements** may include requirements about the following:

- the nature, extent and period of practice of engineering by the applicant;
- the nature and extent of continuing professional development to be undertaken by the applicant;
- the nature and extent of research, study or teaching, relating to engineering, to be undertaken by the applicant;
- the nature and extent of administrative work, relating to engineering, to be performed by the applicant.

As per **section 16** of the PE Act, the above requirements are met by:

- if the applicant is registered with an assessment entity for participation in the continuing registration requirements of an assessment scheme conducted by the entity – complying with the continuing registration requirements of the assessment scheme; or
- otherwise – complying with the Board's continuing registration requirements for the area of engineering for which the applicant is, or was, registered.

CPD is designed to extend the RPEQs' knowledge and skills in their area/s of engineering. The Board has a Policy which outlines the requirements and states that RPEQs must complete **a minimum of 150 hours of structured CPD over a three-year period** leading up to the renewal or restoration of their registration. These requirements are in line with current industry standards.

RPEQs may be **audited** to ensure they are meeting their CPD obligations. The Board works together with the approved assessment entities to audit CPD compliance.



## Code of Practice

Like other professions registered under law, RPEQs must meet and maintain high standards of technical practice and professional conduct set out in a [Code of Practice](#).

The Code of Practice is developed by the Board to provide guidance to RPEQs about appropriate professional conduct and practice expected of them by their peers and the community.

Generally, the principles of the Code of Practice require RPEQs to maintain good professional relationships with peers and clients, work within the limits of their expertise, conduct themselves in a professional, safe and courteous way, act with honesty and integrity and understand and comply with standards of practice and legal requirements.

The current Code of Practice commenced on 29 October 2021.

The Board has commenced a review of the current Code of Practice.

## Mutual recognition

Professional engineers who hold registration in another jurisdiction may apply for registration in Queensland under mutual recognition. Professional engineers may apply under:

- The *Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 1992 (Qld)*, if they are registered in an equivalent occupation in another Australian State or Territory; or
- The *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act 2003 (Qld)*, if they are registered in an equivalent occupation in New Zealand.

While every mutual recognition application is decided on a case-by-case basis, the Board's preliminary view is that the following occupations are equivalent.

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Occupations which are equivalent</u>	<u>Occupations which can be made equivalent by imposing conditions</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Victoria – with or without endorsement to work in the building industry.	Structural Electrical Mechanical	Fire Safety – with condition that fire safety engineers who provide professional engineering services that span multidisciplinary areas must be registered in each area of engineering in Queensland.	Only Professional Engineers with substantive registration pursuant to s 12 of the Professional Engineers Registration Act 2017 (Vic) (NOT deemed/transitional registration under s 107 of that Act).
Tasmania	None	Fire Safety – with a condition that an Engineer-Fire Safety only performs professional engineering services in the building sector.	

In 2023-2024, the Board received 65 mutual recognition applications. Of these 29 were approved.

Queensland is not currently participating in the *Automatic Mutual Recognition scheme (AMR)* which is regulated by Part 3 of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992 (Cth)*.

The Board continues to monitor the registration schemes in all Australian jurisdictions and in New Zealand and liaise with the other jurisdictions proactively.

# COMPLAINTS

The Board has a regulatory function which encompasses **two separate legal avenues** for investigating and penalising RPEQs whose conduct falls below the expected standards of practise and persons who do not comply with the PE Act:

- **discipline**, which concerns the conduct of RPEQs; and
- **compliance**, which concerns offences against the PE Act.

Should the Board form a reasonable belief that the RPEQ may have behaved in a way that may constitute unsatisfactory professional conduct the Board may initiate an official investigation of the complaint. The complaint process is included below. Complaints that are believed to be frivolous or vexatious may be dismissed.

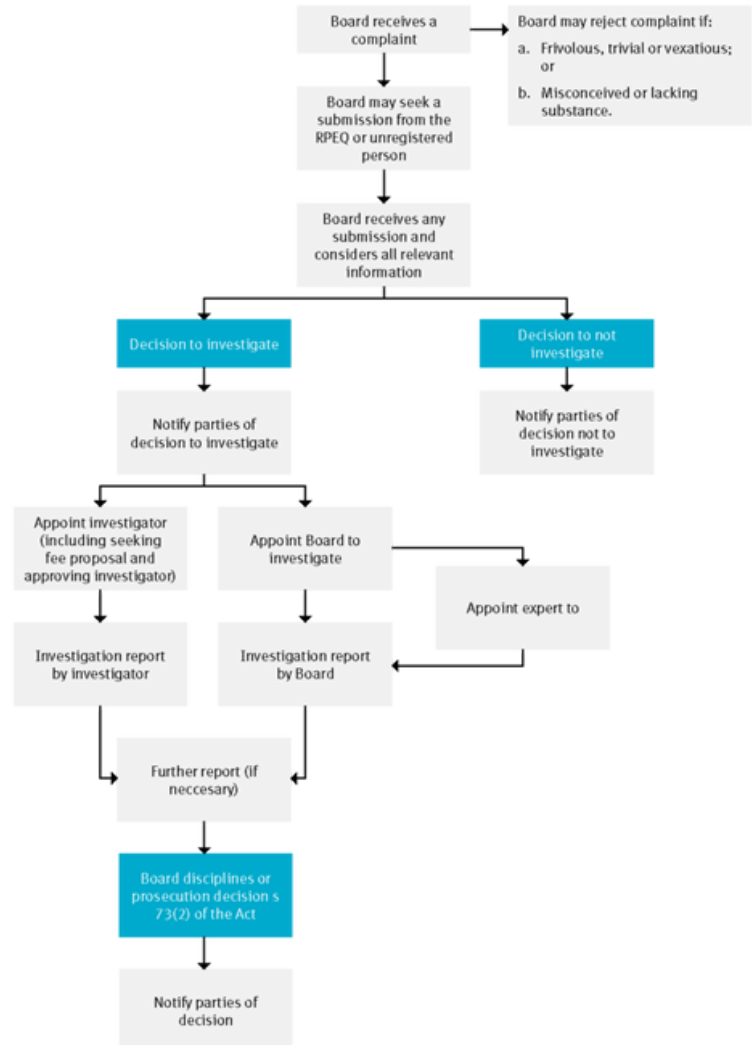
## BPEQ cannot:

- resolve contractual disputes or other similar grievance;
- require the person the subject of a complaint to do anything (e.g. undertake rectification, remediation, pay compensation or other legal remedy);
- assess safety risks and ordinarily will not visit a subject site and/or assess the safety standards of an engineering service that is the subject of a complaint;
- provide legal advice or influence a matter before a court or tribunal; or
- investigate a complaint that falls outside its statutory jurisdiction. That jurisdiction excludes the investigation of conduct involved in the provision of services that are not professional engineering services (unless that conduct involves a contravention of the PE Act).

Managing complaints and investigations is complex and requires both forensic and expert opinion to finalise appropriately.

During the 2023-2024 financial year, the Board:

- received 39 complaints about the conduct of RPEQs and 13 compliance notifications about possible offences in breach of the PE Act
- managed 97 disciplinary and compliance matters (including 49 carried forward from previous years) and of these:
  - 44 were dismissed without investigations
  - 11 investigations were finalised
  - 42 matters were work in progress including 21 investigations (as at 30 June 2024).



# ENGAGEMENT

The Board has an **extensive communications and engagement program** and understands that to protect the public and maintain confidence in the engineering profession, the Board must:



## **Educate**

Educate the community about the importance of using registered engineers and the role BPEQ plays in protecting the community



## **Encourage**

Encourage all engineers working in or for Queensland to register as RPEQs



## **Build Relationships**

Build effective, transparent, and professional relationships with our key stakeholders.

During 2023-2024 the Board has increased engagement with our assessment entity partners, private industry, and universities. Our extensive proactive engagement program continues to provide presentations and seminars to stakeholders and we held more than 100 engagements with our stakeholders and the community during 2023-2024.

Additionally, the Board utilises the Board website, print materials and social media to disseminate important information to engineers, RPEQs and our stakeholders.



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