

Board of Professional Engineers v W

This was a disciplinary proceeding brought by the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland ("**Board**") against a registered professional engineer (deidentified as "**W**") in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal ("**Tribunal**").

Disciplinary Ground

The Board alleged that W had behaved in a way that constituted unsatisfactory professional conduct in the design and certification of a steel framed shed.

W's Background

W was a registered professional engineer.

Conduct of W

In 2009 W was engaged to provide a Form 15 Compliance Certificate for building Design or Specification ("**Form 15**") and Form 16 Inspection Certificate ("**Form 16**") for a steel framed shed in Far North Queensland. The particular location is a cyclone-prone area of Queensland.

Prior to construction of the shed, the design documentation was stamped and signed by W and he completed the Form 15 based upon photographs taken and provided to him by the builder.

The drawings contained significant design defects. Further, W issued the Form 16 certifying that defects in the structure of the frame of the building had been rectified by the builder, when they had not.

Defects in the design included, amongst other things:

- significantly under-designed roof battens and purlins, with over-stress of between 260% and 350%;
- significantly under-designed end wall mullions, over-stressed by between 84% and 360%;
- significantly under-designed wall battens and girts, over-stressed by between 308% and 410%;
- the structural model for the portal frames on the building were under-designed with the pinned base portal frame columns being over-stressed by between 105% and 155% and the fixed base portal frame columns being over-stressed by between 52% and 90%.

What the Tribunal Said

The Tribunal found that W's conduct amounted to unsatisfactory professional conduct and considered that the standard to be expected of engineers, because of the at times critical nature of the responsibilities attaching to their decisions, must be set significantly higher than other occupations where such conduct might not give rise to potentially grave and serious repercussions.

Consequences for W

The Tribunal ordered that W be reprimanded, imposed a monetary penalty, and suspended W's registration for three years.