

Before the Building Practitioners Board

	BPB Complaint No. 26329
Licensed Building Practitioner:	Roneel Kumar (the Respondent)
Licence Number:	BP 130769
Licence(s) Held:	Carpentry

Penalty Decision of the Board under section 318 of the Building Act 2004

Complaint or Board Inquiry	Complaint
Hearing Location	Auckland
Hearing Type:	In Person
Hearing Date:	6 August 2024
Substantive Decision Date:	19 August 2024
Penalty Decision Date:	11 October 2024
Board Members:	
	Mr M Orange, Chair, Barrister (Presiding)
	Mrs F Pearson-Green, Deputy Chair, LBP, Design AoP 2
	Mr D Fabish, LBP, Carpentry and Site AoP 2

Procedure:

The matter was considered by the Building Practitioners Board (the Board) under the provisions of Part 4 of the Building Act 2004 (the Act), the Building Practitioners (Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures) Regulations 2008 (the Complaints Regulations) and the Board's Complaints and Inquiry Procedures.

Disciplinary Finding:

The Respondent **has** committed disciplinary offences under sections 317(1)(b) and (d) of the Act.

The Respondent is fined \$2,000 and ordered to pay costs of \$2,800. A record of the disciplinary offending will be recorded on the Public Register for a period of three years.

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Summary of the Board’s Penalty Decision

[1] The Board has decided it will uphold its indicative orders. The Respondent is fined \$2,000 and order that he pay scale costs of \$2,800. A record of the disciplinary offending will be recorded on the public Register for a period of three years.

The Charges

[2] This penalty decision arises out of the Board’s substantive decision in which it found that the Respondent had breached sections 317(1)b) and (d) of the Act.

[3] Having found that one or more of the grounds in section 317 applies, the Board must, under section 318 of the Actⁱ, consider the appropriate disciplinary penalty, whether the Respondent should be ordered to pay any costs and whether the decision should be published.

[4] In its substantive decision, the Board set out its indicative position regarding penalty, costs, and publication and invited the Respondent to make written submissions on those matters.

[5] On 30 September 2024, the Board received the Respondent’s submissions. It has considered them and made the following decisions.

Penalty

[6] The Board’s initial view was that a fine of \$2,000 was the appropriate penalty for the disciplinary offence.

[7] The Respondent raised various factors in relation to the Board’s penalty order, including that the Respondent has incurred substantial losses, the ease with which a complaint can be made, and that the Board’s findings may allow the complainant to avoid any further payments.

[8] The Respondent also took issue with some of the Board’s findings in its substantive decision. The Board, by inviting the Respondent to make penalty, costs, and publication submissions, was not offering the Respondent an opportunity to critique its substantive decision. Should the Respondent disagree in any way with the Board’s substantive decision, he is reminded that he has a right of appeal to the District Court. Notwithstanding that the Respondent’s submissions regarding the

Board substantive decision do not relate to penalty, costs, or publication, the Board has, to the extent that it can, taken them into consideration.

- [9] Having considered the submissions received, the Board has decided to uphold its initial view. The matters raised and the submissions made by the Respondent relate to factors that have already been taken into consideration and, as noted in the substantive decision, the penalty imposed is at the lower end of the scale.

Costs

- [10] The Board's initial view was that \$2,800 in costs was appropriate.
- [11] The Respondent did not directly address the question of costs but mistakenly referred to the amount of \$2,800 when making submissions on penalty. Costs orders are different to penalty orders. A costs order ensures that the costs incurred in investigating a complaint and holding a hearing are not fully borne by other licensed building practitioners.
- [12] Notwithstanding that no submissions have been made, the Board considers the cost order to be reasonable. The order is affirmed.

Publication of Name

- [13] The Board's initial view was there were no good reasons to further publish the matter.
- [14] The Respondent has submitted that publication of the disciplinary outcome on the Register for a period of three years would be of concern.
- [15] Publication in the Register occurs because of section 301(1)(l)(iii) of the Act. The Register is established by section 298 of the Act, and section 299 sets out its purposes, which are:

The purpose of the Register is—

- (a) *to enable members of the public to—*
- (i) *determine whether a person is a licensed building practitioner and, if so, the status and relevant history of the person's [licensing]; and*
 - (ii) *choose a suitable building practitioner from a list of licensed building practitioners; and*
 - (iii) *know how to contact the building practitioner; and*
 - (iv) *know which licensed building practitioners have been disciplined within the last 3 years; and*
- (b) *to facilitate the administrative, disciplinary, and other functions of the Board and the Registrar under this Act.*

- [16] Section 301 of the Act sets out the matters to be contained in the Register. The section uses the phrasing "must", which makes the provisions mandatory, not discretionary:

(1) *The Register must contain all of the following information, to the extent that the information is relevant, for each licensed building practitioner whose name is entered in the Register:*

- (l) *information about the status and history of the person's [licensing], particularly—*
 - (i) *the class [in which the person is licensed]; and*
 - (ii) *the date on which the person's name was entered in the Register; and*
 - (iii) *any action taken under section 318 on a disciplinary matter in respect of the person in the last 3 years:*

[17] The final provision, action taken under section 318, is the reason why detail on the disciplinary offence must be contained in the Register.

[18] Taking the above provisions into consideration, it is clear that one of the purposes of the Register is to allow an informed consumer to choose a licensed building practitioner. Providing information as regards disciplinary action helps to facilitate this. It is also clear that the Board has no discretion as regards information on disciplinary action being retained on the Register.

[19] Having considered the submissions received, the Board has decided to uphold its initial view.

Section 318 Order

[20] For the reasons set out above, the Board directs that:

Penalty: Pursuant to section 318(1)(f) of the Building Act 2004, the Respondent is ordered to pay a fine of \$2,000.

Costs: Pursuant to section 318(4) of the Act, the Respondent is ordered to pay costs of \$2,800 (GST included) towards the costs of, and incidental to, the inquiry of the Board.

Publication: The Registrar shall record the Board's action in the Register of Licensed Building Practitioners in accordance with section 301(l)(iii) of the Act.

In terms of section 318(5) of the Act, the Respondent will be named in this decision, which will be published on the Board's website.

[21] The Respondent should note that the Board may, under section 319 of the Act, suspend or cancel a licensed building practitioner's licence if fines or costs imposed as a result of disciplinary action are not paid.

Right of Appeal

[22] The right to appeal Board decisions is provided for in s 330(2) of the Actⁱⁱ.

Signed and dated this 14 day of November 2024.



M Orange
Presiding Member

ⁱ **Section 318 of the Act**

- (1) *In any case to which section 317 applies, the Board may*
 - (a) *do both of the following things:*
 - (i) *cancel the person's licensing, and direct the Registrar to remove the person's name from the register; and*
 - (ii) *order that the person may not apply to be relicensed before the expiry of a specified period:*
 - (b) *suspend the person's licensing for a period of no more than 12 months or until the person meets specified conditions relating to the licensing (but, in any case, not for a period of more than 12 months) and direct the Registrar to record the suspension in the register:*
 - (c) *restrict the type of building work or building inspection work that the person may carry out or supervise under the person's licensing class or classes and direct the Registrar to record the restriction in the register:*
 - (d) *order that the person be censured:*
 - (e) *order that the person undertake training specified in the order:*
 - (f) *order that the person pay a fine not exceeding \$10,000.*
- (2) *The Board may take only one type of action in subsection 1(a) to (d) in relation to a case, except that it may impose a fine under subsection (1)(f) in addition to taking the action under subsection (1)(b) or (d).*
- (3) *No fine may be imposed under subsection (1)(f) in relation to an act or omission that constitutes an offence for which the person has been convicted by a court.*
- (4) *In any case to which section 317 applies, the Board may order that the person must pay the costs and expenses of, and incidental to, the inquiry by the Board.*
- (5) *In addition to requiring the Registrar to notify in the register an action taken by the Board under this section, the Board may publicly notify the action in any other way it thinks fit."*

ⁱⁱ **Section 330 Right of appeal**

- (2) *A person may appeal to a District Court against any decision of the Board—*
 - (b) *to take any action referred to in section 318.*

Section 331 Time in which appeal must be brought

An appeal must be lodged—

- (a) *within 20 working days after notice of the decision or action is communicated to the appellant; or*
- (b) *within any further time that the appeal authority allows on application made before or after the period expires.*