

16 May 2022

Paul Gee

By email: pgee3366@gmail.com

Dear Paul

Letter to Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board

Thank you for the letter you sent to the Board on 4 April 2022 and the additional information you provided in support of that letter on 7 April 2022. As requested, this material was considered by the Board at its meeting last week on 3 May 2022.

As you note in your letter, the Board is an ongoing professional regulatory body with a changing membership. While some of the current practitioner members of the Board are aware of the incident at the fish and chip shop in Nelson, none of the current Board members had any direct involvement with your disciplinary case. Nor do any of the current Board members have any direct knowledge about the investigation into the explosion or the other matters you raise in your letter.

The Board is concerned with a number of the matters you have raised and has sympathy for your position..

The Board has to comply with the provisions of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 and can only carry out those functions it is allowed to do under the Act. Unfortunately, in relation to your case, there is nothing in the Act that allows the Board to review a previous investigation or disciplinary hearing. The only right of redress the Act allows in respect of a disciplinary hearing is a right to appeal to the Court and the Board understands that you exercised that right in relation to your disciplinary conviction at the time.

The Board would like to acknowledge that you were never found guilty of any disciplinary offences in relation to the gas explosion at the Milton Street fish and chip shop. The Board has not disciplined any other registered practitioner in relation to the complaint made by Lance Windleburn from the Department of Labour in relation to the incident at the Milton Street fish and chip shop.

The Board acknowledges that this response does not give you the answers you are seeking. Regrettably it does not consider that there is anything more it can do in relation to the concerns you raise about the investigation leading to your disciplinary hearing and the conduct and outcome of that hearing.

While it may not be able to assist you with your concerns about the investigation and disciplinary hearing, the Board can advise you that investigations into complaints against practitioners are very different today to what they were in 2008 – 2009. The Board employs and engages professional investigators (many ex-New Zealand Police) and robust, peer reviewed technical advice is provided as a part of all investigations. In addition, complaints are carefully considered before they are recommended for investigation to determine whether a less formal and more educative approach is appropriate for dealing with any concerns raised rather than a formal disciplinary hearing. The complaints and investigations process are also subject to ongoing monitoring and review to identify any changes or improvements that can be made. It is hoped that these processes are now more thorough and balanced than they may have been in past and that opportunities for any errors or problems are therefore reduced.

Thank you for taking the time to raise your concerns with the Board.

Yours sincerely



Diana Kutzt-Covich
Board Chair
Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board