



Ethics Committee

S+SNZ COUNCIL MEETING

- Meeting Date:** Thursday 5 November 2020
- Subject:** Ethics Committee Report for Period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020
- Report from:** Malcolm Hanrahan (Chair, Ethics Committee)

Summary

1. This is the full, end of year 2019/20 report from the Ethics Committee to Council. It incorporates the half year report that Council considered on 30 March 2020.
2. The Ethics Committee considered 7 and resolved 7 complaints in the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. None of these constituted a prima facie case for breach of *Policy A19-24 Conduct of Members*.

Purpose

3. This report summarises the activities of the Ethics Committee for the full financial year 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. A half-yearly report for the period 1 July – 31 December 2019 was prepared for the March 2019 Council meeting.

Background

4. Under the Constitution the Council of Survey and Spatial New Zealand (S+SNZ) is responsible for disputes, breaches of rules and penalties in relation to certain matters involving its members. The Constitution also establishes an Ethics and Standards Committee. The Council prescribes the Terms of Reference to deal with such matters and appoints experienced and respected surveyors as Committee members. In particular, the function of the Committee is to consider membership, discipline, ethics, appeals, policy and process issues and may make recommendations to Council for consideration and determination.

5. The Committee at 30 June 2020 comprised the following members:

- Malcolm Hanrahan (Canterbury) *RPSurv*
- Nicole Alexander (Napier)
- Malcolm Hanrahan (Canterbury) *RPSurv*
- Chris Hopper (Canterbury), *RPSurv*
- Mike Morris (Wellington) *FNZIS, RPSurv*
- Rick O’Flaherty (Auckland) *RPSurv*.

During the year Jeff Needham resigned from the committee.

6. Administrative and processing support was provided by Karin Knedler (Advocacy and Policy Manager) acting as Secretary to the Ethics Committee up until March 2020. Administrative procedures have been less structured since Karin’s departure from National Office.

Committee Vacancies

7. In an effort to attract geospatial representation on the committee, a new position on the committee was advertised. The position has not been filled.

Meetings

8. Meetings are held approximately every two months. The Committee met six times since 1 July 2019. Members outside of Wellington join the meetings by Zoom/audio. The meetings have been very well attended with near 100% overall attendance rate.

Complaint Metrics

9. The year has been a little quieter with the number of overall complaints down from recent previous years.

10. Two complaints from the previous year were closed out.

11. Six new complaints were received with the Committee closing out four in the period. (The two that were outstanding at the end of the year have recently been closed.)

Nature of Complaints

12. The complaints are diverse both as to what matters are covered and the quality/clarity of the complaints.

13. Features of the complaints that were closed in the period included:

- one complaint related to an old historic matter but was not progressed as the surveyor had died some time ago.
- one complaint related to a conflict of interest relating to a property purchase

- several had poor performance, lack of timeliness and communication by the surveyor
- the remaining complaints related to boundary or technical issues.
- one complainant was particularly dissatisfied with the Committee's findings seeking that the matter be readdressed and that he be afforded the opportunity to talk directly to the committee

14. The committee found no prima facie case had been established on any of the complaints considered.

Other Work

15. The committee recognises the need to update several administrative aspects associated with the committee. Some progress was made in considering role descriptions and consideration of terms of reference. Much of this work has been parked whilst National Office works through a number of related changes that will directly impact on this work.

16. The need remains to address several aspects, including providing better initial and more informative information to complaints. Doing so will assist in the quality and nature of complaints received and it will assist in the overall complainant expectations. Too many complainants show a frustration of the overall process.

17. One complaint processed in the year highlight the need to have greater structure and robustness around how complaints are addressed and reported. The current process is vulnerable to challenge from a dissatisfied party.

Recommendation

18. I recommend that Council **note** the contents of this report.

Malcolm Hanrahan
Chair, Ethics Committee