Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

RADOVICH v LELENI

DUNCAN v LELENI

Plumbers, Gasfitters & Drainlayers Board Disciplinary Decision 2025/12

Summary

Trenton Leleni, Certifying Plumber and Restricted Gasfitter faced charges in respect of two separate complaints, one of employing, directing, or permitting unauthorised drainlaying and one of carrying out drainlaying in a manner contrary to an enactment. In the first complaint, Mr Leleni subcontracted a company to replace stormwater drains at a residential property. None of the employees of that company were authorised to carry out drainlaying. In the second complaint, Mr Leleni carried out drainlaying work which involved altering and laying a stormwater drainpipe and connecting an overflow pipe to the stormwater drainpipe. Mr Leleni did not hold an authorisation to do drainlaying at this time.

Mr Leleni pleaded guilty to the charges.

The Board considered Mr Leleni's offending was moderately serious. The Board found there were no aggravating factors in the case and Mr Leleni had accepted that he made a mistake and recognised both the importance of ensuring contactors are licenced and that he carried out work that he was licensed do complete. The Board considered that Mr Leleni was entitled to a credit for his guilty plea, cooperation, no previous offending, remorse and changes to practices.

The Board ordered Mr Leleni to pay a fine of $2,800 and pay $6,380 towards costs.

IN THE MATTERS OF	a disciplinary hearing pursuant to section 101 of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006
BETWEEN	**WAYNE RADOVICH**
	Investigator
AND	**TRENTON LELENI** Certifying Plumber, Restricted Gasfitter of Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau
	Registered Person
AND	**CATRIONA DUNCAN**
	Investigator
AND	**TRENTON LELENI** Certifying Plumber, Restricted Gasfitter of Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau
	Registered Person

DECISION OF THE BOARD
26 January 2026

Hearing:	Held in Wellington on 8 October, on the papers
Members sitting:	Martin De Gouw (Chair), Selwyn Hikuroa, Tofa Suafole Gush, James Smith, Beth Healy
Counsel:	Elena Mok for the investigator Trent Leleni was self-represented
Legal advisor:	Juliet Philpott

Disciplinary hearing

1. On 8 October 2025, the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (**Board**) held a disciplinary hearing on the papers to consider two complaints made by Francis Caetano and Peter Angell against Trenton Leleni, Certifying Plumber, Restricted Gasfitter. Both complaints related to drainlaying work carried out at residential properties in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau.

Guilty plea

2. On 1 September 2025, Mr Leleni pleaded guilty to employing, directing or permitting unauthorised drainlaying and carrying out drainlaying in a manner contrary to an enactment. Mr Leleni signed an agreed summary of facts, the material parts of which were as follows:

    a. Mr Leleni is a registered and licensed certifying plumber and restricted gasfitter.

Mr Caetano's complaint

    b. In July and November 2023, Mr Caetano hired Mr Leleni's company to replace the stormwater drains at his property in Northcross.

    c. The work involved the installation of cesspits and a pump, and stormwater connections. Mr Leleni was not authorised to do drainlaying work. Mr Leleni subcontracted another company to undertake the drainlaying. Mr Leleni did not tell Mr Caetano that he had subcontracted the company to undertake the work.

    d. On reviewing the work, the Board's technical advisor identified the following issues which were in breach of the New Zealand Building Code (**Code**):

        i. the stormwater drains had inadequate cover, in breach of clause E1.3.3(f)

        ii. the connection between the silt trap and perforated drain was installed in a manner that allowed silt and debris from the ground to enter the drain in breach of clauses E1.3.3 (b) and (c)

        iii. a connection with the subsoil drain was blocked with tree roots in breach of clause E1.3.3 (b)

        iv. a silt trap was installed without a siphon in breach of clause E1.3.3 (b) and (e) which could allow silt to enter the drain increasing the likelihood of blockage and damage to the network downstream

        v. the stormwater piping was installed with an inadequate fall in breach of clause E1.3.3 (b) increasing the likelihood of a blockage forming in the drain.

Mr Angell's complaint

e. In March 2024, Peter Angell hired Mr Leleni's company to carry out drainlaying at his property in Pakuranga.

f. Mr Leleni completed the drainlaying work between 11 and 25 March 2024. The work involved Mr Leleni altering and laying a stormwater drainpipe and connecting an overflow pipe to the stormwater drainpipe. Prior to undertaking the drainlaying work, Mr Leleni informed Mr Angell that he was a drainlayer.

g. On reviewing the work, the Board's technical advisor identified that the work could pose a risk of damage to the building located on the property as there was a risk that if the stormwater drain became blocked. If this happened, there was the potential for the overflow pipe to get backed up and for water to enter the building by an internal gutter and cause damage.

3. The Board was satisfied that the facts in the agreed summary of facts meant that Mr Leleni had committed disciplinary offences under section 89(g) and section 89(a)(ii) of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 (**Act**).

Summary of investigator's submissions on penalty and costs

4. On behalf of the investigator, Ms Mok traversed the penalties available in disciplinary cases and the considerations that applied when imposing such penalties. She submitted those considerations included the need to protect the public, maintain industry standards, punish where appropriate, and rehabilitate. She submitted that it was important to be consistent with other cases, where possible, and to impose the least severe penalty appropriate given the circumstances of the case.

Employing, directing, or permitting unauthorised drainlaying

5. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's offending in relation to employing, directing, or permitting unauthorised drainlaying work was moderately serious because he had not taken any steps to verify that anyone completing the work was authorised. She submitted that this was not only unprofessional and irresponsible, given the job was cash-only and involved multiple people including some Mr Leleni could not name, he ought to have appreciated the need for closer scrutiny. In addition, the work was defective in multiple ways and Mr Leleni had not assisted the property owner in rectifying these issues.

6. Ms Mok referred the Board to its previous decisions in the cases of *Radovich v Hardy* (2024/17)*, Pidgeon v Findlay* (2023/12), and *Cannell v Lee* (2023/13). In *Hardy*, Mr Hardy was found guilty of causing sanitary plumbing to be carried out in a negligent or incompetent manner and employing, directing, or permitting an unauthorised person to carry out sanitary plumbing. The Board considered the offending was moderately serious and adopted a fine with a starting point of $3,500. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's conduct on the unauthorised drainlaying complaint was

more serious than Mr Hardy's as there were more defects with the work and the work had involved more people, none of whom were authorised to do drainlaying.

7. In *Findlay*, Mr Findlay pleaded guilty to a representative charge of employing, directing or permitting an unauthorised person to undertake drainlaying. Mr Findlay had directed an employee to undertake drainlaying at 11 properties over a 17-month period when he was not authorised. The Board considered Mr Findlay's conduct was moderately serious as he should have been aware that the employee needed to renew his trainee authorisation. The Board adopted a fine with a starting point of $4,500. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's conduct was comparable with Mr Findlay's. While Mr Leleni's conduct only involved a single property, it had involved a number of people carrying out the work over a period of time. The work in Mr Leleni's case also involved a number of defects.

8. Finally, in *Lee*, Mr Lee pleaded guilty to employing, directing or permitting unauthorised persons to carry out sanitary plumbing. Mr Lee employed two individuals to carry out sanitary plumbing work both of whom had previously held authorisations but who were unauthorised at the time. The Board considered the conduct to be of low to moderate seriousness and adopted a starting point for the fine of $3,250. Ms Mok submitted Mr Leleni's conduct was more serious as the people carrying out the work had never been authorised to do drainlaying, raising the level of the risk. The work had also been defective in a number of ways and Mr Leleni had not taken any steps to verify that the people involved were suitable.

9. Having regard to previous comparable decisions, Ms Mok submitted that a starting point fine for Mr Leleni's offending in relating to allowing unauthorised drainlaying work should be $3,000 to $3,500.

Carrying out drainlaying in a manner contrary to an enactment

10. In relation to Mr Leleni's conduct in carrying out drainlaying without an authorisation and therefore contrary to an enactment, Ms Mok submitted that this offending was also moderately serious. Mr Leleni had never held a licence or authorisation to carry out drainlaying. Yet, Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni had told Mr Angell that he was able to perform drainlaying work, something he would have known was untrue. As Mr Leleni held registration in other trades, Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni would have been aware that he was not able to complete drainlaying work.

11. Ms Mok referred the Board to its previous decisions in the cases of *Radovich v Douglas* (2022/18)*, Radovich v Harris* (2022/22), and *Pidgeon v Bruce* (2023/11). In *Douglas,* Mr Douglas pleaded guilty to carrying out drainlaying work in a manner contrary to an enactment in relation to the installation and connection of a new septic tank system. Mr Douglas was not authorised to undertake drainlaying but had been instructed to complete the work by his employer. The Board imposed a fine with a starting point of $2,500. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's conduct is similar

to, but more serious than Mr Douglas' as Mr Leleni was not an employee and faced no pressure to complete the work he carried out.

12. In *Harris,* Mr Harris pleaded guilty to carrying out drainlaying in a manner contrary to an enactment for carry out the work without an authorisation. Mr Harris also represented to the property manager that he could complete the work. The Board considered that Mr Harris's case was of low to moderate in terms of seriousness and adopted a fine with a starting point of $2,500. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's conduct was similar to Mr Harris' though more serious as his work had posed a risk to the property.

13. Finally, in *Bruce*, Mr Bruce pleaded guilty to a representative charge of carrying out drainlaying in a manner contrary to an enactment. Over six months, Mr Bruce carried out drainlaying at 11 properties. Mr Bruce had been directed to do so by his employer. The drainlaying work involved the installation of stormwater and sewer drains, the installation of catchpits and the installation of drainage sumps. The Board considered that Mr Bruce's conduct was moderately serious, albeit at the lower end of moderate and adopted a fine with a starting point of $3,000. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Leleni's conduct was similar in seriousness to Mr Bruce's as, though it only involved a single property, unlike Mr Bruce Mr Leleni had never held any authorisation to do drainlaying and his work had been defective.

14. Stepping back and considering the totality of Mr Lelenli's offending on both charges, Ms Mok submitted that the Board should consider a starting point fine in the range of $4,500 to $5,000.

15. Ms Mok submitted that under section 107 of the Act, in addition to any penalty, the Board could order a registered person to pay a reasonable sum towards the costs and expenses of the investigation, prosecution, and hearing. She submitted that the starting point for such an order was typically half of the costs incurred, though it was a matter for the Board to determine in its discretion. Ms Mok submitted that it was open to the Board to consider a reduction to any costs order in this case to reflect Mr Leleni's guilty plea which had help keep overall costs down.

Summary of Mr Leleni's submissions on penalty and costs

16. Mr Leleni submitted that he understood the seriousness of the issues in this case and the responsibility that came with holding a licence under the Act. He submitted that holding a plumbing licence was a privilege and not a right. He submitted that he had wanted to be a plumber from the age of 17 and had worked hard at his studies and starting his own business. He submitted that the worry of the past 10 months facing disciplinary charges had consumed him, but it had also provided him with time to think about his actions and what he had learned. He submitted that it had encouraged him to put extra protective measures in place to lift his standards for himself, his business, and the industry.

17. Mr Leleni accepted that there were aspects of the work that did not meet the expected standards and that he took responsibility for those issues. Mr Leleni submitted that he had been shocked when the second complaint against him was made as he had completed hundreds of jobs with satisfied customers, positive feedback, and referrals. He submitted that he took pride in both his work and his business and was deeply concerned about the impact the hearing would have on his livelihood. He submitted that he was committed to maintaining the trust put in him by the Board and the public and would continue to uphold the high standards of the plumbing profession in New Zealand.

18. Mr Leleni submitted that while some form of penalty was appropriate, he respectfully asked the Board to consider a reduced penalty such as a warning given his early guilty plea, agreeing to the statement of facts and the steps he had taken since the incidents to improve his practices. While accepting that his actions were wrong, he hoped the Board understood that he had no intention to deceive anyone. He submitted that he had decided to complete the drainlaying work himself after another tradesman let him down and accepts this was the wrong decision. He submitted he should have followed the correct process even if it meant delaying the timeline for his customers and he had learnt his lesson.

19. Mr Leleni submitted that he had made changes to his practices and listed the steps he had taken including reviewing standards and regulations, implementing stricter quality control, improving practices regarding subcontracting, and ensuring customers were fully informed.

20. Mr Leleni described his financial circumstances and submitted that while he would pay any fine the Board deemed appropriate, a significant fine would place a strain on his financial situation and business.

Decision on penalty

21. When it comes to imposing penalties in disciplinary cases, the Board's primary considerations are the need to protect the health and safety of the public and maintain industry standards. Any disciplinary penalty should aim to ensure the competency of a practitioner by holding them to account, assist with their rehabilitation, and deter them and other practitioners from disciplinary offending.

22. Having considered the parties' submissions and the facts of the case, the Board determined that Mr Leleni's offending was moderately serious. While recognising that there was a responsibility on the company Mr Leleni subcontracted to ensure its employees were appropriately authorised, the Board considered that Mr Caetano had hired Mr Leleni to carry out drainlaying work and it was therefore also his responsibility to check that any subcontracted party could lawfully carry out that work. In addition, as a registered practitioner, Mr Leleni would have been aware that any person who did drainlaying would had to be authorised to do and he should have taken steps to satisfy himself that the company had appropriately authorised people

on its staff. The Board also recognised that Mr Leleni had been the subject of two, separate complaints.

23. The Board acknowledged that Mr Leleni had accepted that he made a mistake and recognised both the importance of ensuring contractors are licenced and that he only carried out work that he was licensed to complete. The Board found that there were no aggravating factors in the case and Mr Leleni was entitled to a credit for his guilty plea, cooperation, and lack of previous offending. The Board also accepted that Mr Leleni was remorseful and had made changes to his practices.

24. The Board considered that a fine was the appropriate penalty and adopted a starting point of $4,000. Recognising the mitigating factors in this case, the Board reduced the fine to $2,800.

Costs

25. Section 107 of the Act provides that, in addition to any penalty imposed, the Board may order a registered person to pay a reasonable sum towards the costs and expenses incidental to the investigation of the complaint, prosecution, and hearing. The Board was provided with a schedule of estimated costs for the investigations, prosecution and hearing amounting to $15,951.61.

26. The Board recognised Mr Leleni's personal circumstances and the fact that his guilty plea had avoided the costs of a full defended hearing. The Board determined that he should pay $6,380 which was around 40% of the total costs.

Publication

27. In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the Board ordered that details of the action taken against Mr Leleni should be recorded on the register of plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers in the usual way. Any other publication of the Board's orders would be at the discretion of the Registrar of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.

Board orders

28. Being satisfied that Mr Leleni was guilty of disciplinary offences under section 89(g) and section 89(a)(ii) of the Act, the Board made the following orders:

    a. Pursuant to section 106(1)(f) of the Act, Mr Leleni pay a fine of $2,800.

    b. Pursuant to section 107 of the Act, Mr Leleni pay $6,380 towards the costs of the investigation, prosecution, and hearing.

    c. Pursuant to section 74(1)(c)(viii) of the Act, details of the Board's orders in respect of Mr Leleni be published on the register.

Appeal

29. If Mr Leleni is dissatisfied with the whole or any part of this decision or these orders, he may appeal to the District Court under section 162(1)(f) of the Act. Any appeal must be brought within 20 working days from the date on which this formal written decision is received, or within any other timeframe the District Court may allow.

Dated 26 January 2026

Signed



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Martin de Gouw
Chair
Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board