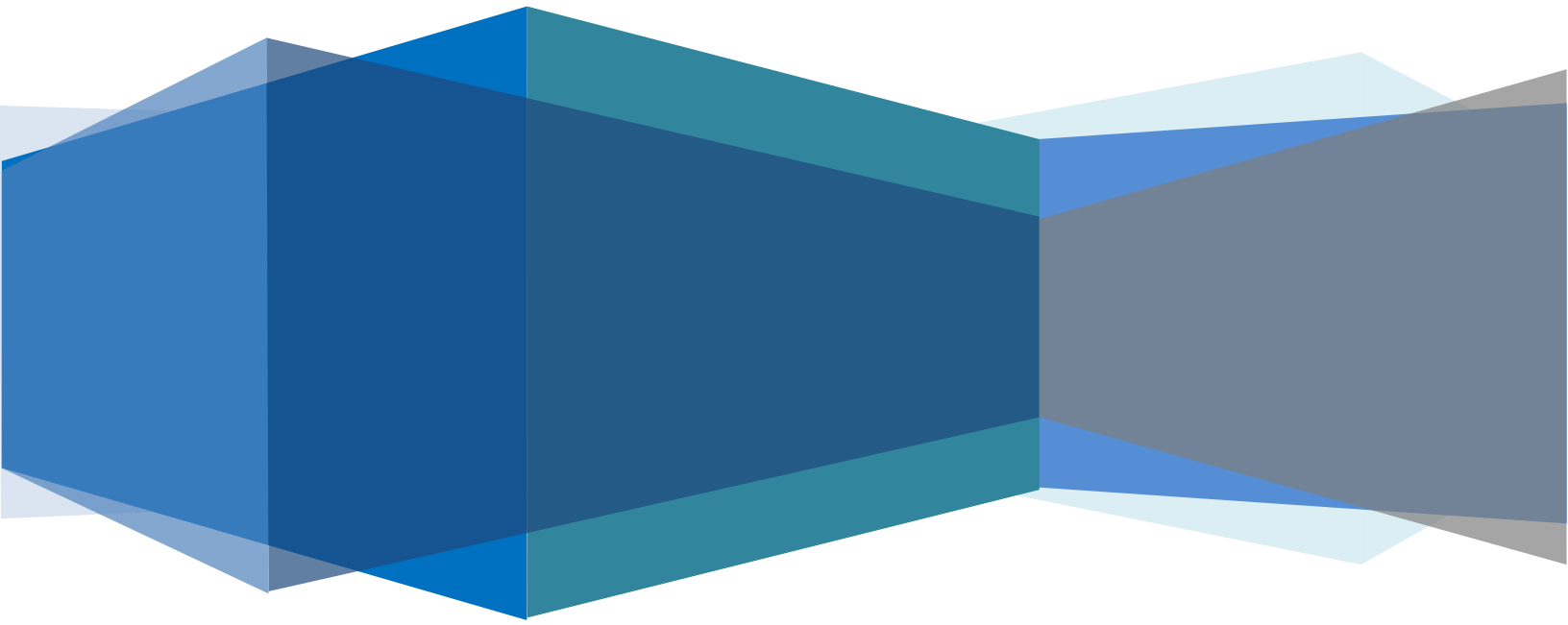
Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board

2025-2026 Annual Report

Covering the reporting period
from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026



Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR **1**
- Appeals During Reporting Period 1
- Judicial Reviews 1
- Forecast of Workload for the Next Reporting Year 1
- Trends Noted 1
- Plans for Improving the Board's Operations 2

CONTACT INFORMATION **3**

BOARD MEMBERSHIP **4**

MANDATE **4**

LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS **6**

OPERATIONS **8**

APPEAL ACTIVITY **9**
- Appeals Received 9
- Judicial Reviews 10
- Performance Indicators and Timelines 10

SURVEYS **10**

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT REPORTING **10**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT **11**

APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES OF BOARD MEMBERS **13**

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board (the "STBCAB" or the "Board") for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2025 and ending March 31, 2026. This report is submitted pursuant to section 59.2 of the *Administrative Tribunals Act*.

Appeals During Reporting Period

Section 59.2(c) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report the number of applications received by the Board during the reporting period. There were no appeals outstanding before the Board at the beginning of the reporting period. During this reporting period, there were two new appeals filed with the Board. Both appeals were dismissed before a hearing on the merits of the appeals was required; one because the appellant failed to perfect their notice of appeal and the other because the appellant failed to diligently pursue their appeal.

Judicial Reviews

There were no applications for judicial review of Board decisions during this reporting period, and there were no outstanding applications or judicial review decisions issued during the reporting period.

Forecast of Workload for the Next Reporting Year

Section 59.2(f) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to provide a forecast of the workload for the next reporting period.

The Board is a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that hears appeals of decisions made by SkilledTradesBC related to tradespeople and their education, qualifications, and certification. The Board has not been called on to conduct hearings on the merits of an appeal in recent years, however the volume of appeals may increase as the regulations under the *Skilled Trades BC Act* continue to expand the list of trades that are subject to mandatory certification in BC.

During the next reporting year, the Board will prioritize review of its website to increase accessibility. The Board will also make efforts to raise awareness about its role by doing presentations at Provincial Articulation Committee Meetings.

Trends Noted

Section 59.2(g) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report any trends or special problems it foresees. Over the past few years, the Board has received few appeals, which the Board considers unusual given the high number of tradespeople

practising their trades and seeking certification in the province of British Columbia. In 2025, British Columbia had a record number of nearly 50,000 registered apprenticeships. SkilledTradesBC currently oversees nearly 90 trades programs and funds nearly 28,000 apprenticeship and foundation-training seats at public, union and private institutions.[1] As noted above, the Board continues to expect appeal volumes to increase as the regulations under the *Skilled Trades BC Act* expand the list of trades that are subject to mandatory certification in BC.

Plans for Improving the Board's Operations

Section 59.2(h) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report on its plans for improving operations in the future.

The enhancements to the Board's website will provide appeal information to appellants and stakeholders in an efficient and accessible manner. This will improve user navigation of the website and result in improved engagement for appeals.



The administrative support functions of the Board are consolidated with the Environmental Appeal Board cluster of tribunals (the "EAB cluster") in Victoria. Effective December 12, 2025, the EAB cluster relocated to a new office it will share with other administrative law bodies. This will further reduce office expenses and offer savings for taxpayers.

Late in the prior reporting period, the BC Government's Chief Records Officer approved a custom information schedule for the EAB cluster: *Environmental appeal board tribunal cluster operational records classification system, schedule 195746*.[2] This schedule identifies categories of information and determines how long they need to be retained, and whether they will be ultimately destroyed or preserved in perpetuity in the government archives.

With this schedule approved, these retention and final disposition rules may now be implemented. This is important because, although the Board maintains a comparatively

[1] BC Government press release: "Province invests in trades training to power B.C.'s economic future" (14 November 2025): https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025PSFS0052-001123.
[2] Schedule 195746 is available publicly at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/information-management/information-schedules/orcs.

modest set of records, there was also considerable uncertainty about which operational records of the tribunal could be disposed of, if any, and on what timeline.

Both the move to new shared offices, and the approval of this information schedule, have naturally resulted in reflections on the Board's day-to-day operations and handling and sharing of information. The Board will continue to review its Rules, Practice Directives, and forms of communication with potential and actual appellants, with the goal of ensuring that processes are cost-effective, relevant, efficient, and accessible to British Columbians.

Richard Grounds, Chair
Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board

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Board Membership

During the reporting period, the membership consisted of:

TRIBUNAL MEMBER	ROLE	TERM EXPIRY
Richard Grounds	Chair	15/08/2028
Gordon Armour	Chair	31/07/2025
Martha Dow	Member	31/07/2031
Gavin Hoekstra	Member	10/07/2031
Daniel Smythe	Member	10/07/2031
Joel Feenstra	Member	10/07/2031

The Board thanks all its members for their service during the reporting period.

Biographies of members are provided in **Appendix 1** to this report.

Section 42 of the *Skilled Trades BC Act*, SBC 2022, c 4 (the "*Act*") provides that a Chair and other members are to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council after a merit-based process. The *Act* does not provide for a Vice Chair and so that designation is made under section 9 of the *Administrative Tribunals Act*.

Mandate

The Board was established in 2003 under the *Industry Training Authority Act*, SBC 2003, c 34, and was continued under section 42 of the *Skilled Trades BC Act*, SBC 2022, c 4 (the "*Act*").

The Board is a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that hears appeals of decisions made by SkilledTradesBC related to tradespeople and their education, qualifications, and certification. The Board is at arms-length from SkilledTradesBC and operates independently under the umbrella of the BC Ministry of Attorney General.

Section 43 of the *Act* sets out 11 specific types of decisions by SkilledTradesBC which may be appealed. These 11 different types of appealable decisions are a significant increase

compared to the 5 types of appealable decision that were set out under the prior *Industry Training Authority Act*.

1. a refusal to award a person an industry training credential;
2. a refusal to determine that a person is a trade qualifier;
3. the suspension or cancellation of a person's industry training credential;
4. a refusal to register a person as an apprentice;
5. the cancellation of a person's registration as an apprentice;
6. an examination or assessment of a person's training;
7. a refusal to issue a person a temporary authorization;
8. a refusal to grant a supervision ratio adjustment;
9. the issuance by a compliance officer of a warning or a compliance order;
10. the imposition by a compliance officer or another officer or employee of an administrative monetary penalty;
11. a decision or order prescribed by the minister.

If a person is a dissatisfied with the outcome of one of these 11 types of decisions, they must first ask the SkilledTradesBC Review Officer to review the matter. If they are dissatisfied with the outcome of that internal review, they may appeal to the Board

Pursuant to section 45 of the *Act*, the Board is empowered to do one or more of the following when dealing with an appeal:

1. dismiss the appeal,
2. allow the appeal and give directions, if any, the board considers appropriate;
3. vary a decision or order;
4. set terms and conditions to which the order is subject.

It is worth noting that section 12(1) of the *Minister's Skilled Trades BC Regulation*, BC Reg 256/2022, explicitly defines the grounds for review of a SkilledTradesBC decision as including any of the following:

1. an error of fact or law,
2. new evidence, or,
3. a failure to observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

In other words, appeals are not constrained to the interpretation or application of a technical code or an evaluation of a tradesperson's skill; rather appeals also examine the legality and fairness of the process and the resulting decision.

Section 45 of the *Act* gives the Board a broad appellant mandate to conduct an appeal by way of rehearing. An appeal by way of rehearing means that the record of the decision below is examined and considered, but the tribunal may also freely hear new evidence and need not give any deference to the SkilledTradesBC Review Officer's findings and decision.

Taken together, the grounds for appeal set out in the *Minister's Skilled Trades BC Regulation*, and the Board's broad appellant mandate, mean that the Board must grapple with both the technical subject matter of an appeal, but also analyze and apply principles of law, including those relevant to evidence, natural justice, and procedural fairness. For this reason, the Board's membership is a mix of both lawyers and subject matter experts in the trades and trades education.

Board hearings take place before a three-member panel, which is typically chaired by a legally trained member, with the subject matter experts sitting as side-panelists. This balance of technical and legal expertise ensures that Board decisions are impartial, based on fact, legally sound, and align with the statutory scheme set out in the *Act*.



Legislative Developments

The name of the Board's enabling act has changed over the years, but the legislative regime's longstanding public policy purpose remains the same: supporting the development and training of skilled trades workers in BC.

When the *Industry Training Authority Act* was enacted in 2003, it established the Board and it also eliminated compulsory certification for the trades in BC. This change made the

traditional apprenticeship model that previously existed under the *Apprenticeship Act* entirely optional.

Two decades later in 2022, the *Industry Training Authority Act* was renamed the *Skilled Trades BC Act* and certification requirements, and the apprenticeship model, were reinstituted. The stated goal of the 2022 *Act* was a return to the mandatory certification model, and through that, to create higher-paying jobs for British Columbians and increase the skill level of the trade's workforce across the province.[3] Mandatory certification means that to call oneself an electrician, for example, that person must actually be certified as an electrician by SkilledTradesBC.

Mandatory certification for all skilled trades did not happen immediately upon the *Act* coming into force in 2022. Rather, the Minister identified a list of specific skilled trades where mandatory certification would be required as of December 1, 2023. At the same time, the Minister also announced a second list of trades that is under consideration for mandatory certification in the future.

Phase 1 (mandatory certification effective December 1, 2023):[4]

1. construction electrician;
2. industrial electrician;
3. powerline technician;
4. sheet metal worker;
5. gasfitter — Class A and Class B;
6. steamfitter/pipefitter;
7. refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic.

Phase 2 (implementation date unknown): [5]

1. heavy-duty equipment technician
2. automotive service technician
3. autobody and collision technician

In phase one of the shift to mandatory certification, the Minister identified seven trades in electrical and mechanical sectors. Uncertified workers in these trades (i.e. those who are *not* registered apprentices or certified journey people) were required to register as an apprentice, or pass a certification exam, or, plan to transition away from hands-on work.

It is significant that since 2022 the list of trades that are subject to mandatory certification has expanded from 0 to 7, and that the number of SkilledTradesBC decision types that are appealable has increased from 5 to 11. It follows that SkilledTradesBC would be called on

[3] British Columbia, *Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 42nd Parl, 3rd Sess, No 147 (14 February 2022) (Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training) at p 4545-4546.
[4] Section 7 of the *Skilled Trades BC Regulation*, BC Reg 252/2022.
[5] BC Government press release: "New act supports good trades jobs, economic recovery" (14 February 2022): https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022AEST0007-000215.

to make an increased number of decisions about the education, qualifications, and certification of these tradespeople than in the past, and, by extension, that the Board should also receive an increased number of appeals.



Operations

Section 59.2(a) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to provide a review of the Board's operations during the reporting period.

The administrative support functions of the Board are consolidated with the Environmental Appeal Board cluster of tribunals (the "EAB cluster") in Victoria.

In addition to the STBCAB, the EAB cluster provides administrative support to six other tribunals. This clustering of administrative support for at total of eight independent appellate tribunals has been done to assist government in achieving economic and program delivery efficiencies by allowing greater access to resources while, at the same time, reducing administration and operating costs. In addition to the STBCAB and the Environmental Appeal Board, the other clustered tribunals are the:

- Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board;
- Energy Resource Appeal Tribunal;

- Financial Services Tribunal;
- Forest Appeals Commission;
- Health Professions Review Board; and the
- Hospital Appeal Board.

This clustering has resulted in significant savings to government through a shared services approach, particularly for tribunals with lower volumes of cases such as the STBCAB with part-time Chairs and ad hoc panel assignments. This arrangement has also proven to be an effective and efficient means for providing administrative support to the Board, which in turn enables the Board to fulfill its appellate mandate effectively and efficiently. The shared services approach and common office has led to greater efficiencies in training new staff and having staff with a larger compliment of knowledge to address novel or complicated issues that arise for the STBCAB.

Effective December 12, 2025, the EAB cluster relocated to a new office it now shares with other administrative law bodies. This will further reduce office expenses and offer savings for taxpayers.

Appeal Activity

Appeals Received

Section 59.2(c) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report on the nature and number of appeals received during the reporting period.

There were no appeals outstanding before the Board at the beginning of the reporting period. During this reporting period, two new appeals were filed with the Board. A summary of each appeal and its status at the end of the reporting period is provided below.

1. ***STB-STBCA-25-A001, FILED MAY 29, 2025*** – Appeal from a May 29, 2025, decision of the SkilledTradesBC Review Officer regarding a failing grade on a Red Seal Interprovincial Construction Electrician exam written on May 2, 2025. This appeal was dismissed on July 7, 2025 following a determination that the appellant failed to follow an order of the Board and failed to diligently pursue their appeal.
2. ***STB-STBCA-25-A002, FILED NOVEMBER 12, 2025*** - Appeal regarding a failing grade on a Red Seal Interprovincial Plumber exam written on October 6, 2025. The Board closed its file in this matter after the appellant failed to perfect their notice of appeal.

Judicial Reviews

No judicial reviews were filed during this reporting period, and no decisions were issued by any level of court regarding Board decisions during this reporting period.

Performance Indicators and Timelines

Section 59.2(b) and (d) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report on performance indicators and provide details of the elapsed time from filing to the date of final decision.

The Board was not called on to hold any hearings or issue any final decisions during this reporting period and so there is no information to report in this category. Nonetheless, both new appeals that were filed during this reporting period received a substantive acknowledgement and response from the Board on the same day they were received, or the next business day.

The Board's Practice Directive #1, available on the Board's website, provides that the Board will endeavour to issue a copy of the final decision or order, including written reasons, to each party within 120 days from receiving the last submissions of the parties in an appeal that proceeds to a hearing on the merits. This practice directive fulfills the requirement set out in section 12(1) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act*.

Surveys

Section 59.2(e) of the *Administrative Tribunals Act* requires the Board to report the results of any surveys carried out during the reporting period. The Board did not conduct any surveys during this reporting period.

Public Interest Disclosure Act Reporting

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (*PIDA*) provides employees of some public bodies with protection from reprisal if they bring forward concerns about specific kinds of serious wrongdoing (i.e. whistleblower protection). The Board is one of the public bodies subject to *PIDA*.

Section 38 of *PIDA* requires the Board to report the number of disclosures of wrongdoing that were received and the results of any investigations undertaken in response. During this reporting period the Board did not receive any *PIDA* disclosures. The Board is unaware of any reports in which it, its staff, or its members (past or present) is alleged to have committed any wrongdoing.

The Board continues to ensure that information about *PIDA* is regularly made available to its members at its annual general meeting.

Financial Statement

(For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025)

In fiscal year 2025/2026, the STBCAB incurred expenses of **$23,408** as detailed below in this 5-year comparative chart.

The average total annual expenses (as shown below for the past five years) for the STBCAB were **$25,789**.

Direct Expenses	***2021/2022 $***	***2022/2023 $***	***2023/2024 $***	***2024/2025 $***	***2025/2026 $***
Salaries and Benefits	0	0	0	0	**0**
Member Fees & Expenses	4,814	10,001	18,547	13,643	**12,816**
Professional Services	3,132	983	4,424	6,269	**0**
Office and Venue Expenses	10,600	11,751	12,844	8,530	**10,592**
					0
Total Expenses	**$18,546**	**$22,735**	**$35,815**	**$28,442**	**$23,408**

Salaries and Benefits encompasses the full-time staff who support the Board. This number is zero because the Board's staff are shared with a cluster of other tribunals who bear that cost instead.

Member Fees and Expenses reflects the remuneration and expenses for the Chair and five appointed members of the Board. Outside of hearings and decision writing,

remuneration may be incurred for time spent on case management, engaging in approved professional development, attending the Board's annual general meeting, improving the Board's processes and operations, and engaging with routine operational matters and meetings as required. The Chair and members are appointed on an as-and-when needed basis and are paid a per diem for the time they work in accordance with Treasury Board Directive 1/24 and the BC Ministry of Attorney General's *Tribunal Performance Framework and Remuneration Plan*. Members are also reimbursed for any authorized expenses according to those same policies. Pursuant to section 8.5.3 of Treasury Board Directive 1/24, the Board publishes actual remuneration and reimbursement information on its website at: www.stbcab.ca/home/annual-report.

Professional Services reflects the cost of retaining outside legal counsel to provide professional development to members at the Board's annual general meeting, and to provide legal advice on operational or case management matters throughout the year. Outside legal counsel are drawn from a prequalified list provided by the BC Ministry of Attorney General and are paid standard government rates. This category also encompasses outside professional services, such as court recorders in the event they are required for an oral hearing.

Office and Venue Expenses reflects the direct costs incurred by the Board when it meets in-person for a hearing or an annual general meeting, routine office expenses at its registry, and any registration fees for professional development, such as training opportunities offered by the BC Council of Administrative Tribunals or the Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals. This line also reflects the Board's IT infrastructure, including its website, case management system, and standard office software applications.



Appendix 1: Biographies of Board Members

RICHARD GROUNDS, CHAIR (TERM BEGINNING AUGUST 15, 2025)

Mr. Grounds is a lawyer in private practice and was called to the bar in BC in 1998. In addition to acting as legal counsel on various matters, he is an experienced workplace investigator, labour adjudicator and mediator. Mr. Grounds acts as outside counsel for the Department of Justice on wrongful conviction matters. He is currently also a member of the BC Employment Standards Tribunal. He has previously been a crown prosecutor, Residential Schools Adjudicator and member of the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. Mr. Grounds has served on the Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board since November 2018.

GORDON ARMOUR, CHAIR (TERM ENDED JULY 31, 2025)

Gordon Armour was Chair of the Skilled Trades BC Appeal Board and a former Coordinator of Transition, Training and Trades for School District 27, Cariboo Chilcotin (Williams Lake). Mr. Armour was responsible for the development of career education programs and coordination of work experience programs and apprenticeship training in partnership with post-secondary institutions and industry. Previously he was a Senior Instructor in Construction Trades with School District 27. Active in his community, Mr. Armour was a Member of the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board, Thompson River University Community Education Advisory Committee, the Williams Lake Work Placement Committee, and the Williams Lake Community Futures Training Sub Committee. He also served as Board Chair of the BC Health Association, Cariboo Park Lodge, and Cariboo Memorial Hospital. Mr. Armour has a Bachelors of Education from the University of British Columbia.

MARTHA DOW, MEMBER

Dr. Martha Dow is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of Culture, Media, and Society at the University of Fraser Valley (UFV) in Abbotsford. There, she also serves as Director of the Community Health and Social Innovation (CHASI) Hub and Senior Advisor for Changemaking to the President of UFV.

Dr. Dow holds a PhD in Educational Studies from the University of British Columbia, and a Master's and Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Western Ontario. Her MA research on inter-provincial sentencing of violent young offenders, combined with frontline work with high-risk youth, inspired her commitment to bridging public policy and lived experience.

Previously, Dr. Dow was appointed by the federal Minister of Public Safety to be an Independent Chairperson for the Correctional Service of Canada. In this role she was responsible for ensuring fair and impartial adjudication proceedings for inmates charged with serious disciplinary offences. She is also a past member of the Abbotsford Police Department's Chief Constable's Diversity Advisory Committee.

GAVIN HOEKSTRA, MEMBER

Gavin Hoekstra works for the Law Society of British Columbia as a lawyer. Prior to joining the Law Society, he was the manager of litigation for the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia ("WorkSafeBC"). Prior to WorkSafeBC, Gavin was a litigator in private practice for over three years. Gavin volunteered with Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver from 2012 to 2025 by spending time with youth who do not otherwise have male role models in their lives. He served as a moot court judge at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC most years between 2013 and 2023.

DANIEL SMYTHE, MEMBER

Daniel Smythe is an Associate Professor at University of the Fraser Valley. He instructs all levels of the electrical apprenticeship training program as well as the master electrician program. Daniel holds a Red Seal Endorsement and a BC Master Electrician certification. He has worked across the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors of the electrical trade and has owned and operated an electrical contracting company. Daniel holds a Bachelor of Integrated Studies from University of the Fraser Valley, and has completed the Governance Essentials Program through ICD-Rotman Business School. In addition he has completed governance related training in Enterprise Risk Management, Digital Transformation, and Financial Essentials through the Institute of Corporate Directors. Daniel presently serves as a member of the board of directors for Technical Safety BC, and is chair of the Governance and Human Resources Committee. Daniel volunteers within his community as a member of Mission Search and Rescue.

JOEL FEENSTRA, MEMBER

Joel Feenstra is an Associate Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley teaching electrical apprentices. Previously he was the principal of Feenstra Electric Ltd. Mr. Feenstra has been active in his community serving as a Chair of the BC Electrical Instructors Provincial Curriculum committee, director of the University of the Fraser Valley Alumni Association, and Member of the Canadian Standards Association. He holds a number of designations including a Red-Seal Endorsed electrical journeyman (RSE) and BC Master Electrician (TSBC). Mr. Feenstra also completed his training as a provincial instructor with the Vancouver Community College and as an electrician at the University of the Fraser Valley.