

From: Kate Shapiro <kate@dte.coop>

To: "ocmail@dte.coop" <ocmail@dte.coop>, Active 2 <active2@dte.org.au>, conFest Committee <cc@dte.coop>

Subject: Re: Respect

Date: Fri, 5 Feb 2021 03:56:51 +0000

I note that there has been a password restriction placed on minutes this morning.

I did not request this. The board did not request that this be done.

I made a request to David for minutes to be made inaccessible from the external Google links so that agencies would not be able to review people's roles and the work they had undertaken which goes back years.

Why the urgency and what happened to prompt this?

I was contacted by someone late Wednesday who said they were acting on behalf of a government agency to have a chat with me about details of my income and activities. I asked what this was about and he said not to worry - it wasn't just me, that they now do routine checks to make sure information is accurate and up to date and that people are being paid the right amount. This immediately got my attention.

After googling myself I realised there is years worth of information of many, many members and volunteers who have received benefits of all types - far greater than I, with all kinds of circumstances where they potentially did work for the cooperative and has been on disability benefits, or unemployed and completed declarations saying they had not worked in a paid or unpaid role, or that they had looked for work and yet this documented them being on site..... the list goes on. These people's lives depend on this money. There's audio files of them talking about it too so their voices are recognisable as theirs.

I acted with absolute urgency to protect members as I saw an actual impending threat to people's livelihoods and which could result in people having tens of thousands of dollars debt raised against them. Many members would be unlikely to re-qualify for payments again. Some members may have completed declarations when they were at working bees or set up etc. and receiving unemployment or disability benefits to say they did not work and then there's minutes of them saying they have done things or are doing work. Some members may have completed exemptions for looking for work but then there's work discussed and documented.

This is something that wouldn't just affect one or two people. We have years and years worth of minutes, audio, general meetings, text files, task lists documenting work undertaken, sub-committee group minutes with more work undertaken on there and many, many people likely affected.

Our membership are all volunteers. We have a huge cohort of people with circumstances where they are able to volunteer for us but are unable to have regular jobs but find a place in DTE.

Unfortunately, the government doesn't understand the nature of chronic health conditions and that just because someone can volunteer, it doesn't mean they can always work in a normal job. Unfortunately this government are also notorious for raising debts, cancelling payments and putting the onus back onto individuals to apply for debt removals, reapply for payments etc. and I'm not sure these would be granted again.

You know, we may have our tiffs, but at the end of the day, we are all still Confest family when it comes to something like this, and we are a member based organisation.

I acted immediately and unilaterally for the sake of the community because if this affected even one additional person, this was potentially tens of thousands of dollars to them and people's lives. And the reality is that we have many members.

I'm sorry for any inconvenience caused everyone. I'm sorry if anyone felt that they might have been locked out or that things may have been deleted but you weren't locked out nor was anything deleted but you weren't locked out by David and I. It was all merely moved to break the Google links.

In regards to the password that's now on there, the board didn't tell Peter that it wanted him to put a password on it. I certainly don't think it was a malicious gesture on Peter's part though and if this is indeed a relevant concern to members, and given Peter has already now set up password protection can I suggest as a member that we have a generic username and password for all members and volunteers to get in? The intention was only ever for the protection of members from external bodies.

If the feel of the room is that this is indeed something that affects members, then maybe the board can move a motion for you to just do those things you mentioned last night Peter (ie. make it so Google doesn't index minutes, task lists, chat files, audio recordings etc.) and in light of the password protection you've now set up, you could just create a general username and password that we can all use to login.

Anyway, my intention was never, ever for any of us not to be able to read minutes.

Sometimes you've got to make a call. I made the one where I would receive the most flak because there would be a delay in communicating with you all, but which would protect all of our members and volunteers as quickly as humanly possible.

Kate

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On 5 Feb 2021, at 10:12 am, Peter Tippett <email@petertippett.com.au> wrote:

Correspondence inwards for the board and OC.

The board is going to write to ITC for recommendations regarding locking you out of DTE information.

An example suggested....

Only members can view minutes.

So volunteers that contribute so much like John Reid cannot view minutes?

Keep in mind forwarding protected information to someone like John Reid so he can continue to call GMs would be a breach of the code of conduct.

Anyone see how silly this is going to get, the time wasted....

Anyway the board is going to write to ITC. The board knows I am currently and have

repeatedly been removed from ITC with reason or explanation.

So the board is basically removing me, who has no budget from the discussion.

This does not show respect or appreciation for what I and others have contributed. This does show that the issues involved are beyond the ability of the board to address.

I ask those on the board to consider deferring this topic to the OC. ITC is a sub-committee of the OC anyway. Allow the OC the opportunity to hear, evaluate and possibly address any concerns.

Peter Tippett