

Answers to questions taken on notice – Engineers Australia

- 1. We understand that Engineers Australia operated and approved a Professional Standards Scheme between 1997 and 2016. Can you explain how that scheme worked and why it was not continued?**

Engineers Australia had a Professional Standards Scheme (PSS) but found that the take-up by members was extremely low. A key reason for low take-up of the scheme is that engineers found that clients were requiring them to contract out of the limited liability that was the core benefit of a PSS. The PSS was therefore of limited value. In making the decision to discontinue the PSS, Engineers Australia recognised that it had very robust systems in place to drive a high level of professional standards amongst its members: the voluntary National Engineering Register (NER), accreditation of entry-level degrees, and provision of CPD.

- 2. [Engineers Australia] represent 100,000 engineers across Australia, what percentage of that will be covered by the Design and Building Practitioners Bill?**

The Design and Building Practitioners Bill will require engineers who design ‘elements’ of the building to be registered to sign-off on the design. Whilst the scope of the Bill is relatively undefined and may expand via regulations, this answer is based on current information that suggests registration would initially apply to those designing fire safety systems, load-bearing components and building services for Class 2 apartments. Those are typically designed by fire safety engineers, structural engineers and mechanical engineers.

It should be noted that, especially when it comes to building services, there are other areas of engineering practice that can be involved. Also, that whilst a great many fire safety engineers do work on Class 2 apartments, for the other areas of practice there will be many who do not practice in the building sector at all. Furthermore, many engineers in those areas of practice will work under supervision and therefore not sign off on designs.

With the aforementioned in mind, it is not possible to provide an accurate percentage answer, but our advice is that the percentage of Engineers Australia members across Australia who will be covered by the DBP Bill is low.

- 3. In the additional tranche what you believe is the number of engineers that would immediately be covered by the [Professional Engineers Registration] bill? Obviously we acknowledge there is a regulatory-making power in the bill to incorporate other issues.**

This answer provides an estimate for the number of professional engineers working in NSW without supervision in the areas of practice of: civil, structural, mechanical, electrical and fire safety. At the time of the 2016 census, there were 60,197 people with engineering qualifications in the labour market who were also employed in an engineering occupation. Apart from Fire Safety Engineering which is a relatively new area of practice and quite small in number (we estimate about 100 are in NSW), the other areas of practice represent the

most common and could include around half of all engineers in NSW (about 30,000). About a third could work under supervision, which leaves about 20,000 engineers in NSW as potentially subject to the provisions of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill.