

**Submission
No 6**

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019

Name: Mr Bill Pearce

Position: Civil Engineer - Project Management, Inner West Council

Date Received: 17 December 2019

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to lodge this submission to your Inquiry into the proposed Engineer Registration Bill. I support engineer registration in NSW.

I have been a practising professional Engineer for the last 51 years/. My experience covers many different roles in designing, constructing, maintaining and managing infrastructure works for State and local government, private enterprise and the education sector. The types of works I have been involved with include major roads, drainage, mining infrastructure, railways, airports, banks, schools universities, motorways and lately parks.

I have observed a gradual decline in employment of locally trained engineers with the shortfall coming in from overseas. It is more important than ever to avoid the risk of non-professional people passing themselves off as experienced engineers and making decisions that could impact cost and time overruns and particularly public safety.

Registration of engineers in New South Wales is long overdue. Right now, anyone can call themselves an engineer in NSW which is not the case with any other profession. Other professions have had licensing and registration regimes in place for many years to guarantee professional standards, protect the public and the profession from unscrupulous and unqualified operators. Examples of other professions where this is the case and where it has had an impact on public safety include: architects, builders, electricians, plumbers, doctors, nurses, and many others.

When you consider that engineers sit at the apex of the building and construction process – scoping, designing and overseeing the work of other trades and professionals, it underlines how absurd and dangerous the current situation is.

Introducing engineer registration is simply a matter of public-interest. It would close a long-time regulatory gap which makes no sense and exposes the public to risks. I understand why high-profile residential construction failures at Mascot and Opal towers have been the focus in the media, but these crises are indicative of a wider problem that goes well beyond the high-rise building sector.

Our major projects such as roads, bridges, rail, water & energy projects should not be exposed to unqualified people who can only call themselves engineers because there is no registration system. There is plenty of evidence that a lack of engineering input is affecting project outcomes. This includes the problem of public safety, but it also blocks innovation and leads to major projects running overtime and over budget. There are several recent examples of public and worker safety being compromised, but there is also a litany of issues with cost overruns and delays attributable to poor scoping of engineering dependent/critical projects.

People deserve to know if they are employing a properly qualified and experienced engineer whether they're building a bridge, an apartment or a new energy generator. And the public deserve to know that the infrastructure and services they use are safe. I urge you to support the Engineer Registration Bill to give the public confidence and workers in the profession the respect they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon (Bill) Pearce

Civil Engineer/Project Manager