

**Submission  
No 12**

## **PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019**

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**Position:** Civil engineer

**Date Received:** 18 December 2019

# Inquiry into the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 Submission

Dear Committee Members,

I write to lodge a submission to your Inquiry into the proposed Engineer Registration Bill.

I support engineer registration in NSW.

I am an engineer in WA. Due to my love for the beautiful Sydney and NSW, I advocate for engineer registration in NSW.

We need a system to ensure sufficient professional firefighting engineers are available to prevent the big bushfire endangering the life and property of the NSW public. It will reduce the risk of smoke haze that further affects the public health of Sydney public, costing medical expenditure of the taxpayers and dragging down the livability of Sydney internally therefore affecting potential international investment to Sydney and NSW.

We also need a system to ensure sufficient professional civil engineers and mechanical engineers are available to scope the works and estimate cost properly to prevent cost blow out to NSW infrastructure projects such as the Sydney light rail project, Westconnex project and the most recent Sydney Football Stadium project.

We need a system to ensure sufficient professional water engineers to provide proper water infrastructure such as dams and irrigation facility to help farmers fight against the drought that NSW experienced last year.

We need a system to ensure sufficient professional power engineers to provide proper electricity infrastructure for residents to prevent blackouts that has affected NSW so frequently in recently years when condition is predicted to be worsen in coming years.

Not to mention that we need sufficient professional engineers to design, construct and maintain the NSW roads properly, especially regional roads where around 70% of the total fatalities occur, which has seen 338 people killed on roads for this calendar year and a steady increase since 2015 (300 fatalities).

Obviously, only having registration in the building industry would not work for the NSW Government.

It will be like just having a very long board for a bucket whilst keeping other short or broken boards untouched. The overall service level that the NSW Government can

provide to the NSW public would be determined by the short boards, not the longest one. This would eventually cause headaches to the NSW Government itself, as shown by the current numerous evidence shown above.

Please kindly note that as a professional engineer, I am trying to sincerely help you by reminding you to take immediate measures to have engineer registration in the whole industry, not only the building industry.

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 related profession.

Other professions have had licensing and registration regimes in place for many years to guarantee professional standards, protect the profession from unscrupulous and unqualified operators and protect the public. 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 there are 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 the current situation is. Introducing engineer registration is simply a matter of public-interest and closes 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 vertical 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,

Dr. Wen Chen

Civil Engineer

