

**Submission
No 28**

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019

Name: Stephen Clayton

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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 and do so in support of engineer registration in NSW.

I have been a local government engineer for over 40 years having graduated from the NSW Institute of Technology (now University of Technology) in 1978 with a Bachelor of Engineering. I have subsequently obtained qualification as a Local Government Engineer under Ordinance 4 of the Local Government Act 1919, and in later years obtained post graduate qualifications in management with a Graduate Diploma in Management (Technology Management) through the APESMA endorsed course at Deakin University. During my career I have attended countless seminars, training sessions and professional development opportunities in order to remain professionally effective, up to date with regulations and legislation to ensure I remained attuned and relevant to my chosen industry of Public Works engineering. I have spent a considerable part of my career in the management of civil infrastructure assets and fully understand the importance of the responsibilities of adhering to due processes of due diligence all through the stages of an asset's life cycle. A practitioner's qualifications as evidence of their capability to professionally undertake the duties of an engineer is critical to ensuring that all users of the asset are free from any risk of injury or other damage resulting from its performance in providing a services to a reasonable standard.

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 and is a concern given the potential for community impact should engineering works fail – especially public infrastructure and buildings.

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 profiled 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 block 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,

Stephen Clayton

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