

**Submission
No 42**

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019

Name: Mr Stuart Tourle

Date Received: 30 January 2020

Stuart Tourle



Legislative Assembly
Committee on Environment and Planning

Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019

Dear Sir,

I wish to take this opportunity to express my concerns about portions of the proposed Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 and in particular *s10 Eligibility*.

Who Am I?

I completed an Associate Diploma of Engineer (Electrical) through TAFE NSW in 1991, in conjunction with fulltime technical traineeship with Sydney Water. The associate diploma is equivalent to today's Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level 6 qualification, Advanced Diploma.

Since obtaining the associate diploma, I have practice as an engineering associate (defined as by Engineer Australia, as having completed a two year advanced diploma or associate degree of engineering). In my professional career I have:

- a) Led, trained and mentored professional engineers.
- b) Design complex electrical systems including calculations.
- c) Practiced Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Recently I have been accepted on to Engineers Australia's National Engineer Register (NER).

The Issue

The proposed legislation is states that, under s10 Eligibility, "an applicant is eligible for registration as a professional engineer only if the applicant—

- a) has completed an assessment scheme to the satisfaction of the assessment entity for the scheme, or
- b) has the qualifications and competencies required for 1 or more areas of engineering, set out in the regulations."

Assuming that the proposed legislation mimics Queensland's, the qualifications and competencies means having the academic standard that meets the Washington Accord and 3 -5 years of engineering experience post graduation.

These requirements excluded myself, and many others engineering associates, from working as engineers based on academic qualifications, no matter on how small the project, without the additional overheads of working under the “direct supervision” of a professional engineer. In small companies with a mix of professional and engineering associates, this will have a major detrimental effect. In these companies, the senior engineer is often the engineering associate, an engineer with many years’ experience, providing guidance to many professional engineers, both recently graduated and experienced. In short acting as a professional engineer.

What the proposed legislation *fails to identify and recognise* by its narrow definition, is the experience of many years of practical and applied engineering, engineering associates have. In my case 30 years of experience. In those years I have guided, instructed, taught, mentored and correct the work on many professional engineers.

Recommendations

A possible solution is to broaden the professional engineer definition to include engineering associates with recognition of prior learning (RPL), that is a giving credit for skills, knowledge and experience gained through working and learning. For example:

- 1) A relevant AQF level 6 engineering course, and
- 2) 10 years post-graduation engineering experience (proven through referees, etc).

The NSW government, through Training NSW, recognises RPL as “a process for giving candidates credit for skills, knowledge and experience gained through working and learning”. Also the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) state that “recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual’s relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit”. If these two organisation can accept RPL, consideration should be given in the proposed legislation.

While I understand the need of this legislation, I feel that the definition in s10 will exclude me from my chosen profession and limit any opportunities unless a four-year undergraduate degree in engineering is undertaken, irrespective of the amount and quality of the post-graduation engineering experience.

Of the three levels of electrical professions, electrical trades, engineering associate and professional engineer, this legislation will, as engineering associate, limited my scope to work. I cannot work as an electrician as I do not have a trade certificate, I cannot work as a professional engineer as I do not have a degree. However an electrician can work as an engineering associate, and professional engineer can work as an engineering associate.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a submission.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Stuart Tourle.

Stuart Tourle