

**Submission  
No 59**

## **PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019**

**Organisation:** Planning Institute of Australia

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Alex Greenwich  
Chair Inquiry into the Professional Engineers Registration Bill  
Committee on Environment and Planning  
NSW Parliament

Via email: [environmentplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:environmentplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the review of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill. The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) supports the approach of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill. PIA would also support the approach being extended to *Registered Planners* to ensure that each of the key built environment professions (i.e. architects, engineers and planners) offer comparable assurance of competency.

PIA understands trust in the knowledge, training and integrity of professionals in the built environment is essential to retain community and investment confidence in the safety, quality and performance of buildings and infrastructure in their setting.

PIA offers the following input against the terms of reference:

**1. The most appropriate way to regulate professional engineers in the building and construction industry**

A registration system for different fields of engineering as proposed in the bill should include requirements for: education, training and continuous professional development – as well as ethics.

The bill offers an appropriate means by which the community and investors can be assured that work that carries significant risk to safety and quality is being undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals.

The track record of Engineers Australia means that there is a pre-existing organisation that can facilitate the operation of the registration scheme by ensuring that the appropriate EA membership accreditation corresponds directly to the professional registration requirements.

It is also vital that sufficient resources are available to ensure the integrity of the scheme in terms of monitoring, audit, review, feedback/complaints and sanctions. The experience of the NSW Building Professionals Board is relevant here.

## 2. How engineers and other building industry professions are regulated and monitored, and proposals for reform under the Bill and consideration of alternate proposals.

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) has had significant involvement in the establishment of a successful professional accreditation scheme for *Registered Planners* in South Australia. We strongly endorse this process as set out in our [submission link](#) to the SA registration scheme.

Good urban and regional planning can only be achieved by good planners. To be trusted unequivocally as the lead profession in effective planning for people and places, planners must be recognised as setting, maintaining and promoting the highest standards of professional competence. PIA has established the highest professional membership grade 'Registered Planner' for this purpose.

PIA encourages State Governments to design registration schemes that make use of the membership grades, advice and expertise of the respective professional bodies (i.e. Engineers Australia, Australian Institute of Architects, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and the Planning Institute of Australia). Members of these organisations are accountable for their standards to the professional institution.

Each body has made a substantial investment to the advancement of knowledge and practice through developing, supporting, regulating and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence within their respective professions. It is possible to develop either several or a unified built environment professional accreditation scheme using the industry competency standards recognised by the professional institutions. This approach reflects the criteria of the Professional Standards Council which have been used to benchmark professional competency registration schemes such as that implemented by the Government of South Australia.

PIA is heavily committed to researching and implementing relevant professional standards. Several years ago, PIA undertook an extensive consultation process with members, the broader planning profession, academics and a number of international planning institutes. This substantial body of work resulted in a set of six essential competencies of an Urban and Regional Planner, with a set of descriptors and indicators associated with each competency. Where qualifications are to be considered as part of accreditation it is important to ensure these qualifications are also accredited. PIA is involved in several learning and quality assurance initiatives, notably through accrediting Australian tertiary education courses, promoting individual certification through the Registered Planner program, and requiring ongoing study through continuing professional education and development. PIA would be happy to share our learnings in these areas.

### Conclusion

Planning, engineering and design decisions in the built environment professions should be made by trusted qualified and experienced professionals. Good planning requires high quality, transparent and efficient planning practices and systems. The planning profession and community wants a planning and development system that is transparent and accountable and gives confidence that the right planning decisions are being made.

PIA endorses the benefits of the engineers registration scheme outlined in the bill and urges the government to extend consideration to planning professionals in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this submission. If you wish to discuss any of the above further, please contact John Brockhoff, National Policy Manager by email at [REDACTED] or by phone on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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