

IPENZ INPUT FOR PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REVIEW OF TTMRA 2015

1. PRINCIPLES

IPENZ (as the Registration Authority for Chartered Professional Engineers) fully supports the TTMRA principles to facilitate cross-border mobility of engineers. Despite the voluntary nature of registration in New Zealand, the Registration Authority (IPENZ) recognises RPEQ registrants under the TTMRA as occupational equivalence is established.

In fact, it applies the same principles to other registers requiring similar levels of competence to that required for CPEng (such as NPER, CPEng(Aust) and CEng from the UK). The critical factor is that IPENZ can be assured of equivalence of competence as these quality marks involve an assessment against an internationally agreed standard (namely the exemplar competence standard required for registration on the International Professional Engineers Register).

2. SCENE SETTING

There is currently increasing pressure from various sources (recent royal commissions and local regulators etc) to increase the rigour of assessments for CPEng registration in New Zealand. The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment is currently doing work on the occupational regulation of engineers and initial feedback from their public discussion paper on the review supports this view.

The Board of Professional Engineers Queensland (BPEQ), the body which registers engineers as Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ), appears to be under pressure to cut compliance costs and is using a competitive approach to assessments to facilitate this. There are now seven bodies acting as approved assessment entities, some but not all of which appear to assess to the international exemplar competence standard (i.e. the International Professional Engineers Register standard).

Recent attempts to seek clarification from the BPEQ on the standards expected to be applied by assessment entities and the quality assurance processes operated by the Board have not received a response.

3. SPECIFIC RESPONSES

In light of the above comments, we make the following responses to specific questions in the discussion document.

Q32: Currently, only a small percentage of professional engineers in New Zealand are required to be registered for aspects of the engineering work they undertake. However, the Registration Authority's practice has been to recognise all RPEQ engineers who can demonstrate occupational equivalence under the TTMRA for the purposes of CPEng registration in New Zealand.

Q38: To date, the Registration Authority has not placed conditions on engineers granted registration under the TTMRA provisions, but may consider doing so should registration standards applied by a particular assessment entity be demonstrated to be lower than the standard applied in New Zealand (and in

Australia by approved assessment entities such as Engineers Australia and the Institution of Chemical Engineers).

Q44: Informal approaches to the BPEQ have been effective in resolving issues of interpretation in the past and we will pursue this option in the first instance to address our current concerns.

Q49: Given the need to establish occupational equivalence across the range of disciplines in the engineering profession, we would not support moves towards automatic mutual recognition.

Jeff Wastney

Registrar

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