

National registration reform to unlock engineering productivity and workforce mobility

Engineers Australia, Consult Australia, Professionals Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) have welcomed findings from the National Competition Council's (NCC) [final report](#) to the Council for Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) on its review of mutual recognition arrangements for workers.

The case for engineering licensing reform is clear, with the NCC identifying engineering as the leading example of an occupation that would benefit from a national registration scheme.

The report states: "The Council found that national licensing schemes have the potential to deliver large benefits for labour mobility by removing many of the barriers that currently arise under mutual recognition arrangements. This includes removing complex equivalence assessments between licences. National licensing would create greater certainty while also simplifying compliance and administration."

The engineering bodies have consistently advocated for a national registration scheme to reduce the regulatory burden on professionals and improve workforce efficiency by replacing the current patchwork of individual state and territory arrangements with a single streamlined system that allows engineers to register only once to work anywhere in Australia.

Engineers Australia Chief Executive Officer Romilly Madew AO said the NCC's endorsement of the benefits of national licensing schemes is evidence of the productivity improvements that would accrue to critical services that rely on engineering.

"The NCC's report marks an important step towards a framework that allows engineers to register once and practise anywhere in Australia," Ms Madew said.

"Engineers are key contributors to vital projects relating to Australia's national security, energy and infrastructure, often working across multiple states and jurisdictional boundaries. There should be a simple process that allows them to deliver on these matters without inconvenience."

"National registration will reduce compliance costs associated with the current fragmented system and create more opportunities for the more than 545,000 qualified engineers in Australia to work in regional and remote areas facing skills shortages."

Calls for a national registration scheme have seen strong public support, with polling from Professionals Australia showing 93 per cent of Australians backing the system and nearly eight in ten engineers on board.

Engineers Australia looks forward to working collaboratively with governments to support the development of a national scheme, with our Member Advisory Groups offering practical industry experience and technical expertise.

"We hope governments continue with this momentum to reduce the regulatory burden for our professionals," Ms Madew said. "We're pleased to collaborate with other engineering bodies, states, and territories to support a national scheme."

Quotes attributable to Jonathan Cartledge, CEO of Consult Australia:

"This review recognises the significant business constraints that stop our members moving engineers to regions to ensure government can deliver their expansive public infrastructure pipeline."

"Across our membership, we estimate that over \$54 million could be saved just by helping our existing registered engineers do what they do best irrespective of the state or territory they find themselves in."

About Consult Australia

Consult Australia represents consulting businesses in design, architecture, engineering and technical services – an industry comprised of 58,600-plus businesses that directly employ more than 285,000 people. From building design to advisory services on major infrastructure, Consult Australia members shape, create and sustain Australia's built and national environments.

Quote attributable to Sam Roberts, CEO of Professionals Australia:

"Engineers are trusted with work that keeps communities safe, connected and functioning. A national registration system should match the national importance of that work."

"Our latest engineering remuneration survey shows engineers are working an average 42-hour week, often carrying unpaid overtime to keep critical projects moving. Government should make their work easier, not more complicated."

"A register-once, practise-anywhere system means less red tape for engineering professionals and more time delivering the infrastructure Australia relies on."

About Professionals Australia

Professionals Australia is a contemporary union and professional association representing over 20,000 professionals across STEM, including engineers, scientists and IT specialists. With a long-standing commitment to the engineering profession, we support members working across the public and private sectors through advocacy, professional development and industrial representation. Our organisation brings together technical expertise and policy insight to support a highly skilled, future-ready workforce that underpins Australia's infrastructure and economic resilience.

Quote attributable to David Jenkins, CEO, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia:

"For local government and public works engineers, who often manage infrastructure assets and projects that straddle council and state boundaries, this review has found that national registration is a practical step that will cut red tape, lower the cost of engaging consulting engineers across borders, and let our members focus on delivering the infrastructure communities rely on."

"The portability it offers will also make the profession more attractive, particularly in regional and remote areas where skilled engineers are needed most."

About IPWEA

IPWEA is the peak association for infrastructure asset management and professionals who deliver public works and engineering services. We provide comprehensive educational programs, technical publications, advocacy on behalf of our members and the chance to network and collaborate with peers both nationally and internationally through our annual conferences. With offices throughout Australia, New Zealand and Canada, we are committed to developing the capacity and capability within the sector and delivering value to the communities we serve.