

*Submission*

by

Business|NZ

to the

**Institute of Professional Engineers  
of New Zealand (IPENZ)**

on the

**Standards for  
Chartered Professional Engineers**

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## Standards for Chartered Professional Engineers

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This submission is made on behalf of Business New Zealand, incorporating regional employers' and manufacturers' organisations. The regional organisations consist of the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (Northern), the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (Central), Canterbury Manufacturers' Association, Canterbury Employers Chambers of Commerce, and the Otago-Southland Employers' Association. Business New Zealand represents business and employer interests in all matters affecting the business and employment sectors.
- 1.2. One of Business New Zealand's key goals is to see the implementation of policies that would see New Zealand retain a first world national income and regain a place in the top ten of the OECD in per capita GDP terms. This is a goal that is shared by the Government. It is widely acknowledged that consistent, sustainable growth in real GDP per capita of well in excess of 4% per annum (and probably closer to 7-8%) would be required to achieve this goal. Continued growth of around 2% (our long-run average) would only continue New Zealand's relative decline.
- 1.3. The effective use of the \$1.5 billion dollars expended on post-compulsory education and training is a critical part of achieving these objectives. Achieving consistently high growth rates will require significant improvements in productivity. Improving the skill levels of the existing workforce, and those entering it, is likely to be the most critical factor in this. This submission is made in this light.

## 2. Summary of recommendations

- 2.1. Business New Zealand supports the overall the focus in the proposed standards on current competence for Chartered Professional Engineers.
- 2.2. Specifically, in respect of the content of the proposed standards and code of ethical conduct, Business New Zealand recommends:

### a) Specification of 'current Practice Area' (Lines 34 to 37)

add after line 37

37a 'current practice area' means that practice area for which an engineer is currently publicly certified as meeting the standards for registration.

### b) Priority for health and safety (Lines 90-92)

change level of standard

90 'Give priority to health and safety of community'

91 A chartered professional engineer must, in the course of his or her engineering activities,

92 give priority to the health and safety of people who might reasonably be foreseen to be affected by his or her activities.

## 3. General Comment

- 3.1. Business New Zealand strongly endorses the requirement explicitly set out in the proposed standards that Chartered Professional Engineers must demonstrate current competence in his or her current practice area.\
- 3.2. This focus is in line with Business NZ's assessment of the importance of a focus on outcomes rather than process in education, training and certification. The requirement to maintain knowledge and skill in relevant areas of practice fits with businesses' need to maintain and improve skill levels in industry.

## **4. Specification of 'current practice area' (Lines 34-37)**

- 4.1. Business New Zealand supports the concept of specifying, for each Chartered Professional Engineer, a clearly identified 'current practice area', defined by the area within which the engineer has specialised engineering knowledge, and by the nature of the engineer's professional engineering activities.
- 4.2. Business New Zealand believes it would be useful for the 'current practice area' of a Chartered Professional Engineer to be made explicit as part of the registration process. In other words, the 'current practice area' for which a Chartered Professional Engineer is certified should be recorded as part of the registration process, and also be publicly available. This would assist businesses and others utilising the services of a Chartered Professional Engineer to ensure that they were qualified in areas relevant to the needs of the business or client.
- 4.3. Business New Zealand therefore recommends that the 'current practice area' for which a Chartered Professional Engineer is certified be made explicit and public as part of the registration process.

## **5. Priority of health and safety (Lines 90-92)**

- 5.1. While Business New Zealand agrees that health and safety matters are of great importance for the engineering profession, it questions whether the obligation proposed in respect of these matters is overly risk-averse. The proposed standards would oblige a Chartered Professional Engineer to give the 'highest priority' to the health and safety of people who 'may' be affected by their activities.
- 5.2. This is a much higher standard than that proposed for environmental effects of the activities of Chartered Professional Engineers. In this area engineers are to be obliged to recognise 'reasonably foreseeable' adverse effects on the environment, and 'if practicable' to reduce these. These obligations seem to recognise that life is an inherently risky and uncertain proposition, and

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while it is incumbent on professionals to mitigate those risks, it is important that we do not become so risk-averse as to stifle our ability to achieve other important goals, such as raising the standard of living of New Zealanders.

- 5.3. Business New Zealand therefore recommends that the level of the proposed standard be altered, by removing the word 'highest' from line 91, and replacing the word 'may' in line 92 with ' might reasonably be foreseen to'.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1. Business New Zealand strongly supports the overall focus of the proposed standards on demonstrated current competence. It would be useful for the standards to clearly and explicitly specify what is meant by 'current practice area', and for there to be a more balanced approach to the issue of health and safety.