



National
Engineering
Registration
Board

ANNUAL REPORT TO JUNE 2010

This report is for the period July 2009 to June 2010.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It is pleasing to report that the year to June 2010 was one of significant progress in the foundation and governance of the National Engineering Registration Board. For some time, the NERB has noted the need to review its underpinning governance and policy foundation, if it was to achieve the goals that it has set itself for the next five years and beyond.

This review was largely achieved in 2009/2010, with the successful negotiation of a new Memorandum of Agreement between the signatory parties to the NERB (Engineers Australia, Consult Australia, The Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (APESMA) and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA).

This Memorandum, signed in July 2010 but finalised in 2009/2010, recognises that the NERB shall be the professional association 'face' of and (shall) advocate registration to Governments and the community. It forms the basis of concerted action by the signatory parties to advocate to Australian governments the adoption of nationally-consistent, broadly-based, co-regulatory (state) registration systems for professional engineers. The Memorandum is also underpinned by a Joint Policy Statement that sets out the clear and unanimous support of the parties for nationally consistent registration of professional engineers, with the registration of other occupational categories to follow.

With this agreement, and the spirit of cooperation and determination that has accompanied it, I believe that the NERB is in the best possible position to achieve its ambitious goals of nationally consistent registration within five years. May I extend my thanks to all of the signatory parties and extend a particular welcome to IPWEA who, although not a signatory to the original 1994 agreement, have greatly contributed to positioning the NERB for the way ahead.

As chair, it has been a great pleasure to work with the signatory parties and Board members over the year. And may I also acknowledge our hard working Registrar, Michael Bevan, for the sterling work he has performed over the year.

With the continued efforts and support of all those I have mentioned, I am confident that the NERB has a sound and exciting future.

Rolfe Hartley FIEAust CPEng EngExec

ANNUAL REPORT TO JUNE 2010

This report is for the period July 2009 to June 2010.

CONTENT OF REPORT

INTRODUCTION.....	3
VISION.....	3
MISSION.....	4
Web presence	
Policy advice	
Review of administrative procedures	
BOARD GOVERNANCE.....	5
BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE	5
BOARD PERFORMANCE	6
Strategic Planning	
Public Interest aspects of the Board's role	
Government support	
International Registers	
REGISTER PERFORMANCE.....	7
Legislative references to National Registers	
Register statistics	
• Register report	
• Audit report	
Promotional activity – all registers	
Areas of Practice	
Financial report	
2010 – 2011 FORECAST.....	10



INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of the National Engineering Registration Board is prepared in accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference for the information of all stakeholders, defined as the community, government, industry, the engineering profession and other interested parties. Accordingly, the report is to be made available to all organisations represented on the Board and to the public. The Board's website is the place of publication for the Annual Report.

State and Territory Governments, their administrations, engineering employers, the profession and the community are invited to make reference to the role of the Board in ensuring that National Engineering Registers are operated in the public interest.

This report presents information on the following aspects of Board and registration activity:

- Vision
- Mission
- Governance
- Board Membership and Attendance
- Board Performance
- Register Performance
- Forecast for 2010 – 2011



VISION

The National Engineering Registration Board's objective is to safeguard the community. The Board's vision is for an Australian community and environment safeguarded through competent engineering outcomes achieved through the operation of the national engineering registers. The Board provides input to:

- establishing and maintaining national engineering registers
- establishing new areas of practice for registration in response to demand from community regulators and/or practitioners
- registration systems that protect the community
- ensuring the national engineering registers operate with integrity in respect of National Competition Policy
- ensuring national engineering registers recognise stakeholder requirements
- promoting the value of national registers to organisations that are served by the engineering profession
- entry, audit and review systems that are open and accountable
- providing an accessible independent appeal system

The Board comprises nominees of state and territory governments, community organisations and professional associations. Its stakeholders include the community, government, industry, the engineering profession and other interested parties.



MISSION

The Board's mission, to ensure that the national engineering registers are recognised and respected as the leading registers in Australia for engineering practitioners who are committed to the safety health and welfare of community and environment, is achieved through its web presence, policy advice to Engineers Australia and continuous review of administrative standards and procedures.

Web presence

The Board's website at <http://www.nerb.org.au> provides an invaluable tool for communicating with applicants, registered practitioners and the community. The site offers the following information:

- Board constitution, membership and reports
- Key attributes of practitioners on each of the national engineering registers and the International Registers
- Description of areas of practice on the national engineering registers
- Guidelines needed by anyone applying for registration
- Assistance with preparing for a CPD Audit
- Introduction to the regulation of the engineering profession in Australia, and a list of State and Territory legislation relating to engineering
- Qualifications and competencies to be assessed for registration as a Registered Professional Engineer in Queensland (RPEQ)
- Online search facility for registered practitioners, **rpsearch**.

rpsearch is an online search facility that provides contact details of registered practitioners, or locates registered practitioners who provide engineering services in certain areas of practice in selected locations. **rpsearch** also provides details of professional engineers who have been assessed as currently satisfying the qualifications and competency requirements for registration in Queensland. **rpsearch** is accessible at no cost.

Policy advice

During the reporting period, the Board provided advice to Engineers Australia on the following matters:

- Policy in relation to registered practitioners in career breaks and retirement
- Ensuring that national engineering registers are operated in the public interest
- New areas of practice to be included in national engineering registers
- The case for the registration of engineering practitioners providing the basis for regulation.
- A strategy to significantly increase the number of CPD audits to 5000 per year.

Review of administrative procedures

The Board regularly reviews reports on registration revenue and expenditure, additions to and losses from the National Engineering Registers and audit activity. The Board reviews revenue and expenditure statements to ensure that Engineers Australia neither subsidises nor profits unduly from registration activity. Registration and audit statistics are reviewed each meeting to track demand for registration by engineering practitioners and the effectiveness of accountability structures.



GOVERNANCE

The Board was established in 1994 as a joint initiative of the Institution of Engineers Australia (Engineers Australia), the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (APESMA) and Consult Australia (formerly ACEA). The Institute of Public Works Engineering (IPWEA) has been represented on the Board since its first meeting.

Engineers Australia is the service provider to the Board, administering the National Professional Engineers Register (NPER), the National Engineering Technologists Register (NETR) and the National Engineering Associates Register (NEAR).

A Memorandum of Agreement, to be signed in July 2010 by Engineers Australia, Consult Australia, APESMA and IPWEA, will require Board to update its Terms of Reference, which have been unchanged since adoption in July 2002 by Engineers Australia's Council. The Board's governance will be based on the Memorandum of Agreement between the proponents and will lead to modern Terms of Reference. The Board will continue to function as a committee of Engineers Australia's Council.



BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

The Board currently includes nominees from eight State and Territory governments, two Community or Community Organisation nominees and the nominees of several Professional Associations. During the period July 2009 to June 2010, the Board's membership, and attendance at several meetings and teleconferences, was as follows:

Rolfe Hartley, Chair (elected)	2/2
Mike Marley, Past Chair	2/2
Max Smith, Queensland	2*/2
Fabio Finnocchiaro, Northern Territory	0/2
Menno Henneveld, Western Australia	1*/2
Ian Cooper, Tasmania	2/2
Don Freeman, South Australia	1/2
Will Strachan, New South Wales	1/2
Tony Gill, Australian Capital Territory	2/2
Simon Longstaff, The St James Ethics Centre	1/2
Mara Bun, Community Representative	1/2
Jamie Shelton, Consult Australia	2/2
Erin Wood, APESMA	1/2
David Abbott, IPWEA	2/2
John Southwick AM, Professions Australia	2/2
Gunilla Burrows, NVP Engineering Practice	1/2
Marlene Kanga, NVP Engineering Practice	1/2
Michael Forry, Engineering Technologists	2/2
Keith Chambers, Engineering Associates	2/2
Peter Taylor, Chief Executive EA	2/2
Michael Bevan, Registrar	2/2

* Alternate nominees attended some meetings

Martin Dwyer, Director Engineering Practice at Engineers Australia, and Maurice Allen and David Robinson, Directors Education and Assessment at Engineers Australia also attended both meetings.



BOARD PERFORMANCE

Strategic Planning

During the reporting period, the Board developed a statement of several key strategies for achieving its vision and mission. Over the next five years, the Board will:

- engage with major government procurement agencies and major industry bodies to achieve the desired recognition and respect for national engineering registers
- provide appropriate and timely advice in response to events that strengthens the case for mandatory registration
- engage with government, industry and community to develop and publicise additional specific areas of practice of registration, particularly where:
 - practitioners' work carries an acknowledged high level of risk
 - engineering competence is essential to safe and sustainable technical solutions
 - registration can apply to engineering practitioners across the whole engineering team
- negotiate with engineering associations to offer their members a more robust and well defined standard of competence through the national engineering registers
- support the strengthening of international mobility agreements based on national engineering registers
- review, improve and broaden assessment schemes to accommodate the unified registration system and provide clear information on competencies offered by NPER, NETR and NEAR
- incorporate governance and financial arrangements that are open and equitable into new Terms of Reference, operating procedures, logos, postnominals, certificates, letterhead and publications

Public Interest aspects of the Board's role

The Board met twice during the period of this Report, on 21st Sept 2009 and 22nd Feb 2010. At its meetings, the Board:

- Continued to monitor Engineers Australia assessment of qualifications and competencies in the areas of engineering set out in its approved assessment scheme for assessment for registration as a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) prior to lodging an application with the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland
- Confirmed that NERB will continue to be a committee of Council until governance exigencies require a different legal status
- Using a methodology for calculating and reporting registration revenue and expenditure, the Board ensured that registration funds are committed to registration activity and that registration is not being subsidised
- Reviewed registration fees to ensure that registration activity continues to be self funding.

Government Support

The registration system now enjoys the support of eight State and Territory governments. Government nominees to the board represent Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria (as advised in May 2010). Attendance at meetings demonstrates a significant commitment to registration in all jurisdictions.

International Registers

International Professional Engineer registration (APEC and EMF), available in certain authorised disciplines that correspond with NPER areas of practice, is recognised by some overseas jurisdictions when considering an application for registration or licensure.



REGISTER PERFORMANCE

Legislative References to National Registers

At the end of June 2010 the following legislation and sub-legislation pointed to registration on the National Professional Engineers Register as a basis for practice in certain circumstances:

ACT

- ACT Construction Occupations (Licensing) Regulations 1998
- ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Regulations 2001
- ACT Building Regulation 2004
- ACT Public Health Act 1997 (Code of Practice for Legionella Management)

Northern Territory

- Northern Territory Building Regulations (Northern Territory Practitioners Board)

South Australia

- South Australia Development Regulations 1993
- South Australia Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1995 (Public safety in relation to amusement structures)

Victoria

- Victoria Building Regulations – 2006 (Victoria Building Practitioners Board)

New South Wales

- NSW Building Professionals Act 2005 (The Building Professionals Board's accreditation scheme for certifiers - effective 1 March 2007)
- Public Health (Microbial Control) Regulation 2000
- Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002
- Mine Health and Safety Regulation 2007

Tasmania

- Tasmania Building Regulation 2004 (Building Practitioner Accreditation)
- Tasmania Public Health Act 1997 (Guidelines for Legionella Management)

Queensland - Queensland is the only State in Australia with legislation that regulates the engineering profession. Persons offering or providing a professional engineering service unsupervised in Queensland must be registered by the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (BPEQ), which administers the Queensland *Professional Engineers Act 2002*. Since 1 July 2008, Engineers Australia has assessed the qualifications and competencies for an application for registration as a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ).

Western Australia - Western Australia government received a convincing level of support from the public comment on its discussion paper and has advised that it wishes to support a move to national registration of engineers.

Register Statistics

The Board regularly monitors registration and audit statistics

Registration Activity

Registration Activity for twelve months to 30/6/2010				
	At 30/06/10 *		Joined 01/07/09 to 30/06/10	Retired 01/07/09 to 30/06/10
Number registered on NPER	9455		749	212
Number registered on NETR	54		8	1
Number registered on NEAR	37		10	1
Number of Area of Practice registrations on NPER:				
		APEC Eng		
Civil	4924	220	310	110
Structural	1588	41	142	41
Mechanical	1508	67	124	33
Electrical	1422	59	134	62
Chemical	284	11	33	13
Environmental	150	5	21	0
Biomedical	37		1	2
Building Services	196		26	4
Aerospace	300		21	5
Management	320		18	7
Naval Architecture	11		1	0
ITEE	101		67	1
Fire Safety	74		6	0
Heritage Engineering	2		0	0
Pressure Equipment Design Verifiers	7		0	0
Subdivisional Geotechnics	33		1	0
Amusement Rides	1		0	0
Total	10978	403	905	278

* includes those who have renewed since 30 June 2010, but not those who have joined since 30 June 2010

Audit Activity

Audit Date	Area of Practice	Total Audited	%	Satisfactory Audit	Conditional Acceptance	Resigned	Un-resolved
21 Jul 09	Electrical 2009	268	19%	227	3	23	15
17 Dec 09	Structural 2010	350	22%	318	0	19	13
16 Feb 10	Environmental 2010	31	21%	27	0	2	2
15 Feb 10	Chemical 2010	70	25%	53	1	9	7 *
16 Mar 10	Subdivisional Geotechnics	8	24%	4	0	1	3 *
17 Mar 10	Biomedical 2010	11	30%	10	0	1	0
22 Mar 10	Aerospace 2010	107	36%	93	0	3	11
30 Mar 10	Building Services 2010	51	26%	40	0	1	10
TOTAL		896	09%	772	4	59	61 *
Percentage		10%		86%	0.4%	6.5%	6.8%

* Audit results and the numbers unresolved at 01 February 2011.

No audit respondents were deregistered during the report period and no appeals were received by the Board

Registration statistics indicate a continuing increase in registration activity in the reporting year 2009 to 2010 with a highest number listed on the NPER since 2000.

The up-turn is largely a result of Chartered Members with successful audit outcomes following up with applications to register on NPER and significantly increased numbers in Queensland.

Promotional Activity for NPER, NETR and NEAR and International Registers

The Chairman of the Board and the Registrar have advanced the Board's dialogue with State and Territory Government agencies, with the aim of ensuring wider adoption of National Registers as a means of judicious co-regulation.

Areas of Practice

The following new areas of practice were endorsed by the Board, in accordance with its *Policy for Establishing New Areas of Practice*:

General Area of Practice: *Marine Engineering* - available to Professional Engineers (NPER) and Engineering Technologists (NETR)

Specific Area of Practice: *Heritage and Conservation Engineering* – currently only available to Professional Engineers (NPER)

Work continued towards the introduction of the following new Areas of Practice. It is envisaged these will be introduced during 2010 -11:

- Landslide Risk Management
- Electrical Equipment in Hazardous Areas
- Mine Safety Engineering

Financial Report

Registration income funds all the activities of the Board and the operation of the national engineering registers. Board operations provide for meetings and promotional activity connected with its objectives. Board members are not remunerated. Register operations provide for record keeping, assessment and audit activity. Registration initiatives provide for new areas of practice and the development and operation of registration schemes to meet government requirements. The Board reviews financial data at each meeting.

Engineers Australia has realigned budget regimes with the strategic plan 2011-2015. During the reporting period Engineers Australia's Education & Assessment directorate analysed the cost of services. Each audit costs about \$200 in resources to complete; an audit conducted for each member every five years would mean that \$40 from their annual registration fee was earmarked to audit.

Regarding the competency-based assessment process that provides the basis for registration (and Chartered membership), analysis indicates that the resources expended by Engineers Australia substantially exceeded the existing fees. The Stage 2 assessment fee is currently \$500 (plus GST) but it actually requires around \$4,500 in total resource terms. In addition, roughly \$1,500 worth of volunteer time also goes into each Professional Interview. A number of agreements require that the standard of assessment is not diminished in any way. Engineers Australia is exploring strategies to better manage the costs of assessment.

Engineering Education Australia developed the Experienced Engineers Program to support engineers in working towards Chartered Status.

It is understood that Accountants and Lawyers pay significantly more to achieve their practice credentials than Engineers do. Ultimately, decisions on fees are the responsibility of Engineers Australia's Council.



2010 - 2011 FORECAST

The Board expects to meet three times in 2010 – 11 in order to resolve critical matters it is considering and is expecting to make great strides towards national registration for professional engineers with the intention of following up with national registration for engineering technologists and engineering associates, once the preferred model is accepted.

The appointment of Engineers Australia as an Assessment Entity under the amended Queensland *Professional Engineers Act (2002)* has continued to raise the profile of the National Professional Engineers Register, providing opportunity to increase registrations on NPER, and expanding the work of the registration team. During the next reporting period Engineers Australia is to apply for the renewal of its appointment as an assessment entity.

The Board anticipates implementation of NPER - Petroleum Engineering during 2010-11 in response to increased economic activity in this sector and the requirement for petroleum engineers to be registered in Queensland.

Auditing of registered engineering practitioners will continue to increase during 2010 – 11. With the introduction of new By-laws during 2011, it is expected that follow up procedures for audits can be streamlined. The expertise developed by the registration audit team is also employed to audit Chartered Members of Engineers Australia with the objective of completing the first round of CPEng audits by the end of 2012.

The Board has committed itself to the following targets in the period to 2015:

1. that any government or regulatory agency establishing a register for engineering practitioners should refer to the National Engineering Registers
2. to persuade all State and Territory governments, as regulators, to support policy positions that adopt broadly based registration systems in which the Board is influential
3. to establish measurable criteria that show registration reduces risks carried by government, consumers and industry, thus demonstrating the benefits of engaging “registered engineering practitioners”
4. improve information on the safeguards stemming from competency-based National Registers
5. to implement five further areas of practice appropriate to NPER, NETR and NEAR
6. to achieve greater than 50% of Chartered members on NPER, NETR and NEAR with appropriate areas of practice
7. to overhaul RPSearch

Author:

Michael Bevan, Registrar

mbevan@engineersaustralia.org.au

February 2011