

# Strategic Planning Forum

## Part 6: Other Submissions



ENGINEERS  
AUSTRALIA

# Summary of Submissions by Individual Members

Eight submissions received between September 2008 and May 2009

Submissions are presented in chronological order of initial receipt. All submissions have been summarised. Every effort has been made to retain their key messages.

## SUBMISSION #1 – September-October 2008

### On Professionalism, the Learned Society, and the Code of Ethics

The Strategic Plan should highlight right at the beginning and also in the summary Engineers Australia's commitment to the Code of Ethics and the professionalism of the core membership ie the members and fellows.

In framing the rest of the strategic plan the leadership of Engineers Australia should take special note to ensure there is no statement or plan included that digresses from Tenets 3 and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

The representation argued that there are many areas of science and technology where no member of Engineers Australia has competence, and made particular reference to "the political issue of climate change". Climate involves many scientific fields (several of which were addressed in the submission), and the member feels aggrieved when Engineers Australia endorses party political policies which are based on very doubtful computer modelling and are not backed by scientific verification. The member noted that bodies such as AusIMM which has members with geological and geophysical knowledge does not make pronouncements on climate change, and have a code of ethics similar to Engineers Australia but adhere to it by not making pronouncements outside their area of competence

Bowing to political correctness and pandering to union involved non-professional associates and technicians will only lead to destroying the reputation of Professional Engineers. Political issues have no place in a learned society or in professionalism.

There is need in the strategic plan for a much, much greater emphasis on the code of ethics, to tie a learned society, professionalism and heritage together. The plans should be completely rewritten to emphasise the following four points

- a) The learned society nature of the Institution
- b) The professional nature of the members and fellows
- c) The code of ethics which underlines the profession
- d) the standing in the community of engineers and past members, and the engineering heritage legacy.

## SUBMISSION #2 – October 2008

### On National Regulation of the Profession

It is of outmost importance that Engineers Australia is recognised nationally as the peak engineering body and regulator. As it is now the States of Victoria and Queensland require separate registrations to their own State government departments. That by itself makes a mockery of what Engineers Australia should stand for.

## SUBMISSION #3 – October 2008

### On Membership and the Engineering Team

The ballot several years ago sent a clear message to the leadership that the majority of the membership want to be exclusively professional. That should be respected.

As a large organisation, Engineers Australia should avoid the risks of trying to be all things to all people. We should acknowledge the vital role of technologists and associates, but they should not automatically be members of the institution. Any organisation for the technologists and associates needs to be driven by them, for them.

There seems to be a lot of time spent wondering how to integrate them into Engineers Australia. Engineers Australia should provide financial and other resources for the creation of a separate organisation for technologists and associates. A new organisation for them would allow sufficient focus for them to gain substantial membership.

### On Planning and Strategic Issues

The Strategic Plan 2005-2010 was very good and provided clear guidance on what Engineers Australia should focus on. It also prompted many of our groups to come up with their own plans and helped them clarify their own objectives.

The organisation is doing a good job, is getting better, and should keep it up!

- Keep lobbying and providing a voice for engineering to government, especially more places for engineering students.
- Technical colleges need to be strengthened and perhaps become more of a focus for Engineers Australia.
- Somehow be a voice to the public, explaining technology, especially when it comes to controversial technology. Be a voice of reason in public debates.
- The marketing review in 2007 should be heavily utilised for interaction with members and services for members.
- Membership guidelines and Chartered status should be simplified. Chartered status needs to be strengthened so it is recognised as valuable. Many older members don't have faith in the brand because they see engineers with it who they feel should not have it.

## SUBMISSION #4 – October 2008

### On the Engineers Australia Submission on the Defence White paper

This representation was supportive of our policy submission on the Defence White Paper. However it stated that for our submission to realise success in the longer term would need a concerted effort to be managed through our 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.

The representation went on to argue for changes in Defence procurement policies, including the need for in-country engineering and industry capability for defence self-reliance.

The member argued that there has never been an engineering review of the causes for many large and complex Defence projects running over time and budget – only management reviews. Engineers Australia should create a complex projects national committee with a multi-disciplinary focus to make its own investigation of the causes of the adverse outcomes and the implications for education of engineers and managers.

This could be a new national committee to be sponsored by CELM.

## SUBMISSION #5 – October 2008

### On Climate Change and Engineering Education for Sustainable Development

This contribution provided a copy of a substantial submission to the Garnaut Review, and a paper presented as a keynote address to an Engineering Education for Sustainable Development (EESD) conference in September 2008.

The submission to the Garnaut Climate Change Review presented evidence and explanation around the major issues arising from a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Australia – with an economy-scale focus. The member’s contribution argued that this context is critical for Engineers Australia to make significant decisions about the future of the Institution in assisting members address emerging 21st Century challenges.

The member’s submission notes the lacklustre progress towards engineering education for sustainable development. It refers to the EESD paper as a framework for engineering departments to engage in rapid curriculum renewal towards EESD – covering the impacts for educating engineers on the changing nature of the role of the profession in ensuring humanity’s well-being and development. The EESD paper addresses, among other things:

- A rationale for rapid curriculum renewal
- The time lag dilemma in curriculum renewal
- Identifying and mapping graduate attributes
- An audit tool for transition to EESD

The paper includes reference to the Carrick Institute report developed by Robin King, which the authors drew upon in formulating recommendations for EESD.

## SUBMISSION #6 – November 2008

### On Global Mobility and the Standing of Chartered Status

This member’s submission was from an early career engineer with Chartered status (both in Australia and the UK), currently working in the UK.

However, the member (was) moving to Canada in 6 months and made the point that it (appears) the only country where being a Professional Engineer in good standing with Engineers Canada seems to be both required and valued. Also, in Canada it appears as though engineers are held in higher regard than Australia or indeed, the UK. Canada seems to have achieved a level of recognition in society that values and requires engineers and it is disappointing that we as an Institute have not achieved that standing yet.

The submission acknowledged both the international agreements that Engineers Australia has achieved (including with Engineers Canada), and the rigorous basis for achieving Chartered status with Engineers Australia. Nevertheless, under the agreement the member would still be an ‘Engineer in Training’ while working under a Canadian PEng for one year who would then recommend my admission pending my results in two exams relating to engineering responsibilities and engineering ethics.

The role of Chartered Status should be required to sign off drawings or documents. If it was required, it would hold value. Many younger engineers have trouble understanding how the cost of acquiring Chartered status is recovered.

The submission provided information on what constitutes a “qualified person” under national Canadian rules governing how Canadian-listed resource companies disclose scientific and technical information about their mineral projects to the investing public.

## SUBMISSION #7 – November 2008

### On Engineers Australia and Climate Change

We should plan to consider all information and available data prior to promoting Engineers Australia views on the impact of human activity on climate change.

We should form our own opinions based on facts which are well-substantiated. We should not accept the conclusions of others (eg the IPCC report).

We should view with suspicion the opinions of any person/group who has a vested interest in promoting action by organisations (eg governments and media) which would increase their wealth and/or ego.

I note that I have seen very little published by Engineers Australia (except the paper by Lance Endersby) which works with basic substantiated data unskewed by vested interests.

## SUBMISSION #8 – March-May 2009

### On Service to the Community

These representations argued that it is a critical issue to ensure incorporation in the Strategic Plan of the sentiments strongly expressed both at the Sydney Division forum, and through CELM, that Engineers Australia needs to put upfront the message that our primary focus is to serve the community.

Our Supplemental Royal Charter and Bye-Laws place obligations on us to advance the science and practice of engineering, and to advance the interest of our members and the profession. However this must be considered in the context that a pre-requisite for Royal Charter is that it should be in the public interest.

Our Code of Ethics gets it right, with the Cardinal Principles of the Code of Ethics being

- To respect the inherent dignity of the individual
- To act on the basis of a well informed conscience, and
- To act in the interest of the community

The first Tenet of the Code of Ethics

1. Members shall place their responsibility for the welfare, health and safety of the community before their responsibility to sectional or private interests, or to other members;

It is this up front focus on service rather than the selfish which is absent from the recent publication “Engineers Australia, my organisation”, the website preamble for the Strategic Plan, and the foreground of the resulting documentation.

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## Issues Identified by Overseas Chapters

With the number of overseas members in slow decline, our International Committee and the Council have considered issues affecting overseas members on several recent occasions.

The following is a consolidation of suggestions received from our Chapters in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Malaysia

### Better access to technical sessions and information

- Promote more widely the opportunity for members to give technical sessions when visiting locations where overseas groups could host them
- Include overseas groups as potential audiences for our eminent speaker programs
- Engineers Australia to consider improved availability online of specific programs (eg. safety, environment, quality management) and other 'short courses' to benefit overseas members

### Better communication for our overseas groups

- Use our magazine to profile the overseas groups with articles and other information
- Continue the well-received visits and briefings by the National President and Chief Executive
- Provide more information from National Office on current issues such as the status of mutual recognition and other forms of agreement, membership-related statistics for each group, etc
- Support the Congress delegate when visiting overseas groups with timely feedback on national activities, and current issues for each group
- Overseas groups to engage with each other more regularly on issues of mutual interest

### Stronger ties across universities

- Encourage triangular programs with Australian universities and local universities on specialised programs such as nano-technology, water/waste treatment
- Work with our overseas groups to identify and follow-up potential new members among students at Australian universities (and also graduates)

### Access to information on employment opportunities in Australia

- Engineers Australia to provide information on employment opportunities to overseas members considering relocating back to Australia  
NOTE: Providing information on employment opportunities is not strictly within Engineers Australia's charter. Perhaps information on skills assessment and recognition of qualifications was intended.

### Membership subscriptions

- Our International Committee and the Council of Engineers Australia have reviewed closely the suggestion made from time to time – and again now – that overseas members be granted a discount on annual membership subscriptions. The current approach to setting membership subscriptions will continue, with the agreed increase in subventions for inflation catch-up intended to improve in-country service to members.