

A look back on another year for engineering in Western Australia

As the year comes to a close, Engineers Australia would like to thank its members for their continued support. We look back at the achievements of the members and committee groups in 2021 and their contributions to the engineering profession and the broader community across Western Australia.

Western Australia President Brian Haggerty says it has been a year of change for Engineers Australia and the broader community.

“With online content having become the major source of information and discussion for members in 2020, this year we started to appreciate the value of face-to-face engagement. Through adapting to this new hybrid offering, we wish to acknowledge the outstanding efforts and passion of our volunteers and employees who have strived to deliver a positive experience for members and the community we serve,” Mr. Haggerty says.

A sustainable future with a particular emphasis on the need for climate change action was a critical topic that volunteers and members contributed to in 2021, including informing Engineers Australia’s response to the Infrastructure WA Draft Infrastructure Strategy.

There has also been ongoing consultation and activity to better support student engineers to gain practical work experience and focus on making the profession more inclusive.

Our members have been integral to the progress we’ve made at Engineers Australia this year, and we want to thank you for being a part of Engineers Australia. We thank you for stepping up and speaking out on issues for the benefit of the community and profession.

Western Australia has made significant strides forward this year because of our dedication to the profession.

Climate

Climate change is a passion for many engineers who are seeking ways to address the crisis and WA Division Committee raised this as a priority for 2021.

The Division Committee supported a paper prepared by David Rice and James Westcott at the Climate Smart Conference that outlined the opportunity for engineers to lead and take action to tackle climate change.

The initial guideline developed by our Student Practicum working group, led by WA Division Committee member Doug Bruce, was updated to a version that includes tertiary sector contacts across Australia. In addition, the WA group worked collaboratively to develop a survey of students, graduates, and employers to understand students’ access to quality work placements, their experience of the placement and gaps that need to be addressed. Analysis of the results from this research will be available in early 2022.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion remained a priority and specific focus throughout 2021. Informed by a survey, Engineers Australia made submitted to the WA Parliamentary Inquiry into sexual harassment against women in the FIFO mining industry.

Led by Amanda Pearce, member of WA Division Committee, the focus group created and hosted a very successful three hub event - with live audiences in Perth, Karratha and Bunbury and online - to celebrate International Women

in Engineering Day. Events such as this assist engage our members in the regions and several activities have stemmed from this increased engagement.

Safety

The WA Division Committee established a cyclone safety taskforce in response to the impacts of Cyclone Seroja in the mid-West WA in April. The group started with a review of the current state of play. Then through a series of stakeholder roundtables, it determined several gaps relating to design, construction, inspection and maintenance of buildings as well as general consumer education in areas potentially affected by cyclones.

Members of the group have worked to effect changes to relevant standards and shared their learnings through a series of events looking at the wind design codes. Engineers Australia, on the advice of relevant College groups, has now provided initial advice on the regulations governing inspections.

A voice in government

Through our representation on several WA government, industry and university advisory committees, Engineers Australia has contributed to the WA State STEM strategy industry engagement, WA LNG taskforce, WA defence industry workforce development and been invited to other discussions on the future of work and workforce needs.

Mentoring

Engineers Australia has continued to support the Kaleidoscope Mentoring Program for skilled migrant professionals through providing mentors and hosting work-readiness workshops at our premises.

Our engagement with high school students supported the Design Engineer Construct program piloted earlier this year at Cecil Andrews College. This was the first school in Australia to run the UK based program. We have also provided administrative support for the 'It Takes A Spark Conference', held on 7 December.

Members can look forward to further updates in regards to the planned move to new facilities in 2022.

The WA Division Committee is working to build impact through the External Voice Project and greater regional engagement. An industry briefing update on the draft Infrastructure WA plan is proposed to be hosted towards the end of February. Also in the new year, the College of Leadership and Management is looking to host discussions relating the registration of engineers and the new Work, Health and Safety legislation.

Engineers Australia's holiday shutdown period will run from Monday 27 December 2021 to Friday 7 January 2022. During this time our office will be closed, and there will not be any events held.

Western Australia President Brian Haggerty says he is pleased to welcome the incoming WA President Jodey Brookhurst and looks forward to working with her and the 2022 WA Division Committee as it continues to build on Engineers Australia's successes.

"I am excited by the capability and enthusiasm of this great group of individuals," he says.

"We wish you all the best over the holiday period and into the new year."