

MEDIA RELEASE

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Registration offers greater public protection: BPEQ

The Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (BPEQ) has welcomed New South Wales Government reforms to the building industry, including the introduction of registration for engineers working in the sector.

The reforms were announced in response to a report into building industry regulation prepared by Chancellor of Western Sydney University Peter Shergold and lawyer Bronwyn Weir which identified the absence of registration as a major problem.

Queensland is currently the only Australian State or Territory with mandatory and comprehensive registration requirements for engineers working across all sectors.

BPEQ Chairperson Dawson Wilkie said the registration of engineers was an important public safeguard and other States and Territories could learn a lot from Queensland's system.

"The services provided by engineers, particularly in the building industry, affect public health and safety, therefore engineers should be held to a certain standard," said Mr Wilkie.

"Registration imposed by law and administered by an independent regulator is the most effective way of setting an appropriate standard of professional conduct, holding engineers accountable and safeguarding the public.

"Under the Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) system only people who are assessed by BPEQ as qualified and competent are registered as RPEQs and legally entitled to carry out professional engineering services.

"The conduct of any person who provides a professional engineering service in or for Queensland can be referred to BPEQ for investigation and disciplinary action if something goes wrong.

"BPEQ can also launch an investigation into engineering defects or faults on its own motion."

Mr Wilkie said the recent events at Sydney's Opal Tower and the Neo200 building in Melbourne strengthened the case for registration for engineers in all Australian States and Territories.

"The RPEQ system does not guarantee that mistakes will not occur but unlike elsewhere in Australia, Queensland is uniquely positioned to effectively respond to serious defects in high-rise buildings.

"However, registration should apply to all engineers, not just those working in the building industry; the services provided by engineers working on a mine site can have just as much of an effect on public health and safety.

“BPEQ stands ready to work with government departments and regulators in other States and Territories to improve regulatory oversight of engineers,” said Mr Wilkie.

Queensland’s RPEQ system was created in 1929. BPEQ registers more than 14,000 RPEQs across 26 engineering disciplines, including civil, electrical, fire safety, mechanical, mining and structural engineering.

To obtain registration, engineers must first graduate with an accredited engineering degree, then develop competency through work experience and be assessed. RPEQs must renew their registration annually and complete continuing professional development.

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