



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**BY THE**

**CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS COUNCIL**

**ON THE**

**PERFORMANCE OF THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2017**



**Chartered Professional Engineers Council**  
**Kāhui Kaiwetepanga Ngaio Whaimana**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by the Chartered Professional Engineers Council (Council) on the performance of the Registration Authority (RA) for the period 1 January to 31 December 2017, pursuant to Section 53 of the Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act 2002 ('the Act'). The RA is the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ), trading as Engineering NZ (ENZ).

## 2 REGISTRATION AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL REPORT

The RA has provided the Council with its annual report for the period: 1 January to 31 December 2017. The report provides information on activities performed by the RA and records the work undertaken by the RA in fulfilling its obligations under the Act.

The RA is required to complete the following duties as prescribed in the Act:

- a) Maintain rules containing the minimum CPEng standards;
- b) Assess the competence of applicants against the CPEng standards;
- c) Keep and maintain a register of chartered professional engineers;
- d) Receive, investigate and rule on any complaint against a chartered professional engineer.

Following a strategic overview, commentary and information is provided by the RA on the following topics:

- **Assessment Process:** The competence assessment process for admissions to the CPEng register, and for continuing registrations.
- **Register Trends:** Data on the number of assessments undertaken for admission to, and continued registration on, the CPEng register.
- **Other CPEng-Based or Related Quality Marks:** Commentary on Design Verifier and Category A Recognised Engineer registers.
- **Complaints/disciplinary activity:** Commentary on the complaints process and improvement initiatives.
- **Complaints statistics and trends:** Data on complaints received by the RA relating to the actions of chartered professional engineers and challenges to the competence assessment process.

The RA's report covers the necessary quantitative information required by the Council for the reporting period. Two complaints case studies have been included. The Council found these to be an informative addition to the report.

A copy of the RA's annual performance report is submitted to the Minister with this report from the Council.

## 3 REBRANDING OF IPENZ

Under the Act, the Registration Authority means the Institution of Professional Engineers of New Zealand Incorporated (IPENZ). On 1 October 2017 IPENZ introduced a new brand, Engineering New Zealand (ENZ) and new logo. As IPENZ remains the legal identity no change to the Act was required.

In addition to the rebranding, ENZ implemented a new membership pathway that sits alongside the CPEng register. Whilst ENZ membership is outside of the Council's remit, in its last report the Council expressed concern over possible confusion that could arise between the status of a "Chartered Member" of ENZ and a

"Chartered Professional Engineer" under the Act. In the communication of the changes to its members, ENZ placed considerable emphasis on outlining how the membership and professional pathways related to each other.

ENZ notes in their report the concerns expressed by the Council. They are continuing to communicate with members, chartered professional engineers, territorial authorities, MBIE and the wider engineering community on the changes.

The changes made by ENZ are consistent with the wider proposed changes to the professional licencing regime initiated by the Ministry. The Council understands that the licencing changes are still at least 24 months away. Therefore, any potential confusion will exist for this period.

## **4 THE COUNCIL'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE**

The Council considers that the RA is performing well in the following areas:

- Financial surplus achieved for RA activities for the year.
- The processing time for initial (AFA) and ongoing assessments (CRA) has continued to improve. Both are now below their target period of 84 days at 81 and 68 days respectively. This has been enabled by the introduction of streamlined assessment application system.
- The total number of chartered professional engineers has increased steadily in recent years. The total number of registrants has increased 18% over the past 5 years with a 3% increase in the last 12 months. The increase in the previous 12-month period was 2%.
- The competency assessment and re-accreditation process for chartered professional engineers continues to be robust. The Council has in 2017 received 1 appeal from an engineer who has been declined re-assessment. This appeal is still in progress.
- Ongoing effort is being made by the RA to streamline the complaints process. This has included the finalisation of a handbook for Investigating Committee and Disciplinary Committee Chairs.
- Continued work is underway to develop formalised Bodies of Knowledge and Skills (BOKS). In response to the Canterbury Earthquake Royal Commission the initial focus for the BOKS is specialist geotechnical and structural work. The Council has commented to both ENZ and the Ministry that initiatives such as this need to be applied across the wider engineering spectrum. The need for this is highlighted by the issues with the water supply engineering in Havelock North in mid 2016.

In previous reports the Council proposed to conduct a survey of a sample of CPEng candidates and registrants to ascertain their views on the registration system and what is working or not working well for them. It was decided that some Council focussed questions would be added to a survey of all registrants proposed by the RA. Progress on this has been slow. The questions have now been agreed. Metrics from these surveys should be available for the next report by the RA

As part of its review and appeal functions under Section 45 of the Act, the Council continues to:

- Invite the RA to each Council meeting to present reports on assessments and complaints.
- Monitor the time taken for the hearing of complaints.
- Consider the outcomes of appeals and maintain discussions with the RA on whether the Act and Rules, as currently worded, are efficient and appropriate.

## 5 REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

The following are specific matters that the RA is required to report on under section 52 of the Act.

- (a) the number of chartered professional engineers at the end of the 12-month period **(3610)**; and
- (b) the number of persons whom the RA registered for the first time **(205)** and the number of persons whom the RA declined to register **(43)** during the 12-month period; and
- (c) the number of persons whose registration was removed **(107)**, suspended **(62)**, or placed in abeyance **(31)** during the 12-month period; and
- (d) the number of persons against whom the RA made a disciplinary order **(1)** during the 12-month period; and
- (e) the amount of the charge or charges payable in relation to registration or the issue of a registration certificate **(no change)** during the 12-month period; and
- (f) any other information that the Council reasonably requires **(see below)**.

The Council continues to express its concern over the gender imbalance within the engineering profession. At the end of the reporting year only 8.9% of CPEng registrants were female (c.f. 9% for 2016). The Council notes that both ENZ and the tertiary training institutions are investing considerable effort in promoting engineering and other science subjects through the school system.

No changes to the Rules were made during 2017.

## 6 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The RA reports that the total number of assessments completed in 2017 (624) was slightly down on that experienced 2015 (701) and 2016 (704). A slight increase to just over 740 is predicted for the 2018 year. There is an expectation by the RA that many CPEng will chose to remain as Chartered Members and not seek continued CPEng registration. This could reduce the number of CPEngs on the register. The Council will review this in future reports.

The RA has increased its pool of Practice Area Assessors to 374 (295 in 2016). This increase and the improved assessment processing system has resulted in a continued reduction in the average numbers of days required to process an application for initial or continued registration.

Given the low number of appeals against the decisions of the Competence Assessment Board (CAB), the Council has confidence that the RA is maintaining a credible and robust competency assessment system that fulfils its obligations under the Act.

## 7 REGISTER TRENDS

The RA has provided quantitative information with respect to the trending number of CPEng, age distribution, gender breakdown, fields of engineering practice and geographical distribution of registrants. As requested by the Council qualitative commentary is also provided. The Council is pleased to note the efforts being made by ENZ to promote diversity within the profession. However, as noted above, this is yet to be reflected in the number of female CPEng registrants.

## **8 OTHER CPEng-BASED OR RELATED QUALITY MARKS**

The RA continues to manage the registers of Design Verifiers (pressure equipment, cranes and passenger ropeways). There was an increase of two individuals on this register (now 24).

ENZ continues to maintain close relationships with other similar professional bodies throughout the international engineering community. Active liaison is maintained with Engineers Australia.

## **9 COMPLAINTS/DISCIPLINARY ACTIVITY**

The RA has continued to educate the CPEng community on the management of complaints. A toolkit has been prepared to help engineers recognise and deal with someone who is dissatisfied.

Based on appeals received, the Council has been concerned in the past over the lack of consistency of approach at the various stages of the complaints process. A guidance handbook for Investigating and Disciplinary Committee Chairs has now been issued. The RA provided a copy of the handbook to the Council for information and future reference.

Most importantly the RA is now coding all complaints with a view to tracking trends, themes and to ensure that appropriate lessons are learned and communicated to the wider profession.

## **10 COMPLAINTS STATISTICS AND TRENDS**

As noted above the RA is now coding all complaints. In future reports the Council will report on trends that emerge. Of the 40 “concerns” received during the year over 50% (19) were solved via an early resolution process. Three were progressed through to an Investigating Committee and only one was upheld by a Disciplinary Committee.

Two decisions of the RA were appealed to the Council. Both appeals were declined.

The initial categorisation of complaints (excluding those relating to decisions of the CAB) indicates that design competence (38%) and ethics (25%) are the primary factors and structural engineering (72%) the main field of practice. These findings are consistent with complaints that the Council sees on appeal. The Council will continue to review future trends with the RA.

## **11 SUMMARY**

The Council considers that the RA is continuing to perform well with a culture of continued improvement evidenced in the areas that the Council observes. It is very pleasing to see the continued reduction in assessment times for both initial and continuing assessments.

As the RA commences the survey of all engineers going through registration, the Council looks forward to receiving more qualitative feedback on how the registration process is viewed by the users.

The rebranding to Engineering New Zealand has given the RA the opportunity to connect more closely with the wider engineering profession. The Council will observe and review the impact of the new Chartered Member status on the Chartered Professional Engineers register. The Council will continue to communicate with the RA to ensure that confusion between the “brands” is minimised.

The relationship between the RA and the Council is seen as strong and positive. Whilst it is the Council’s role to provide oversight of the RA’s operations it makes this role considerably easier and more effective with the lines of communication between the two parties open.

Dated: 1 June 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Williams', written in a cursive style.

**Chairperson: Jon Williams**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Ross Tanner (Deputy Chair)  
Sandra Hardie  
Chris Harrison  
Rebecca Knott  
Sue Simons  
Alan Winwood

# CPEC

Chartered Professional Engineers Council  
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