



INTRODUCING BPEQ'S NEW REGISTRAR

As I commence my new role as Registrar of the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (BPEQ) I am quickly coming to understand the requirements of the role.

My previous experience with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), Licensing and Advisory Services at Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and Legal Aid Queensland has assisted my steep learning curve and understanding of the environment in which BPEQ operates and I am looking forward to the challenges this role presents.

Like engineers, teachers seeking employment in Queensland are required to be registered. The QCT is tasked with the administration of a registration system, upholding professional standards, safeguarding the public, managing complaints, undertaking investigations and conducting disciplinary action. In my previous roles at the QCT, as Principal Legal Officer and Executive Manager, Discipline and Appeals, I was required to assess applications for registration to determine whether an applicant was 'suitable to teach'. I was also required to conduct and manage all disciplinary action on behalf of the QCT.

Before joining the QCT I started my career at Legal Aid Queensland. I worked in a variety of teams including as an administrative officer at the Woodridge Regional office and within the Victims of Crime Compensation Unit. Following my admission as a solicitor I undertook a variety of roles as a legal officer, working within the Youth Justice team, Supreme Court bail team, Duty Lawyer/Committals team in Brisbane and at a number of regional offices including Ipswich and Cairns. Undertaking roles as a duty lawyer and



legal aid lawyer, I have represented clients of all ages charged with a variety of criminal offences, from shoplifting through to murder, and was also involved in specialist courts such as the Drug Court.

In 2013/14 I took up an opportunity as Manager, Licensing and Advisory Services within WHSQ. My role included managing the provision of high risk work licences such as cranes and hoists, rigger and dogger, scaffolding, demolition and forklift truck licences. In addition to the licensing process, my team also provided a call centre service providing advice to Queenslanders about a variety of workplace health and safety issues including asbestos removal, health



and wellbeing at work, managing risks and workplace hazards to name a few.

In my new role as Registrar of BPEQ I look forward to working closely with all stakeholders in ensuring Queensland continues to be a leader in upholding the standards and promoting the high quality of services registered professional engineers provide throughout Queensland.

At the same time as I was appointed, Mick de Brenni was promoted as Minister for Housing and Public Works. BPEQ extends a warm welcome to the Minister, who wasted no time in arranging meetings with stakeholders, including myself and the Chairman Dawson Wilkie.

The election of an RPEQ representative to the Board will be a priority for BPEQ in early 2016. Nominations

for election are now open and all current RPEQs are eligible to nominate and vote. As Registrar, I encourage as many RPEQs as possible to be involved and have their say in this process, but in particular I urge female RPEQs to put their hands up for election.

Before the election, and what promises to be an eventful 2016, we here at BPEQ are looking forward to a brief break. BPEQ offices will be closed from 25 December, 2015 until 4 January, 2016. Emails will be monitored for any urgent matters.

On behalf of the Board and staff of the BPEQ may I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Kylie Mercer
Registrar

THE PRIME MINISTER'S INNOVATION STATEMENT AT A GLANCE



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's statements around science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), innovation and discovery has hit the right notes since his elevation to the top job in September.

That rhetoric has been backed up with action with the release of the federal government's innovation statement to drive an Australian ideas boom.

The innovation statement commits \$1 billion toward STEM, education and universities and innovation while also reforming sections of the taxation system and bankruptcy laws to support innovation and growth.

Highlights for the engineering sector include:

- Five year \$48 million program to inspire Australians to get involved in STEM subjects;
- Five year \$51 million to equip young Australians with the skills and knowledge they will need in the digital age;



- \$13 million to encourage more women into STEM subjects;
- Establishment of Innovation and Science Australia, an independent advisory body with a direct reporting relationship with the PM.

Innovation, according to the Prime Minister, will be a central consideration of all the government's major policies going forward.

In addition the above proposal, the innovation statement also:

- Guarantees funding for critical research infrastructure (more than \$2 billion over 10 years);
- Establishes a \$127 million grant fund to incentivise and help foster commercial links between universities with business;

- Boosts funding to the CSIRO by \$200 million, and contributes \$75 million CSIRO's data research branch, Data 61;
- Reforms the 457 visa system to lure international tech talent to Australia;
- Introduces 10 year capital gains tax exemptions for venture capitalists and other investors.

BPEQ applauds the federal government for recognising the strategic and economic importance of STEM and innovation for Australia's future growth. There is however no room for complacency and government at all levels must act to stimulate growth and investment in the engineering sector.

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