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Hon David Seymour
Minister for Regulation
Parliament Buildings
Wellington, 6160
D.Seymour@ministers.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister

Improving the standards system can help improve productivity

The New Zealand standards system is broken. This system is important as it sets, maintains and adapts nationally consistent standards for everything from the houses we live in down to your toothbrush. These standards can significantly improve productivity and stimulate the economy. The issues with the standards system include outdated or inaccessible standards, cost pressures on smaller firms, increasing demands on volunteers, and the systematic misalignment between legislation and current standards. The accompanying letter copied to you with over thirty industry signatories shows the depth of concern.

Engineering New Zealand is New Zealand's largest professional body for engineers, with more than 23,000 members dedicated to engineering better lives for the people of New Zealand. Engineering New Zealand also regulates the engineering profession, as the Registration Authority for Chartered Professional Engineers (Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act 2002).

Driving change in the standards system is a high priority for us and our members. We have developed a high-level position statement that further outlines the challenges, opportunities and proposes solutions to remedy the broken standards system. This is attached to this letter for your information.

As Minister for Regulation, we thought you would be interested in the challenges that the standards system is causing across many industries. One of the challenges you may be particularly interested in is the increasing number of outdated legislative references, creating an environment where practitioners must choose between following the legal reference or using best practice provided in the current standard. We know that you will understand many of the challenges the sector faces due to your engineering experience.

It is acknowledged that the Government is doing work to explore a more sustainable, fit for purpose funding model for New Zealand's standardisation system. However, this does not have the urgency or scope that is required. The economic model that underpins the system is fundamentally flawed and needs urgent redress.

We wish to meet with you soon to discuss our ideas to enhance this system and how you may be able to support the sector. Anything you can do to help support vital changes to the standards system would be greatly appreciated. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with you to deliver improvements that would benefit all New Zealanders.

Nāku, nā



Dr Richard Templer
Chief Executive