

5 May 2025

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Kia ora Chris Hipkins

## **Request to meet and discuss key issues in the infrastructure sector**

Engineering New Zealand would like the opportunity to meet with you to discuss challenges facing engineers in two main areas: building system reform and the lack of short-term infrastructure work. We welcome your recent efforts to highlight the challenges facing the sector, particularly around the short-term infrastructure pipeline. We would like the opportunity to support your work and provide you with further detail about the experience of engineers.

The building system is critical to the delivery of infrastructure that New Zealand needs most. We are concerned that the building system can fail to deliver compliant buildings, risking public safety. Inefficiencies within the building system are also slowing down the ability to plan and deliver critical infrastructure and housing.

As you know, the slowdown in the provision of critical infrastructure work, particularly public infrastructure, has resulted in significant job losses across the infrastructure sector. Without engineers the Government will not be able to meet its ambitious infrastructure goals.

We have also reached out to your colleagues Hon Barbara Edmonds, Hon Kieran McAnulty, Arena Williams, and Tangi Utikere, as these challenges also relate to their portfolios.

### **Background on Engineering New Zealand**

Engineering New Zealand is both a membership body and the Registration Authority for Chartered Professional Engineers. We have over 23,000 members and regulate 4,300 Chartered Professional Engineers. As the Registration Authority we have responsibilities under the Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act (2002) to make rules relating to Chartered Professional Engineers (CPEng), register engineers and assess engineers for continued registration and to hear complaints and inquire into the conduct and discipline of registrants.

### **We need to preserve the skilled workforce now to deliver critical infrastructure in the future**

While the Government has committed record levels of investment in infrastructure, this has not translated to work on the ground. Engineers across Aotearoa are struggling – with far too many losing their jobs and leaving for opportunities overseas where demand is immediate. More than 500 redundancies have been reported across 60

engineering firms<sup>1</sup>, and New Zealand has lost 11,141 construction sector jobs<sup>2</sup>. We are worried that we will see another brain drain like what was experienced in the early 2000's. It took years to rebuild the specialist engineering skills that were lost.

The risk to New Zealand's development and growth is significant. The engineering profession is critical to the delivery of our essential infrastructure and to our wider economic development. Without engineers New Zealand will not be able to meet its ambitious infrastructure goals or resolve the infrastructure deficit. Funds need to hit the market immediately while preparations continue to deliver on the bigger multi-year projects.

We have met with Minister Bishop to advocate for immediate change and proposed a range of actions. He has committed to some actions to address this. Our [article](#) summarises the conversation and correspondence.

### **Building system reform needs a systemic, structured approach**

Engineering New Zealand has been strong advocates for change in the building system for many years. As the regulator of CPEnz, we have a unique perspective of the system and the challenges engineers face. We are concerned that there are documented cases of non-compliant buildings receiving consents, highlighting failures in the building system that need to be addressed.<sup>3</sup> While we have been working to affect change with the levers available to us, some of the challenges facing the sector can only be resolved with Government leadership.

A building system that consistently delivers safe, compliant buildings as efficiently as possible is a key priority for Engineering New Zealand. To help aid the conversation we have developed a high-level position statement on the building system that highlights key challenges facing the sector and possible solutions. We can share it with you when we meet.

### **Conclusion**

Engineering New Zealand would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you in greater detail as it is important that both sides of the house understand the challenges facing the sector.

Nāku, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R S Templer".

**Dr Richard Templer**

Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup> [How's Business Survey November 2024.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Employment indicators: September 2024 | Stats NZ](#)

<sup>3</sup> Our Quality Issues report covers the case studies of the Southland Stadium, residential properties in Tauranga, 230 High Street, and Masterton buildings (refer pages 15-18).