

4 July 2025

Hon Scott Simpson
Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Wellington, 6160

By email: S.Simpson@ministers.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Minister Simpson

Thank you for meeting with Engineering New Zealand

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us on 4 June. This letter follows up on some of the points we discussed on the standards system and discusses the recently announced standards price increase.

It was encouraging to hear your interest in ensuring that the standards system is fit for purpose, including exploring funding options and reviewing the volunteer model. We valued the discussion on how standards development could be better supported, and how the use of international standards and existing industry levies might contribute to more sustainable outcomes.

We appreciated the opportunity to highlight issues such as the outdated or inaccessible nature of many standards, the cost pressures on smaller firms, the increasing demands on volunteers, and the systematic misalignment between legislation and current standards. We were also glad to share ideas around enhancing access, reviewing the development model, and increasing strategic planning and resourcing for Standards New Zealand.

We were pleased to provide you with a copy of our [position statement](#), which sets out our views on opportunities to enhance the standards' model.

However, we are concerned to have recently heard that from 1 August 2025, Standards New Zealand is further exacerbating the cost concerns we discussed by increasing the price of all standards by 12.5%. This is a clear sign that the current user-pays funding model is not working, and we are concerned it will further restrict engineers' and industry's ability to access the standards they need.

The price rise also raises wider questions about the funding model. Standards NZ justifies price increases on the grounds of cost recovery, yet simultaneously advises users to reduce their subscriptions to save money. If engineers follow this advice, Standards NZ will lose revenue from those unsubscribed documents — undermining the very rationale for raising prices. In effect, the model punishes broad user access while eroding its own sustainability.

The price rise has spurred our members to point out that the way engineers and many users use standards needs to be better considered in the funding model. For instance, usage statistics may be misleading. Many engineers work from legally downloaded PDFs which is not recorded in online access and may not show up the analytics being used. Further, charging based on expected or historic usage does always portray future needs. Engineers can work on unique or one-off projects where the relevant standard is not known in advance. Access to a broad catalogue is necessary to explore and identify what applies in each case.

This price increase highlights the importance of finding a more sustainable approach to funding and managing our standards system. We also feel an explanation is urgently needed to industry explaining the basis for a 12.5% increase and signalling that the government is reviewing the model.

We welcome the work you and officials are doing to reconsider the standards funding and development model and look forward to further engagement with your officials, as discussed at our meeting, to inform their advice to you in July/August. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide further input.

Thanks again for your time and the constructive discussion. We look forward to staying in touch.

Nāku, nā

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

Dr Richard Templer

Chief Executive