

02 July 2025

Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Universities
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6011

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

Tēnā koe Minister Reti

Thank you for meeting with Engineering New Zealand

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us on 20 May 2025. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss how Engineering New Zealand can support your priorities across science, innovation, and universities.

Your comments on the Performance-Based Research Fund were welcomed, as we can see the impact it is having on engineering faculties. We valued your openness to feedback on how current settings can disadvantage applied disciplines like engineering and make collaboration with industry more difficult. We noted concerns that the current model does not always recognise the way engineering research delivers value, particularly through partnerships with industry rather than traditional academic outputs such as citations. We support changes that better reflect the nature of applied research and encourage stronger connections between universities and the private sector.

We were also pleased to hear your focus on strengthening university-industry collaboration and your recognition of engineering's role in delivering real-world impact. We are keen to support this work and look forward to seeing how the University Advisory Group's recommendations will help shape the path ahead. We understand that reports from phases 1 and 2 are still to be released and would welcome any further clarity on the next steps.

We also appreciated your comments on the wider science and innovation system. It was encouraging to hear your commitment to bringing greater certainty and stability to the system. We support a longer-term funding horizon with a clear national direction, better alignment across government, and reduced fragmentation.

It was interesting to hear your plans to bring forward an AI strategy and your view that industry should take more of a lead with AI. Engineering New Zealand is committed to helping our members adopt AI responsibly, and we will continue to share what we're seeing on the ground.

Finally, we want to thank you for your comments on the long-term engineering skills shortage. It was good to hear that the Government is committed to stronger signals and strategies to support STEM. We are working closely with infrastructure Ministers to help stem the workforce losses due to the current slowness of infrastructure work to market. We would welcome the opportunity to keep working with you on ways to grow and sustain the skills pipeline. We also welcome the recent announcements and initiatives to boost support for maths and science teachers – an important step toward improving pathways into engineering.

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

Nāku, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "R. Templer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and the last name "Templer" clearly distinguishable.

Dr Richard Templer
Chief Executive