

Senate Enquiry Submission

January 2012

Last year I finished a very challenging engineering degree at the University of Technology, Sydney after studying part-time and working various odd jobs over 12 years. This was a very testing episode of my life, both mentally and financially, though I persevered with the promise of a secure and well paid job in our Australian engineering industry.

To my dismay I have found it very difficult to find actual engineering graduate employment due to the overwhelming competition which exists not just in Sydney, but Australia wide.

My concern is, throughout my work experience as an undergraduate in the Australian engineering sector, there subsisted a lot of practising "*engineers*" who were by no means tertiary qualified nor held any sort of professional engineering academic qualifications.

As an undergraduate student I was employed by RailCorp in Sydney, under the Epping to Chatswood Rail Line Project Division 2007-2009.

Much to my dismay, I found **most** staff working under engineering titles, granted by this organisation, were not actually tertiary qualified (as a matter of fact, on many occasions were *tradespeople* without professional training) who were granted functional professional titles such as *Project Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Maintenance Engineers* and being responsible for work tasking outside their level of expertise.

I'd like to know how our state government is allowed to proceed in this manner without federal intervention.

I have also learned that the Australian Government, through the Department of Immigration and DEEWR, is granting fast-tracked 457 visas to overseas qualified engineers (who's qualifications frameworks are not always controlled nor monitored by the Commonwealth) to enter Australia under the pretext of "skill shortage". In reality, most of my hard-fought graduate engineering colleagues were also in search of engineering employment at the end of 2011, and are now having to develop their careers in **other** professions due to the lack of real engineering graduate work. In my view this is an outrage!

I have addressed this with the Dept of immigration and received an inadequate reply citing "skill shortage" as the main reason from a theoretical economic-balance perspective - when I had living proof in everyday struggles by seeking professional engineering work without success. Incidentally, a great proportion of my graduate friends were also seeking employment in other fields (due to engineering employment shortage) so as to pay off the great amounts of debt incurred in student loans. Personally, I am now employed as an IT officer in the finance sector.

Unlike many other professions, I feel that the body of Professional Engineers authority is lacking assertion amongst the broader Australian community. To my knowledge, in no other major profession can an individual **legally** practice a profession they hold no qualifications in without facing

serious legal ramifications.

I have previously sought an explanation from Engineers Australia in their justification of the above, alas without an adequate reply.

Regards,