

Submission to the Senate Committee.

The Shortage of Engineering and Related Employment Skills

To the Honourable Members of the Committee,

I have worked in the engineering field for over forty five years and am passionate about ensuring vital infrastructure is constructed for longevity. Lower quality will mean shorter life and increased disruption and cost to the community in the medium term.

This country is currently suffering badly from the shortage of engineers. Now, due to this shortage, and the consequent supply and demand forces, we have engineers with little or no depth of experience being promoted beyond their level of competence and without adequate supervision. This results in a poor quality work. In the field I work in (Utility services construction) the faults are covered up (buried) and will not show up for several years.

Senators should not be fooled into thinking that the shortage is not having any impact on infrastructure projects. The project could well be completed on time, as contractors will use whatever staff he can get, experienced or not experienced, but the quality will be a major problem in the not too distant future. The quality systems are no substitute for experience, commitment, dedication and supervision.

The problem of the current shortage of engineers needs to be addressed NOW and proper long term planning put in place to avoid or minimise future shortages. We must avoid kneejerk solutions such as extensive overseas recruitment which will only solve the problem numerically. The quality of work will not be up to standard as there is a shortage of experienced engineers in the industry to mentor large numbers of new engineers.

I appeal to you to facilitate implementation of a long term strategic solution as soon as possible and avoid a kneejerk response.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair G Munro
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