

Standards and Regulation for Building Construction in New Zealand

The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand

The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) is the professional body that moderates the standards of engineering education in the awarding of degrees in engineering.

The Chartered Professional Engineers of New Zealand Act 2002 recognises the role of IPENZ in administering recognition of those qualified to be Chartered Professional Engineers (CPEs).

The Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission sought advice from IPENZ covering the following:

- the legislation and other rules governing the engineering profession (including those imposed by the profession itself) since 1924 to the present day, including comparisons to other countries;
- the sequential development of standards for building construction in New Zealand from 1935 to the present day, and the processes by which the developments occurred;
- the manner in which building controls are managed by Building Consent Authorities (BCAs) and the ways in which this might be improved; and
- any matters that logically arise from the above.

The IPENZ report deals with each of these matters. In addition, IPENZ includes discussion of its role in:

- determining the education and experience considered suitable for CPEs;
- identifying and advising expectations for New Zealand engineers to meet international standards set by agreement with professional bodies in several other countries; and
- requiring CPEs to (i) demonstrate competence in a particular field of engineering; and (ii) adhere to a Code of Ethics which binds them to work only in the field in which they have particular skill and experience.

Other matters discussed by IPENZ include:

- the role of the professional bodies that are involved in standards setting – the New Zealand Society of Earthquake Engineering (NZSEE), the Structural Engineering Society of New Zealand (SESOC), the New Zealand Geotechnical Society (NZGS), the Timber Design Society (TDS) and the New Zealand Concrete Society (NZCS). These learned societies are important centres of knowledge that collectively work to recommend standards of design taking into account knowledge from research and experience;
- the fact that in earlier times, the now disestablished Ministry of Works provided significant Government funding towards the research and development costs that underpinned standards setting - this work is now more reliant on voluntary effort; and

- the administration of standards currently comes under the jurisdiction of territorial local authorities (TLAs). There is a discussion of the performance of TLAs acting as BCAs and in meeting their objectives in respect of earthquake-prone buildings.

The report entitled 'Standards and Regulation for Building Construction in New Zealand' is published on the Commission's website at www.canterbury.royalcommission.govt.nz.

It contains an Executive Summary which gives an overview of the content.