

ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES REGISTRATION BOARD

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Valuable Employment Related Qualifications Lost in the Fog

"It is very sad that valuable nationally and internationally recognised employment related qualifications for the engineering industry have been 'lost' in the mish-mash of new qualifications highlighted at the launch of 'www.kiwiquals.govt.nz' " said Ian Shearer, Chairman of the Engineering Associates Registration Board (www.engineering-associates.org.nz).

"Employers overseas searching 'kiwiquals' for information about New Zealand qualifications should also find information on the nationally and internationally respected Registered Engineering Associate (REA) qualification," said Mr Shearer. "Being ignored because REA is not NZQA registered is unacceptable. It does a considerable disservice to the New Zealand engineering industry, which promotes this qualification for their staff, and it also devalues the technicians concerned."

"On the positive side, the kiwiquals web site will help registration organisations find national diplomas and other academic qualifications which will eventually take the place of the older New Zealand Certificate in Engineering qualification. For the last 40 years, NZCE and first class marine certificates have been the benchmark for technician engineering education and training, and following considerable work experience these lead to award of the REA credential" said Mr Shearer.

"Formal recognition of technical engineering qualifications, the inadequacy of recent technical training, and the ongoing competency of technical engineers have been hot topics for many in the engineering industry for a long time. However the launch of 'kiwiquals' and the recent Building Act review have really brought these issues into focus. This needs to be an important aspect of the new Building Practitioners registration system, and kiwiquals should also include existing excellent and proven qualifications such as REA" said Mr Shearer.

"The new engineering diplomas are academic qualifications, and they do not include the hands on practical experience that was a compulsory component of the old NZCE. Technician engineering is the poorer for this - but we are looking for solutions that will enable our world class REA qualification to continue to show value for future engineers and their employers" said Mr Shearer.

"REA is a qualification awarded under the Engineering Associates Act. This act needs updating to allow the registration board to impose similar ongoing competence assessment criteria which are cornerstone elements of recent employment related registration systems" concluded Mr Shearer.

Why promote technical engineering competence?

Technical engineers and engineering technologists are competent individuals who make a significant contribution to the New Zealand economy. Technical engineers are the lifeblood and expertise of most manufacturing and processing industries in New Zealand and elsewhere in the world.

Technical engineers have the skills and experience that makes them key players in the design and construction of infrastructure and manufacturing projects, and in the operation of utility services such as water, waste, energy, communications, transport, health facilities and new technology applications.

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