



25 July 2025

Board of Inquiry Chair, Renée Enbom KC
 Board of Inquiry into the McCrae landslide
contact@mccraeinquiry.vic.gov.au

Dear Renée

Re: McCrae Landslide Inquiry

As Australia's national body for engineering, Engineers Australia is the voice and champion of our 130,000-plus members. We provide them with the resources, connections, and growth they need to do ethical, competent and high-value work in our communities. A mission-based, not-for-profit professional association, Engineers Australia is constituted by Royal Charter to advance the science and practice of engineering for the benefit of the community.

Landslides such as those which occurred recently at McCrae occur for a variety of both natural and anthropological reasons and can be exacerbated by poor planning or design and construction without appropriate interaction and interface with appropriately skilled and credentialed engineering professionals.

Engineers Australia believes the prevention or mitigation of the risk of similar landslide events occurring in future would be improved by:

1. Requiring professional engineers to be adequately trained, credentialed and registered. In Victoria, Geotechnical engineers can and should be registered as Civil engineers with the Business Licensing Authority.
2. Requiring other engineering occupational categories, such as engineering technologists and associates, to also be adequately trained, credentialed and registered. At present, there is no mandatory mechanism by which engineering geologists can be credentialed nor is there a mechanism to ensure their skill sets are utilised in situations such as that which occurred at McCrae.
3. Re-establishing a Chief Engineer in the Victorian Government and strengthening the role to provide technical advice, best practice, and ensure lessons are shared across projects and sectors. Such a role would have the power and responsibility to provide engineering input and oversight to decision making across Victoria, which can help to reduce the risk of such events occurring
4. Ensuring there are sufficient engineering skills in the relevant government department, in this case local councils, to be able to understand and procure engineering services, and ensure appropriate engineering input is applied to planning decisions.

Registration of Professional Engineers, Technologists and Associates

It is important for the community to have regulatory safeguards to protect them from any engineering failure or substandard work. This protection is more than financial; it is also about injuries and lives. The public must have confidence that engineering services are performed by **qualified, experienced, and competent professionals** who adhere to ethical standards, develop safe and sustainable solutions, and effectively manage risks.

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- Registration assures the public that engineers meet benchmarked standards, helping maintain trust in engineering services and products. In the absence of regulation, anyone can claim to provide engineering services without appropriate competencies and with disregard to standards.

Victoria established its engineer registration scheme in 2021. The Professional Engineers Registration Act currently outlines five areas: structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, and fire safety engineering, while allowing for further areas to be prescribed in regulations. Geotechnical engineers are typically classified under civil engineering for the purposes of this scheme. The scheme however does not recognise closely related professionals such as *Engineering Geologists* which are an equally important part of the engineering team. This means their roles and contributions may be undervalued where they have the potential to make meaningful contributions in areas such as landslide risk assessment. Conversely, it also means that professional contributions in such areas may be unregulated (i.e. members of the public engaging such professionals do not have the benefit of a bona fide registration system to be assured of their credentials and competency)

We recommend Victoria provide clearer advice as to what activities of the engineering team (Professionals, Technologists and Associates) fall within the definition of a professional engineering service and hence provide greater clarity on who needs to be registered, particularly when it relates to geotechnical issues. It is also recommended that Victoria provide for future registration of Engineering Geologists, Engineering Technologists, Engineering Associates and other allied members of the engineering team via regulation to allow for easier future expansion of the scheme.

Engineers in the Public Sector

The public sector engineering workforce has declined by 40 per cent since the 1980s, while engineering-related construction activity has grown by over 200 per cent in real terms. Currently, only 15 per cent of publicly commissioned engineering work is delivered internally. Combined with a widening capability gap, this reduction in engineering expertise has reduced the public sector's ability to manage risk, ensure value for money and deliver projects efficiently.

Engineers Australia supports the re-establishment of the role of Chief Engineer in providing a focus for technical advice to government to ensure work is planned, managed and evaluated according to best practice, and that lessons are shared across projects and sectors. An appropriately resourced Chief Engineer can also provide strategic advice to ensure that government departments and councils have the appropriate engineering skills in-house to help de-risk decision making.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of our submission as you progress. Please do not hesitate to contact policy@engineersaustralia.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Irrelevant & Sensitive

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