

23 February 2021

Ms Elisabeth Bowes
Chief Negotiator AUK-FTA
Regional Trade Agreements Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
RG Casey Building, John McEwen Cres
BARTON ACT 0221
c/- ukfta@dfat.gov.au
cc: Arjuna.Nadaraja@dfat.gov.au

Dear Ms Bowes,

Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications: Engineering

Engineers Australia has been keeping abreast of the AUK-FTA negotiations as they have been progressing. The level of engagement and updates provided by the negotiating teams have been very valuable. Engineers Australia also keeps in regular contact with DFAT as international mobility and recognition within the profession is very important.

Engineers Australia is the peak body of the engineering profession in Australia with over 100,000 members. Engineers Australia is constituted by Royal Charter, and is committed to advance the science and practice of engineering for the benefit of the community.

For the past 30 years, international mobility and substantial equivalence of qualifications for engineering professionals has been strengthened through the establishment of multilateral international education accords and mobility agreements, under the umbrella of what is now the International Engineering Alliance (IEA) (<https://www.ieagreemements.org/>). Engineers Australia, and the Engineering Council United Kingdom (ECUK) are foundation signatories of many of these multilateral agreements and we are both actively engaged in the ongoing governance of the IEA.

With regards to the negotiations for the AUK-FTA, we understand that the Professional Services Chapter is seeking a positive and constructive framework, to promote and encourage dialogue between the relevant professional bodies. Engineers Australia is very supportive of this objective overall. Given that multilateral agreements and accords exist, we recommend that these take precedence over any bilateral arrangement. We recognise that individual professions will not be referred to in the AUK-FTA and see that the above recommendation could be applicable to other professions as well.

Our position relates to differences between how Australian and United Kingdom engineering qualifications are recognised internationally, and the process to assess competency for independent practice. Retaining an emphasis on the existing multilateral agreements and accords is consistent with expectations of Australian regulators for the registration of engineers. Importantly, it will also demonstrate to other IEA members and signatories our commitment to strengthening the multilateral agreements and accords. These agreements and accords include many other Australian trading partners.

We look forward to further updates as the negotiations progress and thank you for the ongoing openness of the updates being provided. Please do not hesitate to contact Bernie Foley, General Manager Professional Standards (bfoley@engineersaustralia.org.au) or myself (chiefengineer@australia.org.au) should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. MacMaster', written in a cursive style.

Jane MacMaster BE FIEAust CPEng EngExec NER MRAeS
Chief Engineer