

Friday, June 19, 2020

LEADING HVAC&R FOR 100 YEARS



The Hon. Kevin Anderson
Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, New South Wales

I am writing to convey the support of the Australian Institute of Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heating (AIRAH) for the passing of the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019.

AIRAH is a keen supporter of the Building Minister's Forum's (BMF) call for a nationally harmonised registration scheme for building practitioners, including engineers. This is in line with the Shergold-Weir Building Confidence report in 2018, which has as its primary aim to "restore community confidence in Australia's building and construction industry".

We recognise the efforts made to strengthen the bill in response to feedback from industry stakeholders, including AIRAH, last year.

In our submission, we highlighted the need for the regulations to apply to all building classes, not just high-rise residential. We also signalled the importance of building services such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and requested that these be specifically named as building elements within the bill. And we supported the introduction of nationally harmonised registration of professional engineers to ensure that professional standards for engineers are lifted across the board – in all sectors.

Based on the bill and its presentation in parliament, we understand that the reforms will initially focus on class 2 buildings only, while additional classes of buildings, such as hospitals, schools and other multistorey buildings are intended to be included in the new scheme as part of the regulations over time. AIRAH encourages their inclusion as soon as practicable to ensure they too are appropriately regulated.

We are pleased to note that amendments were passed to widen the definition of a building element to include mechanical, electrical and hydraulic services for buildings, which means that aspects such as air conditioning will also be covered, in building services. We look forward to providing input on the regulations, which will prescribe how these services are included. .

We are also pleased to note that it will become compulsory for professional engineers to become registered to practice. This is a major step towards a nationally harmonised set of laws regulating the engineering profession and welcome news for our members and the heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC&R) industry.

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AIRAH has operated since 1920 and is the leading specialist membership association for professionals in the HVAC&R industry. This hidden, yet innovative industry employs over 298,000 people in Australia, is worth \$38 billion, uses more than 24 per cent of the country's electricity and accounts for 13 per cent of our carbon dioxide emissions.

One of AIRAH's primary aims is to develop the competence and skills of HVAC&R industry practitioners so that they can better meet society's evolving health, safety and environmental demands, and the challenges of a rapidly changing world. AIRAH encourages world's best practice within the industry through continuing professional development, accreditation programs and a wide range of technical publications.

AIRAH is the only body solely focussed on representing Mechanical Engineer Building Services professionals.

Mechanical Engineer Building Services are those engineering professionals who plan, design, install, commission operate, tune and maintain mechanical machines and systems in the built environment that may include air conditioning plants, ventilation systems, chillers, cooling towers, fire and smoke systems, fans, pumps and control systems.

As part of our commitment to the HVAC&R industry and the engineering profession AIRAH has launched a professional accreditation scheme specifically designed for engineers operating in the HVAC&R building services industry. The AIRAH Registered Professional Engineer (ARPEng) accredits professional engineers in the Mechanical Engineer Building Services discipline.

The ARPEng accreditation has been designed to meet the requirements in Queensland and Victoria, and will also support the Design and Building Practitioners Act in New South Wales.

We look forward to being involved in the next steps of defining the regulations to support the bill, and restoring community confidence in Australia's building and construction industry.

Regards,

Tony Gleeson, M.AIRAH

AIRAH Chief Executive