

Hi,

I'm writing to you in regards to the invitations to comment on skills shortage. My concern might be of a different angle but in the long run is expected to affect the shortage of engineering professionals in Australia.

My concern is in regards to the recently proposed changes to the legislation affecting Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA)(see this link for proposal: <http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=037&ContentID=2235>). I'd like to know if Engineers Australia is currently consulting members to find a united stand point in regards to the recent proposed changes to the LAFHA legislation by the government? My concern lies within the viability of overseas engineers, such as myself, temporarily residing in Australia to be able to sustain an affordable living. In my personal situation, this encompasses increased living expenditures for housing and food. The LAFHA, as it currently works, allows for overseas engineers such as myself to view living in Australia as economically viable option.

I am sure that my personal situation reflects the concern of the thousands of overseas engineers currently temporarily residing in Australia. I think it should be in Engineers Australia's interest to investigate the potential impact on the affordability of overseas engineers currently residing in Australia, as some may view this as a "deal breaker" and choose to leave Australia for better working conditions. Similarly, it will most likely reduce the number of overseas engineers Australian firm's will be able to attract and recruit. The result will be an ever larger shortfall in engineering professionals than the current situation - something that should be a worry for the peak engineering body in Australia.

Furthermore, it seems as the main reason to the change is a large misuse of the allowance by CEOs, avoiding taxes by very profitable allowances in the sizes of several 100,000's of dollars. I agree with that this is a problem and not in line with the intent of the allowance, but should everyone, including those who are actually using the allowance as it is intended to be "punished" for this. It seems as a rather swift and crude action by the government, ignoring the potential impacts such a legislation may affect the ability to attract overseas professionals and talents, and the long-term holistic effects on the economy and development of the engineering profession as a whole.

I trust that Engineers Australia can appreciate the seriousness of the effects of the proposal and provide their opinion on this matter. The closing date for submission of comments on the consultation paper is the 3rd of February, 2012.

Yours sincerely,

**Carl Johansson**