

IEM's Response to Ir. Patrick Augustin's Letter

THE portion of the letter written by Ir. Patrick C. Augustin and published in *The Sun* (dated 12 April 2012) regarding the role of the Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) in dealing with errant professional engineers is misleading and serves to highlight the lack of clarity regarding the different roles of the various organisations and regulatory bodies involved in the construction and housing industries as was pointed out in our earlier letter to *The Sun* dated 10 April 2012.

The IEM had felt it necessary to put in a proper perspective the role of the Institution as a result of the reprimand made by the *Ketua Setiausaha Negara* over the problems of abandoned housing projects which he has attributed, in part, to the IEM (*The Sun*, 3 April 2012). In our earlier letter, we had highlighted clearly the roles of the different bodies involved in the construction and housing industries which we had hoped would have clarified the situation.

Augustin, however, chooses not to accept the clarification and has selectively given his misguided comments on the matter. He insists that the IEM can discipline engineers. Yes, indeed we can; **but only if they are members of the Institution and only with respect to their membership with the Institution.** However, an expelled member of the IEM will still remain a Professional Engineer in the eyes of the Law until and unless the Board of Engineers, Malaysia (BEM) takes action against him or her. Hence, any transgression by our members with respect to the Registration of Engineers Act will, after preliminary investigation by the Institution, have to be referred to the BEM for further investigation and subsequent action on the errant professional engineer.

The IEM was established in 1959 as a voluntary body to serve and advance the engineering profession. The IEM was the only body then to serve the needs of the profession but with the rapid development of the profession, the Institution itself decided that it was also necessary to have a statutory authority to **regulate** the profession and its engineers. Hence, it was upon the initiative of the IEM that the BEM was established via the Registration of Engineers Act (1967) which came into force in 1972.

The roles of the IEM and the BEM are meant to be complementary and were engineered to avoid duplication. The BEM is a regulatory body; the IEM is a professional institution. In its role as a professional institution, the IEM conducted over 300 technical talks, courses, seminars, forums and conferences in the past year, all for the benefit and continuous development of the engineers. We sit on well over 200 committees, including workshops or forums of the various government agencies and authorities where our members play an advisory role that contributes to policymaking, standards development and other matters essential to the practice of engineering. Our members are located throughout the country and we have 12 Branches, almost one in every state, where the Institution caters to the needs of the engineers there as well as provide our voluntary professional input to the various authorities in the States.

The IEM's role is to facilitate the professional development of engineers and to provide our expert opinion to the government and the authorities on matters related to engineering as well as to represent the engineers on issues related to their profession. ■