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# CIVIL ENGINEERING ACADEMY PODCAST

Hosted by Isaac Oakeson

## CEA 114 - STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING IN AUSTRALIA WITH BRENDAN HASTY

Today, Australian Structural Engineer [Brendan Hasty](#) jumps on the show to talk about all things structural engineering. Elaborating on how he got started, Brendan talks about the engineering career in Australia, as well as the controversial topic of why engineers don't earn as much as they should for the type of work they do—and how to change that.

Brendan's relationship with civil engineering started out really early in life. While still a kid, he used to see his grandfather, who was an electrical engineer, work on big projects like the [Loy Yang Power Plant](#) in Victoria, Australia. His engineering notes on various sketch pads got Brendan's interest in the engineering field started. Eventually, he settled on civil structural engineering as this was the one that caught his attention the most.

He then went to college to pursue a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering. Just like in the US, it's usually a four-year degree, but that can

also last five years in order to get all the credit hours required by the university. And it was during his second year that he started gaining experience by doing a lot of CAD drawings as an intern.

However, a master's degree is not as encouraged or necessary as in the US. The key thing in Australia is work experience and knowledge. And contrary to what most people think, the position you get at the smallest firms can teach you the most. Why? Because you'll be doing pretty much everything, from start to finish. This includes not only engineering work you're good at, but also contract to client relations work every engineer needs in his or her career.

After you've finished school and worked about 3-5 years, that's when you can get your "PE status" in Australia. Similarly to what happens in the US, the engineer moves one step up and becomes a Chartered Engineer. The only difference is that [Engineers Australia](#) (the institution responsible for licensure)

doesn't require an eight-hour exam like the Civil PE exam. Instead, engineers have to show documentation and proof of experience and knowledge, signed off by a Chartered Engineer, showing that they meet the criteria established by the institution.

Whether or not you already have your PE, SE, or Chartered Engineer status, Brendan suggests that you should keep studying engineering concepts, as well as people skills. An engineer is certainly made up of the technical knowledge it has, but without knowing how to communicate, all the knowledge becomes useless. And even within your technical field, before you play around with fancy structural software tools like [ETABS](#), make sure you master the basics of structural mechanics. Otherwise the software will not be of much help.

Finally, a controversial topic relates to the amount of money engineers—especially structural engineers—make given the nature and responsibility of their work. The answer to bottom-low wages is the historical industry trend of companies decreasing their prices to win bid wars over their competitors. This has led the industry in a downward spiral of ever-decreasing salary levels. If you want to know more about it, as well as what to do to raise the recognition of the work civil engineers do, check out Brendan's video [Do Structural Engineers Get Paid Well \(in AUS, US, UK\)](#) on [his YouTube channel](#).

## CEA Partners & Resources:

Built Bar - [Link](#)

PPI - [Link](#)

School of PE - [Link](#)

CEA Website - [Link](#)

Ultimate Civil PE Review Course - [Link](#)

Ultimate Civil FE Review Course - [Link](#)

FE and PE Practice Exams - [Link](#)

CEA YouTube Channel - [Link](#)

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