

A survey of current Rehabilitation Engineering practice in Australia

Iain Brown¹

¹ Northern Sydney Local Health District

Aim:

To present a current survey of the field of rehabilitation engineering as it is currently practiced in Australia.

Method:

A survey of engineers whose practice is substantively within the scope of rehabilitation and functional compensation has been undertaken to obtain a snapshot of the current state of rehabilitation engineering in Australia.

Though rehabilitation engineering has been an active field of practice in Australia for many decades, it has only recently begun to coalesce a national sense of identity, community and connection. Efforts on the part of the National Committee on Rehabilitation Engineering (NCRE) and others over the past 5 years have seen increased awareness, connection and collaboration between formerly isolated local groups of practice.

This survey extends on the discussion paper *“Rehabilitation engineering in Australia” (2020)*, which undertook a preliminary survey of rehabilitation engineering in Australia, proposed a framework for exploring the national identity and scope of practice.

This stimulated ongoing discussions about identity, defining competencies, areas for collective concern and advocacy, and the growing need for professional development resources.

Results:

The survey provides insight into the current distribution of rehabilitation engineers geographically, by key area of practice (KAP), and by role archetype. This snapshot provides valuable data about trends in rehabilitation engineering practice, and the need for ongoing professional development. This data facilitates increased connectivity by identifying opportunities for continuing collaboration and support through communities of practice (shared KAPs), and Special Interest Groups (shared role archetypes).

Review of this survey responses provides clarity regarding the current state and trajectory of rehabilitation engineering in Australia, and highlights key priorities for strengthening the field for the future.

It is also hoped that the results of this survey will also provide a pathway for establishing greater connection to communities of rehabilitation engineering practice in other countries across the world.

Reference:

Rehabilitation engineering in Australia – Discussion Paper. Engineers Australia, June, 2020.