

26 May 2000

Amadeus

GROUP OF COMPANIES

Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East
MELBOURNE NSW 8003

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Architects fearful of Productivity Commission recommendations

I recently read the above-mentioned article in Business NSW, Issue 19 May 2000 (attached) and although I am neither for nor against deregulating in the market, I can only go on our company's own experience which, I believe speaks for itself.

We are a fairly successful medium size Building Company in Newcastle and we specialise in Pole Homes, architectural designed homes (for one of a better word), unit developments and retirement villages. We have spent the last seven years doing battle with so-called Chartered Architects whose reputation you are obviously trying to protect. They have cost us a great deal of grief and money as they appear not to know what they are doing, and care more or less only about their so called status and the cheque at the end of it. We have been through so many architects we are sick of them and are of the belief that they are really incompetent fools living in a dream world far removed from structural reality.

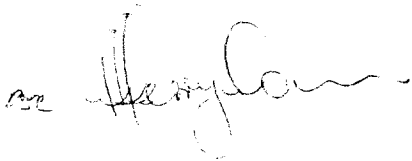
Below please find a list of problems commonly encountered by our firm: -

- Very slow – product quality does not equal time spent on job, but time spent on job equals bill.
- A lot of things designed are structurally not feasible.
- Never on budget (in most cases far over!)
- Most drawings do not comply with local authority regularities.
- Don't check that levels on plans correct with actual levels.
- They rarely listen.
- Most designs are in reality impractical to live in.
- Cannot communicate effectively.

Need I go on? Unfortunately most don't learn from their mistakes either, as they have the arrogance to believe they are always right.

The good news is we have now engaged the services of a female plan drawer (that's rights, not an architect!), and for the first time, there are no mistakes, plans are on budget, they are great designs that work and structurally are not a nightmare, and the clients love dealing with her! She is also eager to learn and keen to listen what more could a successful Building Company hope for? I say, go the Plan drawers!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sibylle MacFadyen', written in a cursive style.

Sibylle MacFadyen BA
Finance and Marketing Manager
Amadeus Group of Companies

cc. Phil Wiggs
Julia Ninness
Business NSW

Architects fearful of Productivity Commission recommendations



Professions

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■ The Royal Australian Institute of Architects fears poorer urban design and expensive mistakes will be the end result if recommendations by the Productivity Commission are to go ahead.

The Commission, currently undertaking a national Review of Legislation regulating the Architecture Profession, proposes a deregulated market which the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) say will lead to the term 'architect' becoming "meaningless". Michael Peck, chief executive of the RAIA, says it is impossible not to see the "irony of the situation" given the current debate on the standard of Sydney's urban environment provoked by, amongst others, Premier Bob Carr.

"You've got people who are really concerned about the community and building environment calling out for greater use of properly trained and qualified architects. "Yet the commission's free-market approach means anyone who wants to call themselves an architect may do so whether they're qualified or not. There's a dichotomy there," says Peck.

"It seems a position of common sense that if the community spends a lot of money training these people and then doesn't ensure they are used when construction is done...well, it's a flawed proposition."

Peck says the public will suffer from the watering down of architectural standards.

"The customer is rarely the consumer of a designer's services. Money saved to meet shareholders' requirements could lead to 50 to 100 years of an unattractive building impacting on the amenities of the community," says Peck.

"With architects, you'll probably only use one in a lifetime. It's possible for someone with good faith to fairly do what you've asked them to do, but because they lack the knowledge, they get it wrong."

"Then you can't ever afford to build another house or invest in property in the meantime."

Ed Haysom, president of the RAIA, says deregulation of the profession may also mean customers embarking on "costly time-consuming process" to find someone with the necessary skills to undertake a project.

"Worse still, is that in the nature of architectural services the problems that arise from poor or bad practice, as might be expected from unqualified suppliers, are most often not discov-



Photo: Laura Friezer

Architects voice concern for the community and building environment

ered until the customer has incurred significant economic loss," says Haysom.

David Slinn, chief executive officer of architecture firm Dem Design, says the role of the professional body should not be undermined - but non-qualified architects are already designing buildings.

"The real issue is that there is some form of regulatory body, which I don't think has been sufficiently addressed. There needs to be a legislative, regulatory framework in place," says Slinn.

"Open competition is not a problem. The problem is that you don't need qualified people to do a

certain job and you create this view point that anyone can do it.

"That's the danger - undervaluing professional skills. Those skills are critical for having better urban space."

For more information contact RAIA on (02) 6273 1548 or go to www.raia.com.au.