

# ARCHITECTS

EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION

**B O A R D**

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Productivity Commission  
Architects Inquiry  
LB2, Collins Street East  
Melbourne VIC 8003  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Commissioners

## **Draft Report - Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession**

Thank you for the opportunity for providing comment on your draft report on the Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession in Australia.

As the regulatory body for the architectural profession in New Zealand, constituted by legislation, the Board views your recommendation, "*that State and Territory Architects Acts under review be repealed after a two-year notification period,*" with considerable concern. This concern relates particularly to the issue of reciprocity and international recognition.

Should the Commission's recommendation be implemented then, apart from the four Scandinavian countries and Ireland, Australia would be the only other jurisdiction, of 57 countries for which the Board holds information, which would not require the registration or licensing of architects.

International standards for the right to use the title "Architect" mean that that person has met stringent academic and practical professional standards which are tested by examination prior to registration being granted. The repeal of the Architects Acts in Australia, means that without the legal protection of the title "Architect" or "Registered Architect," will change the meaning of "Architect" to 'hopeful designer' instead of "attested, competent, qualified, and experienced professional."

Self regulation by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects or other private professional body will not necessarily mean the same stringent requirements that are in place now under statute, will be maintained in the future. Private Institutes are at the whim of the current elected officers of the day, who may have different views or agendas with respect to the qualifications for membership of their Institute which may have little regard for the generally recognised international professional standards. Further, membership of such bodies is voluntary and many designers will have no wish to join such Institutes.

As I highlighted in my submission to you dated 16 December 1999, this Board's opinion is that it is imperative that statute backed registration be maintained in Australia by means of a National Act.

This Board is bound by the provisions of the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1996 which refers to occupations rather than professions. Should the Commission's recommendation be adopted then the Board would be required, under the Act, to register anyone entering New Zealand from Australia who described themselves as an architect. The AERB would not wish to register any Australian "hopeful designer" but would be bound to do so. This would be an unacceptable position to the AERB which is required to protect the public interest.


This would certainly have a detrimental and lowering affect on standards of the profession in New Zealand and in turn affect any mutual recognition agreements the Board had negotiated or wished to negotiate with another country, under our Government's Closer Economic Relations policy. In effect it would prevent New Zealand architects taking advantage of the generally more liberal world wide "Free Trade" environment because other registration authorities will not wish to register Australians registered by the AERB under the TTRMA legislation.

To illustrate this point the AERB is currently having discussions with the Board of Architects of Singapore and the Trade Negotiations Division of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade with respect to a possible mutual recognition agreement between the two registration Boards under the current CER negotiations. Should your recommendation be adopted then our negotiations will fail as Singapore will not want to register "hopeful designers" from Australia who have been registered in New Zealand because of the provisions of the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition legislation.

Therefore the Commission's recommendation, if adopted, will certainly have a detrimental impact upon the architectural profession in New Zealand. Further, it will isolate New Zealand architects, preventing them from moving freely from country to country as architects. This isolation will increase as more international trading blocks are formed and trade barriers are removed.

The AERB strongly urges the Commission to abandon its current recommendation and recommend a National Registration Act for architects in Australia.

Yours sincerely



John Patience  
Chairman