

Response to the Productivity Commissions Draft Report - Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession

Alternative legislation

Architects are a group of professionals who have invested significant time and effort to develop, maintain and improve their skills in the complex business of building design and project delivery. The value they add to our collective wealth by good design through improvement of our building stock, our urban environment, and our quality of life is not recognised or supported in the findings of this report.

There is currently no restriction contained in Architects Acts on the **practice** of architecture.

In fact there is no restriction in **any** form of regulation on the provision of architectural services.

Restriction through the Architects Acts on the use of the title 'architect' to qualified persons attempts to protect the interests of consumers by providing a reliable means to at least differentiate between qualified and non-qualified providers of similar services.

The draft report of the Productivity Commission finds that even this degree of regulation (introduced in the interests of consumer protection) is ineffective and unjustified.

If the recommendations of the report are followed and Architects Acts are repealed there is a strong case for the introduction of an alternative system of licensing aimed at requiring all providers of building design and related work to be suitably qualified and registered, with a graded level of qualification being prerequisite for involvement in projects ranging in scale and complexity.

It should be noted that many other sectors of the building construction industry are required to be suitably qualified and registered.

A similar system of alternative regulation was briefly referenced by the Commission. Its view was that "*there is no public interest justification for excluding non-architects from any sector of the market for building design and related services*". (1) It does not follow that there is no public interest justification for excluding **totally unqualified people** from providing these services.

Has the Commission fully considered and quantified the enormous economic, social and environmental cost we all bear as a result of the current unregulated environment for provision of building design and related services?

(1)(refer p144 - 145 The Commissioners Assessment)