

20 December 1999

Productivity Commission
Architects Inquiry
LB2, Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

ARCHITECTS ACT REVIEW - 1999
COMMENTS BY [several members of the Silver Thomas Hanley company]

The following are my views on the threat of deregulation of the architectural profession.

I strongly support the need for registration of Architects to:

- ensure appropriate operating standards are maintained
- ensure appropriate policing of performance and activity occurs.
- ensure appropriate teaching standards are met.

I strongly support the need to define the roles and responsibilities of:

- the qualified architect (registered)
- the qualified architect (not registered)
- the designer (no architectural qualification)
- other (eg. owner/builder/designer)

I strongly support the definition of work scope for each of the above, based on risk to the prospective client and to the general public.

I strongly support the quarantining of each work area, ie the practitioner in each category must only work in their defined area. Working outside attracts penalties.

I strongly support the principle of penalties for breaches of activity outside the defined area of approved activity.

The principle of "buyer beware" under deregulation will only result in more problems than currently exist with resultant court action clogging up an already loaded legal system. The 'buyer' in most cases does not have the skill to determine whether or not he/she is employing a person with the appropriate expertise.

I strongly support the idea of Architects advertising but based on guidelines which address professionalism, dignity, responsibility, and industry promotion.

I strongly support professional competition amongst architects but strongly object to fee tendering.

I strongly support fairness and equity in the process of service tendering. The large losses absorbed by architects involved in competing amongst themselves, although fully compliant with the principles of free trade. in many instances is the outcome of an obligation to participate (politics, future work, etc) rather than common sense.

I strongly support the creation of an awareness campaign to let the general public know that an architect is not always a "rich man's folly", what an architect actually does, what value he/she adds to the projects, that the role of the experienced professional architect adds value (on the whole) to the built environment. Subtle innuendo is not enough. Most people in the community do not respond to subtle innuendo, but to "in your face" dialogue.

I strongly support the promotion of architecture through the medium of television via quality programs on the history, currency and future of architecture in Australia and the world.

I strongly condemn those architects who continue to practice "pragmatism" and assume that things will "get better by themselves". Involvement equals survival. Speak up.

I strongly support uniform national legislation for the registration of architects across Australia administered by an appropriately structured and resourced Architects Accreditation Council, with a guarantee of an unencumbered process of appeal.

I strongly support the development of performance guidelines, administered by the above body.

I strongly support the continuing role of the Institute, but it must represent all architects, not just the elite. It must appeal to all types of practising architect. Whether or not those architects all become involved is a decision each architect must make for his/her self.

I strongly reject the principle of self regulation in any form.

SILVER THOMAS HANLEY - ARCHITECTS

(signatures)

George Raffa