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NSW`

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The Secretary

Productivity Commission

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION DRAFT REPORT

REVIEW OF LEGISLATION REGULATING THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

My argument in favour of retaining and reforming the Architects Act centres on the quality of the built environment, and is as follows:

Neither the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, nor the legislative controls imposed under this Act by municipal authorities, make explicit reference to good design. The difficulty is that aesthetics are subjective. This difficulty cannot be resolved by regulation.

The existing approach is for municipal authorities to introduce a local environment plan which imposes a range of numerical standards governing such issues as height and boundary setbacks. Unskilled designers can produce buildings which meet the numerical standards imposed by the relevant L.E. P, yet which are in many cases unsympathetic to community interests, and unpleasing aesthetically.

As this area of aesthetics is not *amenable* to legislative remedy, the best option for improving building design standards is through education. Architects are required to undergo some 7 years education, including academic studies and practical experience, prior to registration. By restricting certain building design projects to architects, the prospects of a building design being of higher quality are improved.

Today's buildings leave a legacy to future generations, a legacy that may not be considered by today's purchaser of building design services. Architecture and urban design are the most telling artefacts of any culture. If we wish our culture to be well-regarded by future generations, then we must ensure that it is in the stewardship of those best educated and trained to deal with it.

Yours faithfully

John Van der Have

(signature)

Design for health and safety