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Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic. 8003

Thursday, June 08, 2000

Re: Architects Inquiry

Dear Sirs,

I'd like to firstly thank the Commissioners for the time they have allocated here today so that I may make some brief points in relation to the draft report and also to add to my previous submission.

In my previous submission I called for the ability to use the adjective / descriptor "architectural" to accurately describe the work I perform. I made the point that I am not an architect, but an architectural designer or building designer. I need to be free to explain to the public that I prepare "architectural" designs and that I am distinct from designers of other disciplines, (ie. Engineering, Civil, Electrical, etc.).

In it's draft report, the Commission has already acknowledge the need for this and I am greatly encouraged by this view.

As has been mentioned or will likely be mentioned by others, it is extremely important that we grasp this opportunity to correct the legislative errors in our industry now and not set things in place that are different for difference sake.

I welcome the call of the report for the removal of the Architects Acts throughout Australia, but strongly welcome and urge an industry based registration system for all practitioner to address the following issues;

1. To up-skill all current practitioners in the design disciplines of ESD and the use of other, non-traditional building elements to achieve better design.
2. To have all representative association work closely together to form a set of proficiency standards.
3. It should recognize the skills that a practitioner has, irrespective of how they are gained. Many design professionals do not have tertiary degrees, but competently and effectively compete for market share, thereby proving that skills can be gained in several different arenas.
4. That these standards are actively maintained via a profession development programme, such as in place in the BDA NSW.
5. Public and practitioner protection is set in place by a Professional Indemnity insurance scheme.
6. To allow all practitioners, architects or others, who have the demonstrated skills, to access work within their sphere of expertise. This naturally includes the ability to tender for government work.
7. Council throughout Australia need to set a uniform level of documentation for applications, having regard for the complexity of building design and construction regulation today. (I find it astounding that anyone other than a design professional, would contemplate preparing their own drawings given the volumes of (sometimes conflicting) consent authority documentation these days).

8. No state based restrictions (as currently exist) should be in place that would prevent a practitioner in one state from working in an other.
9. The international accreditation enjoyed now should not be effected by any changes.

All in all, I feel that an over emphasis has been placed on skill through learning. This is undoubtedly important, but what of talent? Is talent not an ingredient in our profession? You can sent me to the best university and provide me with the best tutors to learn ballet, but after extensive training and personal application, I will still have two left feet. Talent is therefore the overriding factor in the ability of a designer to apply the things he or she learns, irrespective of where that knowledge attained.

I count it as a privilege to address you hear today and once again thank you for your time. I will also be happy to field any questions the Commission may have in relation to my submission or the industry in general.

Yours sincerely,

M. Wiegmann (B.D.A.N.S.W.)
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