

A R C H I T E C T

2 June 2000

The Commissioner
The Productivity Commission Architect Inquiry
LB2 Collins Street
FAST MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Commissioner,

I write to influence your inquiry into the relevance of registration of Architects in Australia.

It is true that Architects registration only protects the usage of the name, and not the activity as registration of builders, electricians, plumber and painters does.

To my mind you can provide sensible protection for the community against incomplete building design only through a registration system, or alternatively you have a myriad of public or private enterprises inspectors allowing any person to perform the complex design function which are required by planning law and the BCA. Registration has always been the cost effective option.

The key reasons for retaining registration is.:

Common law negligence claims are based on the reasonable expectation of a profession - but you must define the profession to protect the public.

- Registration or legal recognition defines the relevance of the profession to the community.
- Registration if not continued for Architects will be transferred to other building areas such as building surveyors - with a consequent diminution of generalized knowledge.
- It's always been illogical to enforce registration of builders, who construct buildings yet have no control over the design of buildings,
- It is not good enough to cite Codes and expect the Builders to know their meaning - someone has to provide documentation that complies, is rational and consistent with the underlying intent of legislation and the building purpose.

- Registration is not anti competitive - is just ensures a minimum level of competence and skill to gain entry to registration. No one could accuse Architects of unreasonably restricting entry to the profession.
- professions evolve because their tasks are often complex and difficult to define or to legislate, and reference is made to a standard expected of a member of that profession. To deny this reality would see the dissolution of all the major professions ensuring a form of anarchy prevailing in the business world, particularly in medicine and law.
- The real problem with building regulation is trying to provide a set of rules which have application to all types of buildings and situations.
- I would say the BCA with all the cited Australian Standards has reached the facical goal they sent themselves some 20 years ago. There is no question that the sanity of an architectural profession is needed, with all the well established expertise in various building types and expert knowledge of local conditions that are brought into play is a matter of course
- My view is that productivity is best achieved by providing a fair and predictable framework for persons to operate in.

Yours sincerely,

(signature)

Robert Nicholson
Architect