

**SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION  
DRAFT REPORT HEARING  
BRISBANE 9 JUNE, 2000**

**FROM THE SOLE PRACTITIONER ARCHITECTS GROUP, BRISBANE  
PREAMBLE**

The Brisbane based Sole Practitioners Group consists of approximately 35 registered architects who have met fortnightly since 1985 to discuss various topics of common interest or concern.

Being a Sole Practitioner means each practitioner has to contend with every aspect of architectural practice, for example, design, documentation (working drawings and specifications) site inspections, and the administration of contracts. Our members handle a wide range of building projects from house alterations to high rise buildings, city building upgrades and specialist heritage projects.

So, our group is well qualified to comment on the everyday practice of architecture.

We have focused our attention on the issues as follows:

### **1.2 THE PERCEPTION AND STANDING OF ARCHITECTS**

The definition of architect as used by the Productivity Commission in their draft report is so inappropriate in the context of the real practice of architecture today.

The Heinemans Australian Dictionary is a modern day dictionary currently in use in Queensland Schools. It defines architect as, "a person trained in the art and science of designing buildings."

A high level of tertiary training is required for the profession. The entry level required for Architectural Courses at Qld University of Technology in 1999 was an overall position of 5 and 6 (1 being the highest and 24 the lowest). Tertiary education includes Human Sciences and Cultural Context, Design and Research, Technology and Physical Sciences and Professional Studies and Applications.

Architects in practice, by the very derivation of the word - arkhi(chief), tektōn (builder) - are trained to coordinate and consult with:

- Engineers
  - Civil
  - Structural
  - Hydraulic
  - Mechanical & Electrical
  - Acoustic
  - Traffic
- Quantity Surveyors
- Town Planners
- Landscape Architects
- Interior Designers
- Public Artisans

In recent years, the building industry has allowed Project Managers and Building Designers to perform tasks normally carried out by Architects, but these tasks are only part of the well-rounded expertise an Architect possesses. Even though market share has changed over the years, a high standard of training and experience is still required.

### **3.1 ARCHITECT'S INCOME**

Architects' incomes are not high compared with many professions, and are constantly under threat because of fierce competition within the profession, and with non-architects.

The public expect architects to maintain a high standard of expertise. This standard needs to be maintained to provide the degree of excellence in civic designs and high quality profile buildings.

### 3.4 ARCHITECT'S MARKET SHARE

The percentage of all building projects, designed, documented and supervised by Architects has historically remained constant, i.e. only a small percentage, but is of considerable value to the economy \$700 million as mentioned in the draft for 98/99. Nothing has changed. Main architectural involvement has been -

- Larger commercial and civic projects
- Some industrial projects
- Small percentage of residential with emphasis on unique houses
- Conservation and preservation of historic buildings and landmarks

Architects have traditionally designed, documented and administered the building contracts for unique and high-value housing projects. These clients expect more in design and construction expertise to ensure value for money.

Because of their in-depth aesthetic design tuition, Architects have always lead with innovative design styles and character trends. These trends become fashionable, and are then carried on and diluted by non-architects in the production of the greater proportion of building projects.

### 4. ARCHITECTS' REGISTRATION BOARDS

Boards are funded by low-cost registration fees paid by Architects. They are essential to maintain a standard of expertise for consumer protection. These could still be administered by each state with mutual recognition, or combined into one federal body represented by State Chapters.

The Board should include members of the public, but as a minority representation.

Disciplinary committees at state level should be encouraged to maintain quality practice and ethical standards.

### 6.2 THE TITLE ARCHITECT

The title 'architect' should still be protected by law to reduce ambiguity and set standards on which consumers can rely. To have other (non-architects) call themselves 'architects' will confuse the public and allow the unscrupulous element to claim higher fees while providing minimum quality service.

It is our opinion that the two year moratorium and two-tier system would not work.

Current restrictions on the ownership of architectural businesses, and other businesses employing architects should remain to align with the status quo.

Architects are employed in the knowledge and implementation of many Acts of Parliament e.g. The Town Planning Act, The Environmental Protection Act and The Heritage Act. This ensures new developments managed by architects adhere to the regulations of the Act.

Our registered practitioners are held in high esteem internationally, returning export earnings of \$38 million in 97/98. To abolish registration would jeopardise compliance with U.I.A. Standard and put these growing export earnings at risk. Also overseas students would be reluctant to support our Universities. This income is an important addition to our Universities diminishing income (refer University of Qld Report) Union of International Students.

### SUMMARY

To date the Architects Act through the Board of Architects has worked well in protecting the public interest. It needs to promote mutual recognition between states and further public awareness of the PROFESSION OF ARCHITECTURE.