

Architects Inquiry
Productivity Commission

Dear Commissioner,

As Head of Architecture at the University of New South Wales I would like to voice my concern over the repeal of legislation controlling the architectural profession. From the University's perspective this act's repeal would vastly diminish the international standing of our undergraduate programs.

The University of New South Wales is a major exporter of education. Recently UNSW has won the Best Australian Service Activity in Asia award as part of the annual Business Asia Awards. This award follows on from the Australian Exporter of the Year Award UNSW received in 1999 and is further recognition of UNSW's successful commitment to internationalisation and the provision of world class services to its students, both in Australia and internationally.

The undergraduate Bachelor degree in Architecture which is accredited by the Board of Architects of New South Wales in conjunction with the RAlA, CAA and AACA has a significant proportion of international students. They number 200 of the total enrolment of 800 in this and its affiliated degrees.

International students are attracted to UNSW education in architecture fundamentally because of the Program's accredited status and because of the University's standing internationally. Without the rigour of the Board's accreditation processes much of this attraction would dissipate. Overseas regulatory bodies recognise the Board of Architects of New South Wales as the equivalent regulatory body and thus in conjunction, our Program. Thus students enrolling in our Program and wishing to register as architects in other locations are able to apply because of this respected co-equivalence. It is through accreditation processes and cross-national agreements of standards that the quality of our Program is maintained at high international standard a fact born out by our standing in Asian and other international markets.

For Australian students this repeal would also be short sighted. The majority of countries which are attractive to our students as potential locations for future practice as architects require registration. Many of these recognise our Boards of Architects in Australia and the accredited programs they accept in this country's context. This repeal would make this interchange of professional activity all the harder for students and result in a growing parochiality in the Australian professional character.

Difficulty will also occur if another professional body is to take over the role of the accreditation process as each countries' co-equivalence will need to be renegotiated. This activity would be time-consuming, costly and laborious.

Each of these difficulties will produce added budgetary implications for the University associated with the loss of student numbers and the extensive renegotiations required for co-equivalence recognition.

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