



## **AACA Response to the BMF's Building Confidence Report Implementation Plan (March 2019)**

### **Introduction**

Architects in Australia are regulated by statute in each state and territory. Each Architect Registration Board is an independent statutory authority and is responsible for administering the Architects Act in its jurisdiction. A summary of the regulation of architects in each state and territory can be found [here](#).

The AACCA was formed by the Architect Registration Boards in Australia in the 1970's to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to the accreditation of architectural education and assessment programs on the path to registration as an architect.

This response to the Building Confidence Implementation Plan focusses on the capacity of the AACCA to support initiatives relevant to its obligations to administer the accreditation of architectural education programs, conduct research on matters related to the relationship between regulation and construction quality, provide a national focus for pathways to registration initiatives driven by Architect Registration Boards and participate in stakeholder discussions at a national level.

### **The AACCA**

- Maintains the National Standard of Competency for Architects. The Standard describes what is reasonably expected of a person who can demonstrate the standard of skill, care and diligence widely accepted in Australia as a competent architect. The Standard underpins all assessment programs on the path to registration as an architect in Australia. **See Attachment 1.**
- administers the national Architectural Practice Examination
- administers the *Accreditation of Architecture Programs in Australia and New Zealand*
- assesses overseas architectural qualifications
- negotiates international mutual recognition agreements.

The Architect Registration Boards and the AACCA work in collaboration on matters of national interest relating to the AACCA's functions.

### **National response to issues raised in the Building Confidence Implementation Plan**

The AACCA supports a coherent response to the widespread systematic deficiencies within the construction industry. Effecting improvements in regulation and shifting cultural approaches within the sector will require effort from both existing and new regulatory agencies, industry and professional associations and businesses across the sector as a whole.

AACA is committed, within the scope of its functions, to being part of the national conversation to devise and implement comprehensive solutions to improve the safety of buildings via effective regulation in the construction sector. There needs to be consideration of how regulatory levers may be appropriately used within this context to improve practice and compliance with industry standards.

AACA supports further research into how effective regulation across the sector can result in improvements in construction quality and safety.

### **Registration of Building Practitioners**

The AACCA's 2015 International Benchmarking Study found that Australia has broadly comparable architect registration standards to other leading economies. However, Australia is in a minority among comparable countries in not having any general legal reservation of architectural design function or licensing of non-architect designers. See **Attachment Two**:

Many countries also licence classes of "building author" aside from architects. Engineers are licensed in most OECD countries and licensing of other occupations is also common. For example, in the Netherlands, the Architects Register also controls the use of the titles of urban designer, landscape architect and interior architect. Similarly, in Italy, the Provincial Rolls cover Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Conservation. South Africa licences three classes of architectural technologist and draftspeople. The Board of Architects Malaysia also licenses draftspeople and interior designers. In Spain, there is a licence class called *Aparejador*, which is like an assistant architect and building work supervisor. While in Japan, only 1<sup>st</sup> class *Kenchikushi* are able to design complex buildings.

It should be noted that most countries regulate architectural design function by building class through planning law (i.e. the right to sign off plans for development approval) rather than directly through Architects Acts or similar legislation.

Applicants' readiness for registration as an architect in Australia are benchmarked against the *National Standard of Competency for Architects* rather than credentials.

The AACCA is able to contribute significant experience and expertise in the development of discipline based competency standards and benchmarking assessment programs against these standards.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

Compulsory CPD for architects is now required across the majority of jurisdictions in Australia.

In consultation with the Architect Registration Boards the AACCA will review the Architects Model CPD Code in line with principles of best practice and encourage the adoption of the revised Architects Model CPD Code in all jurisdictions in Australia.

The AACCA will support the Architect Registration Boards to develop nationally consistent CPD modules on the National Construction Code.

## **Attachment 1 The National Standard of Competency for Architects**

The 9 elements arranged under 4 categories represent a set of discrete aspects of architectural practice, all of which are integral to the conception, delivery and management of architectural projects as well as to the professional responsibilities of architects.

### **Design**

1. Project Briefing
2. Pre-Design
3. Conceptual Design
4. Schematic Design

### **Documentation**

5. Detailed Design
6. Documentation Project Delivery

### **Project Delivery**

7. Project Delivery Procurement
8. Construction Stage Practice Management Elements Practice Management

### **Practice management**

9. Practice Management

The 9 key elements of practice comprise 70 performance criteria, supported by 4 Knowledge Domains – core areas of professional knowledge and understanding underpinning architectural practice.

### **Regulatory Domain**

Knowledge of the regulations, standards and codes, relevant to all aspects of architectural practice, project design and delivery.

### **Social & Ethical Domain**

Knowledge of the social, ethical and cultural values relevant to architectural practice and the impacts on project users and broader communities.

### **Sustainable Environment Domain**

Understanding the responsibility of architects to minimise the impact on natural resources and design for longevity.

### **Disciplinary Domain**

Knowledge of histories and theories relevant to architecture, practice, building and technologies.

### **Communication Domain**

Knowledge of appropriate verbal, written and visual means to communicate relevant aspects of architecture.

## **Attachment 2 Comparison of reservation of architectural design practice to suitably qualified practitioner**

- In the USA, reservation of architectural function is provided for at the state level. In California, for example, architects are required for all projects other than –
  - single-family dwellings of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height;
  - multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height;
  - garages or other structures attached to buildings described above, of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height; or
  - agricultural and ranch buildings of wood frame construction, unless the building official having jurisdiction deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety, or welfare is involved.
- Reservation of architectural function also occurs at the state level in Canada. For example, in British Columbia an architect must be engaged for any –
  - commercial building greater than 470 square metres in floor area;
  - residential building with 5 or more units;
  - hotel with 11 or more guest rooms;
  - school;
  - public building exceeding 275 square metres or exceeding 235 square metres if more than one storey; or
  - hospital or aged care facility with more than 12 beds.
- In Japan, only a 1st-class Kenchikushi (the closest equivalent to an architect) can design and perform construction administration for a building greater than 13m in height or greater than 300 square metres in floor area (or any wooden building greater than 13 metres in height or 1000 square metres in floor area) or any building to be used as a school, a hospital, a theatre, a grandstand, or a public hall.
- In France, buildings generally larger than 170 square metres require the planning application documents to be produced by an architect (this does not exactly align with floor area as certain areas are excluded and others are included according to specifics such as intended use of the space).
- In Spain, only qualified architects are allowed to design new buildings (other than one storey buildings of 'technical simplicity') or to oversee major renovations that alter façades, structure, building services, etc.
- In Italy, engaging an architect is mandatory for work on all designated buildings of heritage value (the mainstay of the local architectural sector), metal or concrete structures, or buildings situated in earthquake zones.
- Germany does not have national protection of architectural function, however in practice the profession is protected by the building acts of most Lander, which dictate that for complex construction projects only a registered architect or engineer may submit permit applications.