



*Architectural Education and the Profession in  
Australia and New Zealand*

Research Study 2018

## 1. Introduction

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (ACA) is leading a major study of *Architectural Education and the Profession in Australia and New Zealand* with the support of all architectural stakeholder organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

This aim of this research is to support greater connections between schools of architecture and the architectural profession. It will look at how both the architectural practice environment and the university teaching environment have evolved in recent years, and how the two sectors can best work together to offer meaningful education and career pathways.

This study will be undertaken from August 2018 to June 2019 and is managed by the ACA with the support of the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA), the Australian Institute of Architects (Institute), the Association of Consulting Architects (ACA), the Australian Deans of Built Environment and Design (ADBED), Government Architects Network Australia (GANNA) and State and Territory Architect Registration Boards (ARBs), and New Zealand stakeholder organisations.

The ACA has initiated this work to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of the detailed study of architectural education in Australia published in 2008 by Michael Ostwald and Anthony Williams. This study provided reliable baseline data on questions including the number, background and opinions of architectural academics, the number and background of architectural students, teaching and learning approaches in architecture, the funding environment, and the relationship of architectural education to external processes such as professional accreditation. The new study will replicate some of this research for comparison purposes, as well as introducing new research themes concerning the relationship of education to the changing practice environment.

The Study includes a literature review; collection of data from a range of sources; surveys of the opinions of architecture academics and practitioners; interviews with key stakeholders such as architect registration boards and architectural representative bodies; and focus groups with architecture academics, students, graduates, practitioners and employers.

## 2. Project Outline

Education is critical to the development of the architectural profession and has ramifications nationally for the business and regulation of architects in Australia and New Zealand, and internationally in terms of the mobility of architects and firms practising overseas and to our increasing attractiveness to overseas students as a source of high quality professional education.

The *Architectural Education and the Profession in Australia and New Zealand* Study will explore four key themes:

- **Research Theme 1: Resourcing**  
How changes have in higher education regulation, practice and funding models over the past decade affected architectural education? What resources are available to schools and can they be considered sufficient? What is the profile of architecture teaching staff including contract and sessional staff? To what extent is staff welfare measured and supported?
- **Research Theme 2: Teaching and Learning Practice**  
What are the key contemporary issues in architectural teaching, e.g. the evolving

understanding of “Design Studio”, the need to balance multiple curriculum elements? Is there much diversity in the teaching of architectural programs in Australian universities? Does the increasing proportion of international students bring with it different expectations? What has been the impact of new educational technologies? To what extent is there a nexus between architectural education and research?

- **Research Theme 3: Pathways**

What is the background of current MArch students? How flexible are current pathways into and out of architectural education? Where do architecture graduates seek/gain employment? Do they work in architecture-related contexts when studying? How ready are they for practice and the path to architectural registration? Are there opportunities to increase the diversity in the architectural student body and professional/academic workforce?

- **Research Theme 4: Futures**

What are the future drivers for curriculum development and teaching practice in architecture? How will architectural education be impacted by the changing nature of architectural business (such as internationalisation, specialisation and cross-disciplinary work)? What will be the impact of the new Accreditation Framework / National Standard of Competency for Architects and other changes in the regulatory sphere?

The Study will include a literature review, collection of data from a range of sources, surveys of architecture academics and the architecture profession, interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with architecture academics, students, graduates and practitioners/employers. The main report of the Study is scheduled to be completed in mid-2019.

### 3. Project Resources

The AACA is the major funder of the Study with additional funds provided by the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia, the Australian Institute of Architects, the Australian Deans of Built Environment and Design and New Zealand architectural stakeholder organisations.

Management oversight and administrative support to the project is provided as an additional in-kind contribution by the AACA.

#### **Project team**

Kate Doyle, ACAA CEO	<i>Project sponsor</i>
Dr Alex Maroya, Research Director	<i>Project leader</i>
Dr Gill Matthewson	<i>Senior researcher</i>
Dr Louise Wallis	<i>Senior researcher</i>
Amanda Baillie	<i>Administration manager</i>

#### **Expert Reference Group**

Senior experienced academics and / or practitioners who will provide independent expert leadership in the conduct of the Study.

Prof Deborah Ascher Barnstone, University of Technology Sydney

Prof Kirsten Orr, University of Tasmania

Prof Michael Ostwald, University of New South Wales

Dr Peter Raisbeck, University of Melbourne

Ms Caroline Stalker, ARUP

Prof Naomi Stead, Monash University

### **Stakeholder Group**

A nominee from each of the key stakeholders (AACA / AASA / AIA / ACA / ADBED / GANA / ARBs/NZ stakeholders). The role of this Group is to take into account the views of respective stakeholders in framing the Study, to assist in identification of participants, to encourage participation in surveys, focus groups and interview.

## 4. Study methodology

There are three key elements to the methodology of the Architecture Education and the Profession in Australia Study:

### **Literature review and initial data gathering**

The Study includes a review of significant Australian, New Zealand and international work on contemporary architectural education, starting with the 2008 Understanding Architectural Education study and follow-up work on design studies and collaborative education. Literature will also be sought on the professional skills needs of architectural businesses. Background data will be obtained from a variety of sources such as the Department of Education and Training, architecture schools, the Australian Institute of Architects, the Association of Consulting Architects, Architects Registration Boards, International Union of Architects, and the Commonwealth Association of Architects.

### **Survey of Architecture Academics and the Architecture Profession**

An online survey / census will be undertaken of all full-time and part-time academic staff involved regularly in the teaching of architecture (including sessional staff). Each school will take responsibility for circulating the survey to its ongoing and sessional staff, and following up to ensure the target response rate of 70% is achieved.

Similar to the 2008 study, the survey will include a mix of factual questions (“What is your highest qualification?”), Likert scale questions (“How important is program accreditation in shaping architectural degree curriculum on a scale of one to five?”), list questions (“What are the top three challenges facing architecture schools?”) and a small number of open questions (“How can architectural teaching and research be better connected?”). The overall number of questions will be kept to approximately 40.

Approximately a quarter of questions from the 2008 study have been dropped to allow for additional questions, e.g. adding questions concerning the relationship between architectural education, the profession, and regulators.

A survey of similar size will be conducted of design professionals working in architecture (not only architects) including some of the same questions asked in the academic survey as well as questions focussed on the changing nature and context of current architectural practice.

### **Interviews and focus groups**

The research team will undertake individual semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, e.g. Heads of Schools, Deans / Senior University Managers, Registrars, AACA Board, the Institute, ACA, GANA, APESMA, Professions Australia, Department of Education and Training, employers of graduates. The structure of interviews will be informed by the initial literature review / data gathering and by initial results of the survey.

There will be number of focus groups of 12-20 persons each to include cohorts of academic staff, current students, graduates and practising architects. As with interviews, the content of focus groups would be informed by the initial literature review / data gathering and by initial results of the survey.

This project will be undertaken in accordance with best practice principles for human research and subject to review by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Technology Sydney. All participants will give informed consent to participation, which they may withdraw at any time.

### 5. Timeline of the study

The research team will be running surveys, focus groups and interviews in different locations across Australia and New Zealand from November 2018 to March 2019. The Study is expected to report mid-2019.