



Australian Council of
Building Design Professions Ltd

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Association of Consulting Architects Australia
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
Royal Australian Planning Institute Inc
The Association of Consulting Engineers Australia
The Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors
The Institution of Engineers Australia
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects

9 June 2000

Ms Judith Sloan
Presiding Commissioner
Architects Inquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Ms Sloan

Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession Draft Report

On behalf of the Chair and Directors of the Australian Council of Building Design Professions (BDP), I write to provide expert and professions based comment on the Commission's draft recommendations.

BDP is the peak body for architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, landscape architects and planners.

BDP's mission is to ensure a better-built environment for Australians and to improve the standing of design professionals.

The various professions are represented as follows -

- **architects** (represented by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) and the Association of Consulting Architects Australia (ACA));
- **engineers** (represented by the Institution of Engineers Australia (IEAust) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Australia (ACEA));
- **quantity surveyors** (represented by the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS));
- **landscape architects** (represented by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA));
- **planners** (represented by the Royal Australian Planning Institute (RAPI)).

It is the position of BDP that the public interest would be better served if all building design professionals were registered to allow the consumer, particularly the less informed consumer, to easily identify the professional providing the required service. In this case it is the architectural profession that is under review, and accordingly BDP supports the continuation of an appropriate registration system for architects.

BDP's key points in support of this position are -

- Existing general consumer protection legislation such as Fair Trading and Trade Practices Acts do not adequately protect the interests of consumers of architectural services, let alone the broader public interest issues related to the quality of the constructed environment. This is because alternative "architectural" service providers lack the training, skill and expertise of architects.
- A registration system should publicly identify those qualified to provide architectural services.
- Consumer education is extremely difficult to achieve because consumers are infrequently in the market for architectural services.
- The public could have greater faith in a statutory system of registration.
- The export market accounts for a significant portion of the work of Australian building design professionals, including architects. These architects would be disadvantaged in obtaining contracts for work outside Australia, if the statutory regulation of architects was abolished in Australia.

Landscape architects are also affected by the operation of the current Architects Acts in that all State Acts refer to the permissible use of the term "Landscape Architect", but only one (South Australia) makes any attempt to define what a landscape architect is. The AILA, as one of BDP's constituent members, advocates consistent interpretation of the term and argues that the use of this term should be restricted to persons who are eligible for corporate members of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Such a definition would ensure that a landscape architect has an appropriate qualification and has accumulated an adequate level of practice experience. It ensures a similar protection of the public interest to that achieved by restricting the use of the term "architect" under the Architects Acts.

BDP would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely



Heather Howes
Executive Officer