CADASTRAL SURVEYORS LICENSING BOARD OF NEW ZEALAND

PO Box 5520
Wellington
New Zealand

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MRA Review
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir

Draft submission on TTMRA

The Board, fully supports the principle of mutual recognition as provided for in the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act, where there is equivalence of occupation and qualifications.

The Board has not had any experience, in its time since establishment, with the operation of the Act. In most cases in the past New Zealand surveyors wishing to move from New Zealand to Australia have used long-standing reciprocity arrangements between the New Zealand and Australian Boards.

However, in perusing the Act the Board notes and wishes to draw to the Commission's attention, one possible weakness. This is in respect of section 24 where an applicant is entitled to carry out their occupation, pending granting or refusal of registration. We note that the local registration authority has one month from receiving an application to make a decision to grant, postpone or refuse registration. This allows the possibility that a person not entitled to registration can actually practice, albeit for a short period. It would seem to be more consistent to also require the applicant to also wait the one month until they have heard from the authority.

The Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board of New Zealand is established by the Cadastral Survey Act 2002 with a principal function of setting standards that persons applying for a licence to conduct cadastral surveys must meet, and licensing such persons. It also has disciplinary functions in respect of professional misconduct. The Board is a successor to the previous Survey Board of New Zealand, first established in 1901, with generally similar functions of setting standards for the registration of surveyors.

The purpose of licensing, or registration, of cadastral surveyors is because errors in cadastral surveys can lead to loss to property owners and investors, including third parties, and affect services and utilities. A general loss in confidence in the accuracy of the definition of land parcels would have a large adverse impact on investment and increase the costs of land transactions. There is also an extensive reliance by Government and the public on an accurate cadastral database which depends on the accuracy of surveyors work.

A reciprocity arrangement has existed between New Zealand and all Australian Surveyors Boards since 1892, whereby registration or licensing in one jurisdiction is fully recognised by any or all of the other jurisdictions. This is by a process of exchanges of Letters of Accreditation from one Board to the other, which in effect documents the matters referred to in section 19(2)(a)-0) of the Act, although not to the same detail. This has been found to be a very effective and efficient process, facilitating the exchange of surveyors between the various jurisdictions and has fostered trans-Tasman relationships exchange of and expertise. These Boards meet regularly to ensure consistency of standards for licensing or registration, as the Council of the Reciprocating Surveyors Boards of Australia and New Zealand. The Cadastral Surveyors Licensing Board of New Zealand is continuing with this arrangement.

The Board is not aware of any other particular issues or problems with the operation of this Act.

Yours faithfully

Brian Coutts
Chair