

12 December 2008



Australian Institute of Architects

Mr Patrick Laplagne
Assistant Commissioner
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 8003

Dear Mr Laplagne

Re Review of Mutual Recognition Schemes

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Productivity Commission's (the Commission) Draft Research Report - Review of Mutual Recognition Schemes 2008.

The Institute is an independent, national, member organisation with almost 10,000 members across Australia and overseas. The Institute exists to: advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice; and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our community, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design.

The Institute acknowledges the benefits of mutual recognition in relation to the registration of architects across the jurisdictions, however we believe the next step for the profession is a national register to be established – where architects register and pay a fee in their home state automatically entitling them to placement on a national register - thus allowing architects to work in all Australian state and territories and within New Zealand without having to complete separate registration processes nor pay registration fees across multiple jurisdictions.

We also acknowledge that there are variations in state and territory architects legislation, and we support consistent regulations across the jurisdictions as a logical measure to enhance mutual recognition.

.../2

In this submission, the Institute comments on three issues within the Commission's Draft Report; further training and ongoing professional development, local knowledge requirements, and cross-border and remote service provision.

Ongoing Training and Professional Development

The Institute is committed to the advancement of architecture and the fostering of skills and service in the profession; it is concerned not only with the standard of undergraduate architectural education but also with the maintenance and development of professional competence in all areas of architectural endeavour, for the benefit of the broader community.

The Institute is supportive of the Commission's draft recommendation (5.6) that mutual recognition legislation be amended to make it clear ongoing training and professional development requirements apply equally to all registered persons within an occupation including those registered under mutual recognition.

Differences in CPD requirements for architects do exist across the jurisdictions. For instance, NSW requires 20 hours of mandatory CPD, compared to Victoria where architects do not need to meet mandatory CPD to maintain registration.

The Institute and the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia have a joint policy position on continuing professional development policy, including the endorsement of nationally consistent CPD requirements of 20 hours per annum.

Local Knowledge Requirements

In relation to the Commission's discussion on local knowledge requirements, architects often have to navigate specific planning requirements for different areas of Australia and New Zealand. However the *Building Code of Australia* provides the national standard for building approvals to which all State and Territory legislation refers. The Building Code also contains provisions for local environment issues such as wind speeds, cyclone requirements etc.

The Institute therefore believes that in regard to the profession, there is no need to amend mutual recognition legislation as the Building Code addresses local requirements.

Cross Border and Remote Service Provision

The Institute welcomes the Commission's further consideration of this issue. The Institute's preference for a national register of architects would address the issues raised in the draft report in relation to people working across jurisdictions.

As discussed earlier, the Building Code of Australian provides the national standard for building approvals. Similarly, the Institute would like to see National Guidelines for planning approvals as although architects do navigate the variations in local planning laws, they can act as a barrier to Architects practising across jurisdictions.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this submission if needed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DP', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

David Parken, LFRAlA
Chief Executive Officer