



Inquiry into the Free Trade Agreement Between Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Submission date: 18/03/2022

Architects Accreditation Council of Australia

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ABOUT AACA

Members of the AACA

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 AACA 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. AACA comprises 16 members nominated by the [State and Territory architects registration Boards](#) (Nominating Bodies), each of whom nominates two persons to the membership of the Council.

The Board of Directors

AACA's Board of Directors are five in number who are elected by the Members. The President (Board Chair) must be an architect member of the Council with at least 12 months experience as a Director in the five year period preceding nomination for the position of President. Two of the remaining four positions on the Board of Directors must be occupied by architects; and up to two positions may be held by relevantly experienced persons outside the Membership of the AACA.

The Board of Directors meets at least three times a year. Directors during the reporting year included:

- Mr Keith Drew (President)
- Dr Giorgio MARfella
- Dr Deborah Dearing
- Dr Kirsten Orr
- Mr Malcolm Middleton

Staff

The AACA Chief Executive Officer is Kathlyn Loseby

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AACA Committees

The operational committees established to provide professional advice in the conduct of AACA operations are outlined below.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PANEL

The Panel is comprised of three architectural academics and two practising architects. It provides advice to the Board on AACA assessment programs including the Architectural Practice Examination, the National Program of Assessment, Overseas Qualifications Assessment, Experienced Practitioner Program and the conduct of assessments of qualifications for the Federal Government's Skilled Migration Program.

Members include:

- Sarah Rees
- Dr Kate Hislop (Chair)
- Catherine Lassen
- David Sainsbery
- Paul Boyce
- Tim Browne
- Kathlyn Loseby

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION REGIONAL CONVENORS' COMMITTEE

The eight State and Territory Architectural Practice Examination (APE) convenors comprise the membership of this committee led by the APE National Convenor. The committee's major responsibilities are to supervise, monitor and report on the Architectural Practice Examination, as well as to provide quality assurance for the APE in their respective state or territory.

Members include:

- Melonie Bayl-Smith (New South Wales)
- Paul Boyce (South Australia – APE National Convenor)
- David Bridgman (Northern Territory)
- Scott Hodgson (ACT)
- Ian Hamilton (Queensland)
- Sally Matthews (Western Australia)
- John Padas (Tasmania)
- Emma Templeton (Victoria)

APEC ARCHITECT MONITORING COMMITTEE (AUSTRALIA)

The APEC Architect Monitoring Committee is responsible for assessment of architects registered in Australia wishing to have their names entered onto the APEC Architect Register.

Members include the AACA Directors and the CEO.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Accreditation Management Committee comprising nominees of all the stakeholders in the profession is responsible for providing advice on the management and implementation of the Procedure and providing strategic, high quality advice to the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia Board in order to implement a transparent and fair Procedure in Australia. The Committee does not accredit programs; that is the decision of the respective State and Territory Architect Registration Boards. More information about the Committee is contained in the Accreditation Procedure.

Membership during the reporting period was:

Current

- Mr Stephen Ward (Chairperson March 2020 - present) – nominee of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia
- Dr Chris Landorf – nominee of the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia
- Dr Kirsten Orr – nominee of the Australian State and Territory Architect Registration Boards
- Mr Paul Boyce – nominee of the Australian State and Territory Architect Registration Boards
- Dr Lara Mackintosh – nominee of the Australian Institute of Architects

Previous

- Mr Dean Wood (Chairperson July 2019 to March 2020) – nominee of the Australian Institute of Architects
- Dr Michael Jasper – nominee of the Australian Deans of the Built Environment and Design
- Ms Rebecca Naughtin – nominee of the Australian State and Territory Architect Registration Boards

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

A not-for-profit organisation, AACA maintains the National Standard of Competency for Architects that underpins all assessment processes including the accreditation of architecture programs leading to registration as an architect in Australia.

WHAT WE DO

Locally we:

- consult with key organisations to develop, maintain and promote the National Standard of Competency for Architects
- develop and provide competency-based assessment programs to determine eligibility for registration as an architect in Australia
- administer the Architecture Accreditation Procedure in Australia and New Zealand on behalf of the Architect Registration Boards.

Internationally we:

- facilitate international mutual recognition agreements in regard to architectural education and registration as an architect in Australia
- assess overseas qualifications for architects seeking to register as an architect in Australia
- provide accurate data on the profession of architecture in Australia and overseas

WHO WE WORK WITH

- State and Territory Architect Registration Boards
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Association of Consulting Architects in Australia
- Australian Deans of the Built Environment and Design
- Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia
- Commonwealth Government Departments of Education, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Home Affairs
- International bodies responsible for architecture standards for licensing architects

STRATEGIC PLAN

The AACA developed a new [five-year Strategic Plan](#) in March 2020. The Plan focuses on AACA's supporting the eight architect registration boards by delivering high quality, nationally consistent assessment programs on the path to registration as an architect.

BENEFITS FOR THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) assists the agreement between the UK and Australian Architect Registration bodies to agree a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). This will recognise the professional credentials of graduates of architecture, and registered architects, from both the United Kingdom and Australia to support their mobility by creating the opportunity to practise beyond their borders. In addition to the substantial benefits trade liberalisation will deliver for both producers and consumers, the agreement also opens up critical opportunities for a range of professionals, including architects.

A deepening of the ties with the UK architecture sector is one of mutual benefits that paves the way for a range of further measures that will capitalise on the benefits for professionals in both nations. Under the terms of the agreement, professionals will benefit from provisions to support mutual recognition of qualifications and greater certainty for skilled professionals entering each of our respective labour markets.

The MRA will facilitate the registration of an architect registered in the United Kingdom as an Australian architect; and the registration of an Australian architect as an architect in the United Kingdom. This new arrangement enhances the global exchange of skills, expertise, collaboration and employment opportunities.

Architects are among the most highly qualified professionals alongside the legal and medical fraternities. Architecture is also one of the professions that benefits most from collaboration, hence recognising architects' credentials globally will open up tremendous opportunities to transform the architecture and construction industry in Australia.

Since the announcement of the FTA in June 2021, the AACA has received over 150 enquiries regarding the agreement from both UK and Australian architects who wish to take advantage of the scheme.

BENEFITS FOR THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR

A primary driver for international students to study in Australia is the prospect of being able to migrate permanently out of their home country post-graduation. The architect MRA will allow Australian architecture qualifications and registration to be recognised in the UK and therefore creating additional options for international students who wish to relocate. This is expected to be an extra incentive for international student, especially from Asia, to choose Australia as their destination which is geographically closer and culturally more similar to home.

In addition, in the international education contributed more than \$40 billion to the Australian economy in 2019, including creating jobs in tertiary education sector. The flow on effect from attracting international students will therefore provide significant support in the tertiary architecture programs.

BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS

Protection of the consumer is the principal priority of any regulating authority.

The status of the UK and Australian MRA is still being negotiated between the architects Accreditation Council of Australia (ACA) and the United Kingdom Architect Registration Board (UK ARB).

Both bodies will protect the consumer by making sure any potential candidate applying for registration in the alternate country via the MRA process, is aware of any domain specific requirements. For instance, in Australia, we have Australian Standards and Building Codes (Australian Building Codes Board National Construction Code (ABCB NCC)), design specific responses for bushfire conditions (BAL design principles), and our 2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) requires design, documentation and construction recognising our First Nations heritage and knowledge.

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