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Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession
by the Productivity Commission

Submission to public hearing to be held
at 9.30am Thursday 8th June 2000 at the
Hindley Park Royal Hotel
65 Hindley Street Adelaide
by John Singleton Chappel AM L.F.R.A.I.A.

Having established a medium sized architectural practice, and headed it for more than thirty years, I am familiar with all aspects of Architecture including the creative process necessary to achieve it.

I support and endorse the recommendations made by the R.A.I.A. in response to the Review.

Had the Commission involved architects in the Review initially, I believe their background, experience, and understanding of the problem would have greatly simplified the review process.

Since architect's Acts in Australia were instigated by architects, however, and administered by them for more than half a century to the great benefit of both the profession and the Australian public, failure to seek their initial guidance in this matter seems extraordinary-

Ironically, the reason behind the establishment of the Boards, was in itself the removal of unfair competition by impostors who posed as architects, but were not equipped to provide architectural services,

There was, and still is ample evidence of this practice, which has been an ongoing problem for Australia's architectural development.

2 Since that time, Schools of Architecture have been set up at universities around Australia, to ensure, under the supervision of Registration Boards, that adequate professional training is available to aspiring architects.

In this sense, I suggest, the record of achievement of these Boards is impeccable, their standards being governed by precedents in architectural education progressively established since the days of the Greeks and the Romans.

Alike situation exists in most Western civilizations around the world.

Acts controlling architects are accepted as imperatives by the governments and communities of Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Venezuela - also to be introduced in Ireland and the Netherlands - indicating that governments worldwide are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of statutory regulation of the profession.

Strangely, no arguments have been produced as to why Australia should not require registration, when so many major countries find it necessary.

While there is suggestion that the process of the enquiry has been hampered in some quarters, by a preconceived conclusion, this should not prevent an outcome in favour of regulation.

I submit that a country's architecture is a measure of its culture and civilization, as evidenced down the ages. Any action that could result in a decline of architectural standards in Australia, should, therefore, be avoided. Surely de-regulation would do just that?

Importantly, competition is a comparison of "apples with apples" and then competing on price alone.

This means that architects do compete with other architects, but since they provide a unique service, not available elsewhere, they cannot be said to 'compete' with draftsmen, builders, and other "building design practitioners" who are offering a range of abbreviated and partial services. This, I suggest is a major plan in the reasoning behind the finding. In the light of the above, I suggest it would be seriously damaging to architecture in Australia, to abolish the regulation of Architecture.

Surely Architecture (as distinct from mere building) is a vital component of the development of any civilized nation into the 21st Century, as it has been throughout history. It lies at the core of any nation's history, both past and future.

While conditions of fair competition are important to the economy, therefore, the principle of comparing "apples with apples" is an essential ingredient.

Any other form of "competition" would be totally ineffective and counter-productive.