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30/5/00

**Architects Inquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2, Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003**

To whom it may concern:**Re: Review of Architectural Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession**

I have been a Practicing Architect for 30 years, and I have seen many changes occur in the profession over that period of time.

What puzzles me is why we actually needed this Review in the first place.

Now after reading the first draft of this report, I am convinced that we didn't.

None the less I feel compelled to make my comments to the Productivity Commission as follows:

It appears to me after reading the First Draft of the report that the commissioners have a predetermined end result in mind, and they have chosen what they need from the various submissions to justify their decision.

I suggest that having waded through what appears to be a raft of generalizations the reader would conclude that the Commissions last two paragraphs of their Draft Report give their intentions away!

In the second last paragraph they refer to the United Kingdom experience and the Warne Report.

Not only do they selectively quote from the report, but they completely ignore the fact that its findings were rejected by the British Government, who in fact, actually tightened up their Registration Act as a result.

Secondly in their final paragraph the Commission make the ultimate admission " Architects have unique skills to offer the community" !

The words are clear, no matter how much they may try to split hairs, it is Architects they are talking about, not Draftpersons, Project Managers or Building Economists.

On this basis alone, the report should be rejected.

But, if competition is what the Commission is after, then I suggest that the existing Act be tightened, as the British have done, to avoid what is not in the communities interest, that of comparing apples with pears, or should that read lemons?

In my opinion, in terms of what an Architect is and does, there is no need to change anything.

There always was, and still is, the availability for competition within the market place.

A median salary of \$54,000.00 is hardly suggestive of a monopoly.

What we should be doing in this day and age is improving standards in all forms of "Business Life" rather than reducing them.

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What we are really talking about, is what to call people who practice within the Construction Industry, without infringing on the name Architect and the qualifications that go with the name.

"Constructional Services", "Building Services" are a couple of terminologies which are currently used to describe other similar activities, but Architects have special training, which requires dedication and raises the standard within the industry.

Why, I ask, is it necessary in the Commissions eyes to "Water down" the name and all that it implies?

If people want to use the name "Architect" then they should carry out the study this profession requires; and uphold the conditions it embraces.

I am not against competition, but I believe that the highest standard or choice that the term Architect implies should be maintained, so that the consumer can choose and pay according to their needs and requirements.

Accountants / Book-keepers both carry out various forms of numerical accounting.

Doctors / Nurses both carry out various forms of medical treatment.

Holden / Ford both make automobiles.

There are many other examples of similar activities that cannot use the same names even though they are involved in the same professional or business areas.

Many professions or businesses can perform similar tasks to each other, and depending on our needs we are free to make selections.

We make choices in all aspects of life, and we are aware of differences in those choices by "Name Association", (who it is and what they do) and by carrying out basic research into that business and its ability to perform the task that we want.

The descriptive "Name Association" should give an indication of the level of study/qualification, and thus the degree of confidence that the consumer should have in the service provider. Using specialized "professional references" is by no means a measure of competence, but this problem will not change even if the terminology "Architect" is freed up as is proposed.

It will still be up to the public to do their research and make their choice, as they presently do.

Again I ask, why split hairs? "Architect / Drafts / man / person" or "Architect / Chartered Architect".

Giving all people the same access to use of various terminologies does not ensure better competition for the consumer. It will, in fact, make it harder to choose through a generalization of knowledge and competency, that gives the perspective clients little direction in choosing an appropriate practitioner.

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Although the Report refers to a dictionary definition of Architect "is a designer who prepares plans for buildings, ships, etc., and supervises their construction." It is simplistic and ignores completely the Architects role in the conception of a building and as Arbiter and in placing competency and responsibility on the line in procurement.

I prefer the Etymological Greek derivative of Architect from Webster's Dictionary as "architektOn" "Master Builder".

This infers to me that the Commission should encourage Architects to continue to be trained to maintain the "Highest Standards" rather than its current suggestion to drag the name down to a more "Competitive Level"

Maybe I'm just getting too old and too set in my ways and should be cast off into history with the Ancient Greek "Master Builders".

Yours faithfully

Neil Loftus



Graham Walker



Ron Hewitt