

8 July 2010

NZRAB Newsletter 2/2010

To Registered Architects

Hello from the New Zealand Registered Architects Board. This is an update on what's being happening recently.

Strategic Plan

The NZRAB Board meet on 29 June 2010 and agreed to a Strategic Plan for the next five years. This is important, as, now that the NZRAB is up and running well, this plan charts what we want to achieve next. The Board has been doing a lot of thinking about how it can make a more sophisticated contribution to the quality of the built environment.

OIA inquiry

We've received an Official Information Act inquiry about my credit card expenses as CE. Our response is on the NZRAB website.

You can view both the Strategic Plan and the OIA response on our "News" page at <http://www.nzrab.org.nz/default.aspx?Page=169>.

Continuing Registration application form

Thank you so much for the excellent feedback regarding the draft application form for the first five-year Competence Reviews, which begin next year. Numerous suggestions were received and significant improvements resulted.

From our data base, we have 20 architects who are in that small group who were registered for the first time in the second half of 2006 when the NZRAB just got started, and therefore need to have Competence Reviews next year. Of these we don't know how many will achieve 1000 CPD points, but let's assume 50 per cent. If that's correct then for 10 architects we will need them to fill out the application form that you've seen. Then from the information received we will have to determine if any of these architects need an interactive assessment to confirm that they are still safe to practise.

This will be the curtain raiser for the following year, 2012, when about 1200 architects will need to have their five-yearly 'warrant-of-fitness'. These are the ex-AERB architects who were registered with the NZRAB in early 2007. Organising that will be a challenge.

New publication – *Problems with your client?*

About now most architects are being posted their 2010 - 2011 Certificates of Registration – thanks for all the prompt payments.

Included in that package is a new NZRAB brochure entitled *Problems with your client?* It's also available at the publications page at www.nzrab.org.nz.

Here at the office we often receive phone calls from members of the public upset that their residential project has gone wrong. Occasionally these lead to complaints being laid. As the brochure says, the most common scenario that we hear is:

- the client commissions the architect to design a house and specifies a fixed budget
- the architect prepares the plans and the client pays the architect's fee
- then the quotes come in showing the house will cost twice the funds available
- for the client, the plans – already paid for – are useless.

From those calls we've prepared *Problems with your client?* to help you, the architect, avoid these difficulties. If the brochure seems to be "teaching granny to suck eggs"; well, so be it – the problem is real enough.

ACR

As I write this, we still have slightly over 200 architects who still need to pay for their 2010-2011 certificates. Technically, until the payment is made these architects are breaking the law if they are currently practising. In a few days time they will be recorded on the online New Zealand Architects Register as "expired" and "in default". If this is you, please get this sorted ASAP.

APEC Architect Project gets traction

You'll recall that in July 2009 we signed an agreement with Japan as part of the APEC Architect Project which allows senior architects in New Zealand access to a fast-track cross-border registration procedure in Japan, senior architects from Japan having the same entitlement here. We are now close to finalising a similar arrangement with Singapore. We hope to have this formally signed off in October when the Central Council of the APEC Architect Project meets in Manila.

As I understand it, Singapore is used by many architects as a base for the provision of architectural services around North and South Asia – so if that sounds like you, maybe this is something you need to think about.

As a side bar, we are also in the process of having the Board of Architects Singapore fully recognise our architectural degrees for initial registration there while we are going to recognise the M Arch and B Arch from the National University of Singapore for initial registration here. This offers the education sector here an export opportunity, given that many people from Singapore wanting to be architects study outside Singapore.

Unitec

New Zealand and Australia share a procedure by which every five years we recheck the quality of the qualifications recognised for initial registration in both countries. One of these reviews has just been completed for Unitec, which came through with flying colours. We were able to arrange for the Singaporean administrators to sit in on that, which has helped them come to the view that they can recognise the Unitec degrees, having done so some years back for Auckland University and Victoria University.

The recession?

We are currently preparing our *2010 Annual Report*. Interestingly, our records show a very slight drop in the number of architects registered at 30 June 2010 compared to 12 months earlier and a sharp rise over the same period in the number of architects in Voluntary Suspension. I think this reflects architects having a tough time in the downturn.

Where do the grads go?

Another trend we've seen in recent years is a substantial increase in the numbers of students studying and graduating in architecture, but this has not translated into significant increases in the numbers seeking registration. Whether this matters or not we don't know, but some research is planned to find out why this is happening. We need to be sure that our procedures aren't in some way wrongly shutting competent people out.

That's our news at the moment. Take care and if you have any concerns, do get in touch.

Paul Jackman
CE NZRAB