

26 May 2009

NZRAB Newsletter 2/2009

Greetings from the New Zealand Registered Architects Board. This is our second newsletter for 2009.

Annual fees on the drip?

Firstly, thank you for the many replies to the email that I sent last week asking if architects want to take part in a possible scheme by which you could pay for your annual Certificates of Registration by installment through a finance company.

This will **not** go ahead.

A 25 per cent uptake was required to make the proposal economic. Though some architects would have used the service, from the replies received it would not have been even 5 per cent, so it is not a runner. Still, it was worth testing the idea – as has been said elsewhere “You can’t catch a fish unless your line is in the water.”

A correction

My email last week said the fee for the annual Certificate of Registration is \$511.25 (GST included). That was a typo – it is \$551.25 (GST included).

Invoices for that payment covering 2009/10 are with architects now. We are waiting with great interest to see how many architects renew their registration given the economic downturn. The NZRAB is fully self-funded and the annual fee pays about 80 percent of our costs. Still, we have some reserves which will keep us going for a while and we’ve been working out ways to cut our spending should it be necessary.

Don’t forget that if you have been made redundant and don’t want to pay your annual fee at the moment, you can go into voluntary suspension. When you start working again you can come out of voluntary suspension simply by purchasing your annual Certificate of Registration then. To make this easier, the fee for going into voluntary suspension has been abolished. Also, now you can keep doing and recording CPD in the normal way while you are in voluntary suspension. Your access to your CPD website will still be available so you can do and record CPD as you did when you were practicing.

However, from 1 July you will not be able to record CPD if you simply haven’t paid your annual fee and your registration has expired as a result.

Initial Registration

Things are not all gloom and doom. People still want to be architects. We have an initial registration round underway with 19 applicants which is a good result – more than last year.

The registration leapfrog

As has already been announced, those architects who have already achieved 1000 CPD points will be given the opportunity in July to “leapfrog” their registration. This means they can begin a new five year registration cycle starting 1 July 2009, with their next competence review due in 2014. This is voluntary, so expect an email in a week or so asking if you want to do this. The advantage is it means these architects don’t waste the CPD points that they will accrue between now and when their reviews were previously due.

International

We are advancing on the international front. We have agreed with the Japanese on the text for an access arrangement for senior architects from each economy to become registered architects in

the other economy under the APEC Architect Framework. Once we have signatures on the documents, we will put on the website information about how you can become a Japanese architect/1st-class Kenchikushi, allowing you to practice in Japan. In essence you have to become a New Zealand APEC Architect which entitles you to apply for a fast track registration procedure in Japan. For this you do **not** have to speak Japanese.

Last week we had initial talks with Singapore to establish similar arrangements with them.

Discipline Case

A former New Zealand Registered Architect has been found wanting in a discipline case. For reasons specific to this case, we are keeping the name of the former architect confidential. However, we still want architects to learn from what happened, so as not to make the same mistakes. A report on the case, with the names of the parties removed, is available on the NZRAB website at <http://www.nzrab.org.nz/default.aspx?Page=163>. It's called "Discipline Case 2". **You should read it.**

Naming architects and imposing costs

There were particular circumstances in the case recently concluded. However, at its 12 May 2009 meeting, the Board determined that as a general principle where charges are proven the names of architects found wanting will be published and costs will be sought.

Complaints and Discipline Reform

The NZRAB has made a formal request to the Minister for Building and Construction asking for amendments to the Registered Architects Act 2005 which would allow us to reform our complaints and discipline procedures. We told the Minister that because of the Act's requirements our current complaints and discipline procedures are excessively convoluted, time consuming and expensive.

We want a much simpler procedure, so we can process complaints faster, and the earlier user of alternatives like mediation and arbitration. The procedure we favour would see an Investigating Committee investigate a complaint and then, if it thinks there is a case to answer, a formal hearing would be held in front of the Board, binding decisions being made forthwith.

PI Cover?

One detail re discipline cases: you should check as to whether your PI cover includes the costs of a discipline case – the legal costs of mounting a defence and/or the cost of any penalty. As an architect, you should know and be clear as to whether the cover you have meets your needs.

Strategic Plan

At the 12 May Board meeting the Board adopted a revised Strategic plan to cover 2009-2012. You can read it at <http://www.nzrab.org.nz/assets/strategic%20plan%202009.pdf>. As the plan outlines, one new thing is we are going to investigate whether urban design should be a higher priority in terms of registration requirements.

Registration Assessment Schedule

For registration assessors, next year's schedule is now available at [www.nzrab.org.nz/assets/2010 equivalency and registration application and fee schedule.pdf](http://www.nzrab.org.nz/assets/2010%20equivalency%20and%20registration%20application%20and%20fee%20schedule.pdf)

That's our news for the moment. Do contact me if you have any concerns.

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