

**15 December 2009**

**New Zealand Registered Architects Board**

**Newsletter 5/2009**

**To NZ Architects**

Greetings from the NZRAB. This newsletter is a round-up of recent news and our last for 2009.

### **Fee changes**

You'll recall that a long time ago we consulted with you regarding a number of fee changes – either reductions or fees required for when we begin undertaking architects' five yearly competence reviews. The bureaucratic process grinds so slowly that we still haven't got them promulgated. So we are still waiting, except that where the fees are reductions, or, in one case, a fee abolition, we have just made the changes anyway. But it will be nice to get all this formally put to bed, hopefully quite soon now.

### **Complaints and Discipline reforms**

We are also waiting for changes to our Act so we can then start streamlining our very convoluted and time wasting complaints and discipline procedures. Hopefully amending legislation will be in the house early next year.

### **Structural reform**

Looking ahead, next year the government is going to review all occupational licensing throughout the New Zealand economy, including in the building sector. This could mean changes to the way architects are registered. Various ideas are circulating among the policy makers. There's no telling what will happen in the end, but change is likely. We'll keep you up to date with developments.

### **Registrations**

We've just finished another registration round, which went well, though applications were a bit down on previous years.

The volunteer assessors who did the evaluations have asked me to pass on one point, especially to principals of practices that employ architectural graduates who aspire to registration. It's really important that you help your younger staff build up a broad range of skills and experience. We sometimes receive applications from people who since graduation have slaved away in a practice doing such a narrow range of work that in good conscience we can't register them. The premise of initial registration is that the applicant has to be safe to practice as a sole practitioner – being an excellent specialised team player isn't good enough. There may even be situations where you need to say to a young person "You've done grand work for us, but for initial registration you need to find different kinds of work elsewhere, to broaden your experience."

### **Terminology**

Also, we see confusion about what your junior staff in the office should be called. There is no such thing as a "Graduate Architect" and the term should never be used. The title "Graduate Architect" breaches the Registered Architects Act and is illegal. Only Registered Architects can use the word 'architect' while offering or providing building design services.

What is the right term? We favour "Architectural Graduate", and encourage everyone to use this term, so it becomes the industry norm. "Architectural Graduate" is accurate and legal, and avoids confusion. We will be asking the NZIA to use this term in their publications to be consistent with the NZRAB.

### **Terms of appointment**

The NZIA is worried that they are getting an increasing number of complaints about architects from clients where projects are taken on without agreed terms of appointment. This is dangerous for architects and lays you open to a complaint, if something goes wrong later. The Architect's Code of Ethical Conduct states:

*50) A Registered Architect must not undertake professional work unless the Registered Architect and the client have agreed the terms of the appointment, which may include but need not be limited to:*

- (a) scope of work*
- (b) allocation of responsibilities*
- (c) any limitation of responsibilities*
- (d) fee, or method of calculating it, and terms of trade*
- (e) any provision for termination*
- (f) provision for professional indemnity insurance.*

No matter how small the project, as a minimum you should have an agreement that covers what's outlined above.

### **Lost and found**

You will have seen in recent months our various efforts to trace architects who hadn't paid for their 2009 2010 Certificate of Registration. With a lot of chasing up we have got this down to only eight architects that we still can't contact. They are:

- Michael Barns (Dubai)
- Ephraim Cooper (city unknown)
- Steve Grant (Porirua)
- Faris Hammady (Melbourne)
- Bryan Menzies (Dunedin)
- Scott Peabody (Spring Hill, Queensland)
- Roger Routledge (Wellington)
- Andrzej Wojtowicz (Melbourne).

If you know how to get in touch with any of these good souls, do let us know. In many cases when we find lost architects they choose to go into voluntary suspension or to cancel their registration altogether, which is fine, but it is nice to get our records up to date and accurate. In particular, we need to make sure no one is inadvertently practicing illegally.

### **Anyone for leapfrog?**

In January next year the NZIA will provide us with the names of all architects who as at 31 December 2009 had 1000 CPD points or more, including 100 in each of the four units of competency. I will then write to these architects asking "Would you like to leapfrog your five year annual registration entitlement now?" For those who say yes, this means they will then be entitled to another five year's annual registration starting 1 July 2010. At the same time their CPD points accrual will be reset at zero as at 1 January 2010. This means for automatic ongoing registration five years later they will have to have 1000 CPD points etc. by 31 December 2014.

Whether these architects choose to leapfrog is up to them, and indeed last time we offered this some didn't. There's nothing compulsory about this.

Well, that's our news.

**From both the NZRAB Board and the secretariat here at the office, we hope you have a very Merry Christmas with those you love, and may the New Year bring you prosperity and happiness.**

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