

December 2008

Now an architect!

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You are now a Registered Architect. This means you now have the obligations and entitlements that come with being a member of your profession. But what are they?

Obligations

The purpose of registration is to ensure that architects are competent and reputable, so that the public can rely on them. To this end, in all your dealings you should comply with the ***Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects***, which binds you to a standard of conduct that sets you apart.

The Code is taken from the Registered Architects Rules 2006 and reproduced at the end of this document. The Code covers your relationships with:

- the public
- your clients
- the profession
- other Registered Architects.

Also, have a look at the ***Vision for Architecture in New Zealand***, expressed in the box below. That's the big picture and contributing to it is a great thing to do.

A Vision for Architecture in New Zealand

The task of architecture is to lead the way in terms of what the built environment can and should be. This goes beyond designing for function, essential though that is. Insofar as architecture articulates the national imagination, it contributes to nation building. If the built environment in New Zealand is the best that it can be, then it contributes to the realisation of this nation's potential.

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board is tasked with determining who can be Registered Architects. In doing this, the Board is mindful of the broader contribution to New Zealand that, at its best, the profession makes through leadership and a passion for excellence.

Entitlements

As a Registered Architect you are now entitled to call yourself a Registered Architect and to quote your registration number, which is on your Certificate of Registration. Under the current law, others can design buildings, but they can't call themselves architects as well. However, you can.

We suggest you should tell people about this!

For starters, you can now sign your letters this way:

Bill Brown
Registered Architect 984

Or if you prefer:

Bill Brown, Reg Arch.

And, if you want, you can add a visual element to your letters, business cards and so on, like this:



If you want to download this special logo for Registered Architects, and see the rules for its use, go to <http://www.nzrab.org.nz> and look under the "For Architects" section.

Getting connected

As a newly Registered Architect, you need to access information specifically for you in the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) online database.

To do this, please follow these steps.

1. Firstly, you need a password. Go to the NZRAB home page at www.nzrab.org.nz. Click on "Architect's Login". A page then opens entitled "Architect's Login". Click on "Generate a password". A password will be emailed to you.
2. Once you have the password, go back to "Architect's Login". In the page that opens enter your registration number or email address and your password. Then click "Login" and a page entitled "Welcome Architect" will open. You are now in a part of the NZRAB website that is exclusive to you individually.
3. From this page there are two paths that you can take. The first link is to your exclusive Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

page which tells you about training opportunities; more on that later.

4. The second link is to your individual data, some of which is displayed publicly on the Architects Register. The Register lists all New Zealand Registered Architects and has search facilities for both architects and practices.
5. To keep the information on the Register about you up to date, once you have your password, log in and, if need be, make changes to your contact details.
6. You should also change your first computer-generated password into something easier to remember. Do this by dropping its replacement into your personal details in the two fields above your date of birth.
7. You have a choice about whether or not your personal contact details are visible on the website. To change this, click "yes" or "no" for "Consent to show contact details" under "Additional Information". If you link to a practice, then the public can see that, regardless of whether or not you choose to make your contact details public.
8. Don't forget to "Save" when you have finished.

Staying registered

Annual certificates

Technically, to be a Registered Architect you have to hold a current Certificate of Registration, as you do now. Certificates of Registration are issued annually (July to June). Each year we provide a display certificate for your office and a plastic ID card for your wallet or purse.

Next May/June, you will receive an invoice for your next annual Certificate of Registration for the following financial year, and so on. The money that architects pay for their annual certificates makes up about 80 per cent of the NZRAB's income and pays for most of its day-to-day activities.

Payments can be made by cheque, direct debit, or credit card at www.nzrab.org.nz.

'Architects' who don't have a current certificate are recorded on our Register as "expired".

Competence Reviews

In addition, the law requires that every five years the NZRAB must reconfirm that you are still fit to practise. Put technically, every five years you must demonstrate that you still meet the applicable minimum standards for registration. This is done through a procedure called a Competence Review.

This means every five years you'll be sent a form asking you to outline the work you've been doing, any study and other professional development activities you've done and any other information that you

think is relevant. For this reason, it is a good idea to keep good quality records of what you are doing architecturally, both at work and outside it.

The information that you provide will be evaluated and, assuming the evidence is sufficient, a determination will be made that you are entitled to be registered annually for another five years, after which another Competence Review will be required and so on.

If, in the end, it is clear that an architect is not coping or is putting clients or the public at risk, then ultimately the NZRAB can decide that the architect's registration should be cancelled.

CPD fast track

In addition, as part of the Competence Review procedure, there is a fast track available. The NZRAB operates a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. Architects can undertake professional development activities and have them recognised and recorded (hence the link to training opportunities mentioned earlier).

Then, come the five-yearly Competence Review, architects that have participated fully in the CPD programme are deemed to have already met the review requirements. In other words, full participation in CPD means annual registration for the next five years is automatic.

In essence, the CPD programme involves:

- scheduled CPD events, seminars and the like which you can attend
- individual professional development activities that you arrange and undertake on your own initiative, such as study that you've done, technical reading and so on, which you then submit to the CPD administrators for recognition.

For each architect a secure individual website is provided which:

- advises you of upcoming scheduled CPD events
- allows you to record the CPD you've done
- shows you how much CPD you've done so far and whether you are on track.

You access your secure CPD website through the same "Architect's Login" mentioned before. Then click on "Your CPD".

To obtain the CPD fast track for continued registration, you need over five years to achieve 1000 CPD points with at least 100 CPD points for each of the subjects of Design, Documentation, Project Management and Practice Management, which are derived from the competencies that you were required to demonstrate for initial registration. This is how "full participation in CPD" is defined, as mentioned earlier.

In addition, many architects join architects' support groups, known as Practice Support Groups or In-Office Training Groups. These are forums for sharing information, experiences and ideas. The feedback suggests that participants find them very useful.

Whether you decide to gain 1000 CPD points over five years or provide your own evidence for your Competence Review in five years' time is up to you. However, generally people starting out in their architectural careers especially appreciate the CPD programme.

The NZRAB has contracted the administration of the CPD programme to the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Voluntary suspension

At any time you are entitled, if you wish, to put your registration on hold for up to five years. This facility is often used by people raising families or working overseas. All you have to do is tell the NZRAB in writing that you wish your registration to be put in voluntary suspension for between one and five years. This means for the period selected you cannot practice as an architect and you do not have to pay for annual Certificates of Registration. Your registration is revived at the end of whatever period that you selected or earlier if you wish it. Then you can practise again as before.

The one exception to this is if a Competence Review is due during the period of voluntary suspension. Then when your registration is reactivated the NZRAB will ask you to undertake a Competence Review forthwith, as you would have done some years earlier if you hadn't been in voluntary suspension.

Discipline procedures

The NZRAB is tasked with investigating complaints against architects and the NZRAB has statutory powers, if need be, to discipline architects. Primarily this is to protect the public, but it also protects the profession's reputation as well.

The Registered Architects Act 2005 stipulates what complaints can be about. The main reasons are that the architect has practised in a negligent or incompetent manner, or has breached the Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects. The Code is reproduced at the back of this brochure.

How does the complaints procedure work?

Complaints must be in writing. When a complaint is received it is initially assessed in terms of whether the issue is substantive. Assuming it is, then it is investigated and a recommendation is made to the NZRAB Board as to whether a formal disciplinary hearing is required.

If the complaint is upheld, the Disciplinary Committee recommends a penalty to be imposed on the architect. The NZRAB Board as a whole has to make any final decisions. The architect can appeal to the courts.

The NZRAB can apply a number of penalties on the architect, including a fine of up to \$10,000. As a last resort, the NZRAB Board can cancel the

architect's registration. Effectively, this would terminate the architect's career.

The NZRAB has published a brochure called *Problems With Your Architect?* which describes the NZRAB's complaints and discipline procedures. We provide it to members of the public who express concerns about the service they have received from architects.

What are complaints typically about?

Complaints about technical competence or the quality of the work done are rare. Mostly the problems are about inadequate control of the project's budget and reflect misunderstandings or poor communications. Typically the client has received a bill or a construction quote far higher than expected, to which the architect replies that the client kept changing the specifications, which required extensive costly rework or drove up the construction costs.

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board is a statutory entity created by the Registered Architects Act 2005 and Registered Architects Rules 2006. The NZRAB is tasked with registering, monitoring and, if need be, disciplining architects. The NZRAB became fully operational on 1 July 2006, when it replaced the Architects Education and Registration Board.

The NZRAB Board itself has eight members, half being nominated by the □New Zealand Institute of Architects. The NZIA is the architects' professional association and is separate from the NZRAB.

The NZRAB has a three-person secretariat that is available to help.

Communications

The main way the NZRAB communicates with architects is via email-based newsletters. These are prepared ad hoc as events occur. Some things, such as invoices, are sent by mail.

Also the NZRAB's website (www.nzrab.org.nz) is very important. On it, you can find:

- links to your CPD and registration data
- a mechanism for paying fees by credit card
- reports on past discipline cases and the lessons to be learnt
- information about how the complaints procedure works
- press statements and newsletters
- the Register
- profiles of NZRAB Board members and staff
- accountability documents, such as the Registered Architects Act 2005, Registered Architects Rules 2006, the NZRAB's strategic plan, annual reports and NZRAB Board minutes.

Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects

(Taken from the Registered Architects Rules 2006)

Standards related to the public

46. Not misrepresent himself or herself

A Registered Architect must not represent or promote himself or herself, his or her business, or his or her professional services in a false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive manner.

47. Uphold the law

A Registered Architect must abide by the professional codes of ethics and conduct and laws in force in the countries or jurisdictions in which he or she provides professional services.

Standards related to the client

48. Exercise unprejudiced and unbiased judgment

A Registered Architect must exercise unprejudiced and unbiased judgment.

49. Care and diligence

A Registered Architect must perform his or her professional work with due care and diligence.

50. Terms of appointment

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.

51. Remuneration and inducements

A Registered Architect must:

- (a) be remunerated solely by the fees and benefits specified in the appointment or employment agreement; and
- (b) not offer any inducements to procure an appointment.

52. Confidentiality of client's affairs

(1) A Registered Architect must observe the confidentiality of the client's affairs and must not disclose confidential information without the prior consent of the client.

(2) Subclause (1) does not apply if the Registered Architect is required by law to disclose that information.

53. Conflict of interest

A Registered Architect must disclose to clients, owners, or contractors significant circumstances known to the Registered Architect that could be construed as creating a conflict of interest. The Registered Architect must ensure that the conflict does not interfere with the Registered Architect's duty to render unprejudiced and unbiased judgment.

Standards related to profession

54. Act with honesty and fairness

A Registered Architect must pursue his or her professional activities with honesty and fairness.

Standards related to other Registered Architects

55. Acknowledge colleagues' contributions

A Registered Architect must:

- (a) build his or her professional reputation on the merits of his or her own performance; and
- (b) not claim as his or her own intellectual property and ideas of other Registered Architects.

56. Not maliciously or unfairly criticise

A Registered Architect must not maliciously or unfairly criticise or attempt to discredit another Registered Architect's work.

57. Conflicts of professional appointment

A Registered Architect must, on being approached to undertake professional work for which he or she knows, or by reasonable inquiry ascertains, that another Registered Architect has a current appointment with the same client, notify the other registered Architect.

58. Giving an opinion on the work of another Registered Architect

A Registered Architect must, when appointed to give an opinion on the work of another Registered Architect, notify the other Registered Architect unless the appointed Registered Architect is aware of any current or pending litigation concerning the work that is the subject of the opinion.

For further information contact:

New Zealand Registered Architects Board
PO Box 11106, Manners Street, Wellington
Office Address:

Level 3, The Dominion Building, 78 Victoria Street, Wellington
tel: +64 4 471 1336, fax: +64 4 472 5352, email: info@nzrab.org.nz