

NZRAB Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011

Executive Summary

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board (the Board) was created by statute in 2005 and began operations on 1 July 2006.

Overall, the Board was successful in terms of its initial establishment phase. The Board is now in a development phase in which its systems and processes are being consolidated and improved. The Board intends that the organisation will stabilise into a "business as usual" continuing operations mode of activity by mid-2010. Achieving the deliverables identified in this plan during 2008/09 will help contribute to this goal.

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. In so far 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.

Environment

In recent years, issues besetting the building industry have triggered much greater public scrutiny of the building process. Protection of title for Registered Architects has taken on increased importance, both for the public wishing to employ competent Architects and for Registered Architects who want the reputation of their profession protected.

Latterly issues of house affordability and the transaction costs facing home builders have come to the fore. The economic downturn in 2008 will impact on the building industry and the environment within which Architects work. CPI inflation above the Reserve Bank's target will impact on the Board's costs. A future government may have a different perspective on occupational licensing.

Purpose

The Board is a statutory entity created by the Registered Architects Act 2005 (the Act) in order to ensure that Registered Architects are competent and reputable so that the public can rely on them.

The Act describes the Board functions as being to:

- a) make rules relating to Registered Architects
- b) register Architects, issue certificates of registration and assess whether Registered Architects meet the requirements for continued registration
- c) maintain a register
- d) investigate complaints and, if required, discipline Registered Architects
- e) provide information to the public about the registration system for Registered Architects.

History

The Act came fully into effect on 1 July 2006. The Board's key achievements in the 2006/07 establishment phase included:

- about 1450 Registered Architects being moved from the previous Architects Education and Registration Board Register to the Board's Register
- new and improved registration procedures
- an enhanced complaints process
- information from the Register available for view on line
- the establishment of a national office.

During 2007/08, the Board determined a set of benchmarks as to what it intended to achieve in the longer term and began working towards their realisation, as per the NZRAB Strategic Plan 2007-2010. This updated plan builds on those benchmarks and what has been achieved so far.

Stakeholders

The Board's key stakeholders include:

- the public
- Registered Architects
- architecture graduates and undergraduates
- the Minister for Building and Construction
- the Department of Building and Housing
- the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA)
- the Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ)
- the Building Practitioners Board/LBP Scheme Registrar
- other professional registration schemes in the building industry
- other design organisations
- tertiary institutions with schools of architecture
- NZRAB assessors
- international registries and affiliations.

Governance

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board is a statutory board. The Board is self funding and fully independent within the constraints set by the Registered Architects Act 2005 and the Registered Architects Rules 2006.

The Board is accountable to the Minister for Building and Construction, the primary expression of that accountability being the Board's *Annual Report*.

The Board can have six to eight members. They are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Minister for Building and Construction. Half the Board members are nominated by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Under the Act, the Board is empowered to delegate its functions as it sees fit and, where permitted, the Board has delegated its powers to the Chief Executive. This is subject to certain restrictions, however, so that decisions in regard to registration, continuing registration and discipline must be made by the Board itself.

Typically the Board meets four times a year. The Board's minutes can be viewed on the NZRAB website and the Board is subject to the Official Information Act.

To facilitate policy development and operational oversight, the Board has established a number of Committees, the members of which include a mix of Board members and others.¹ These Committees are as follows:

Strategy and Finance Committee

Function: To assist the Chief Executive in developing the annual Strategic Plan and Budget and to provide oversight in their implementation.

Registration Committee:

Function: To develop policy and provide oversight of the Board's initial registration procedures.

Continuing Registration Committee

Function: To develop policy and provide oversight of the issuance of annual Certificates of Registration, continuing registration requirements, CPD, and the five-yearly Competence Reviews required by the Act.

International and Standards Committee

Function: To develop policy and provide oversight of the Board's international liaison and, in particular, the development of standards and benchmarks shared with other jurisdictions.

Public Protection Committee

Function: To develop policy and provide oversight of the Board's disciplinary procedures. This Committee also appoints Investigating Committees and

¹ The Act section 56 requires that each Board Committee must include at least two Board members.

recommends to the Board appointments to Disciplinary Committees, if required.

The Board employs a three-person secretariat based in Wellington.

Resources

The Board is fully funded by Registered Architects and registration applicants on a cost-recovery basis. The Board's assets/resources include:

- a logo
- a website (www.nzrab.govt.nz)
- a register
- an office
- the skills-base of the Board, other committee members, assessors and staff.

Goals

A period of consolidation and improvement is now underway. The Board intends that the organisation will stabilise into a continuing operations mode of activity by the commencement of the 2010/11 year. To this end, the Board intends that by then the following will be achieved:

REGISTRATION

1. Registration applicants will be well informed as to the requirements for registration
2. Registration applicants and Registered Architects will perceive the Board's initial registration procedures and requirements as being efficient and fair.
3. With a high degree of consistency, Architects that are newly registered will meet the applicable minimum standards for registration.
4. Newly registered Architects will understand their obligations and entitlements as Registered Architects and the role of the Board as it impacts on them.
5. The Board will be liaise with associated registration authorities and will be involved in developments affecting the registration of Architects both nationally and internationally.

CONTINUED REGISTRATION

6. Architects' registration will be renewed annually, contingent on Architects holding current Certificates of Registration.
7. Every five years, or when required, Registered Architects will be reassessed in terms of whether they continue to meet the applicable minimum standards for registration, this being a requirement for ongoing annual registration.
8. A widely-available and relevant continuing professional development (CPD) programme will assist Registered Architects to stay professionally up to date and to provide evidence by their participation that they continue to meet the applicable minimum standards for registration.

9. Registered Architects will understand the Board’s continuing registration requirements and the role of CPD within that.

PROTECTION OF TITLE

10. Those sections of the public that commission building design will understand what Registered Architects are, what services they offer, and what can be expected of them.
11. The media will know that persons who are not Registered Architects but who nonetheless design buildings should not be described as Architects or confused with Registered Architects.

REGISTER MAINTENANCE

12. The Register will be compliant with the requirements of the Act and will be convenient for the public to access and use.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

13. All complaints about the conduct of Architects will be investigated and resolved in a timely and just manner.
14. The outcome of disciplinary procedures, where applicable, will be communicated to the profession to foster best practice.

ADMINISTRATION

15. The Board will operate in an open and transparent manner.
16. A fee structure will be in place by which the Board covers its costs.
17. The Board’s governance arrangements will be stable, defensible and well understood by those using them.
18. Good open relationships will be in place with all key stakeholders.
19. Key person risk in terms of the Board Chair, the Deputy Chair and staff will be well managed.
20. A group of well-informed Registered Architects will be available to undertake registration assessments, Competence Reviews and public protection functions.

Issues

The following are descriptions of the issues that the Board currently faces, organised by function.

Functions	Current issues
REGISTRATION: Assess whether persons meet the minimum standards for registration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current recruitment and training of assessors is ad hoc in terms of content and purpose. 2. Currently newly-registered Architects are expected for the most part to fend for themselves in terms of understanding what registration means for them.

<p>CONTINUED REGISTRATION: Assess whether Registered Architects meet the requirements for continued registration</p>	<p>3. As yet, the Board does not have in place procedures for determining continuing competence, which will be required in early 2011.</p> <p>4. As yet, Architects don't know the criteria that the Board will apply for determining continuing competence.</p> <p>5. There is doubt as to whether the CPD needs of Architects in provincial New Zealand and at all stages of Architects' careers are being met.</p>
<p>PROTECTION OF TITLE: Protect the title "Registered Architect"</p>	<p>6. Too often the Board receives reports of persons being described in the media and elsewhere as being Architects who in fact are not Registered Architects.</p>
<p>REGISTER MAINTENANCE: Keep and maintain the Register</p>	<p>7. The Register, as currently presented to the public on line, does not provide the information that the Act decrees the public is entitled to.</p>
<p>PUBLIC PROTECTION: Receive, investigate and hear complaints</p>	<p>8. A full procedural template for the disciplinary process has yet to be developed, reflecting the fact that as yet a Disciplinary Committee hearing has not been held.</p> <p>9. So far the processing of disciplinary process has been too slow, reflecting the fact that the appropriate procedures are still being developed.</p> <p>10. Members of the Rule 88 list need to be kept well informed of public protection developments and offered appropriate training to ensure that they have a shared understanding of the Board's public protection procedures and requirements.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION: Provide information to the public about the registration system for Registered Architects</p>	<p>11. The complaints that the Board receives suggest that often the public are ill informed about the role of Architects, the services clients are entitled to expect, how to get the best out of an Architect, and what can be done if difficulties emerge.</p> <p>12. Registered Architects' understanding of the Board's policies and procedures appears in</p>

	<p>some instances to be poor.</p> <p>13.As yet, the NZRAB logo is not trademarked.</p>
GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION and FINANCE	<p>14.The Act and the Rules in some instances are internally inconsistent.</p> <p>15.The Board’s current fee structure does not provide for the Continuing Registration procedures now being developed and, in some other cases, overcharges in terms of cost recovery for particular services.</p> <p>16.The Board is operating deficits that in the longer term are unsustainable.</p> <p>17.The Board is vulnerable to a loss of institutional knowledge, given the small number of people undertaking key roles.</p> <p>18.The Board’s offices are poorly ventilated and lack a discrete meeting room</p> <p>19.The new committee structure as yet is not well coordinated between the committees and the Board as a whole.</p>

Deliverables

The table below describes deliverables identified as priorities for 2008/2009. They are in response to the issues previously listed.

Deliverables by function	Timeline
REGISTRATION: Assess whether persons meeting the minimum standards for registration	
1. Establish a properly planned and targeted recruitment and training programme for assessors	June 2009
2. Provide a printed handbook for newly registered Architects explaining their obligations and entitlements as Registered Architects and the role of the Board as it impacts on them	June 2009

CONTINUED REGISTRATION: Assess whether Registered Architects meet the requirements for continued registration	
3. Adopt a comprehensive Continuing Registration Policy and make sure Registered Architects understand its requirements, especially in terms of ways that they will be able to show every five years that they still meet the applicable minimum standards for registration	June 2009
4. Ensure that the CPD contract with the NZIA accords with the Continuing Registration Policy, once that policy is finalised	June 2009
5. Undertake a comprehensive survey of Architects' perceptions of the current CPD programme	June 2009
PROTECTION OF TITLE: Protect the title "Registered Architect"	
6. Ensure that all reports received of the title 'Registered Architect' or 'Architect' being used wrongly are investigated and an appropriate response provided	Ongoing
REGISTER MAINTENANCE: Keep and maintain the Register	
7. Develop a mechanism by which, via the NZRAB website, the public can access all the information about individual Registered Architects specified in the Act and the Rules	June 2009
PUBLIC PROTECTION: Receive, investigate and hear complaints	
8. Complete and use where required protocols and procedures for investigating complaints	June 2009
9. Where possible, ensure that complaints from members of the public are fully resolved within 12 months	June 2009
10. Develop a training programme for Rule 88 list members	June 2009

COMMUNICATIONS: Provide information to the public about the registration system for Registered Architects	
11. Publish brochures explaining the Board's role, what the public can expect from Architects and what can be done when an Architect fails to perform, and provide the same information via the NZRAB website.	June 2009
12. Continue providing Registered Architects with regular electronic newsletters to foster their understanding of the Board's policies and procedures	Ongoing
13. Finalise trade marking of the Board logo	June 2009
GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION and FINANCE:	
14. Record and collate difficulties and limitations in the current Act and Rules and options for reform, in preparation for when at some future time the Act and the Rules are reviewed	Ongoing
15. Obtain ministerial approval for fee changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fund Competence Reviews • abolish the voluntary suspension fee • fund a simplified Pathway 4 qualification equivalence procedure • provide a half year fee for annual Certificates of Registration 	June 2009
16. Decide on an annual basis whether the Board's current fees provide the income necessary to ensure the Board's financial viability	June 2009
17. Develop an office manual to describe office procedures, to help mitigate key person risk	June 2009
18. Upgrade the Board office, providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a discrete board room • a well-ventilated office space for staff • a professional entrance for receiving guests 	June 2009
19. Provide annually a Board calendar	July 2008