



INDUSTRY PROFILE

THE PROFESSION OF
ARCHITECTURE IN
AUSTRALIA . . .

FEBRUARY 2018

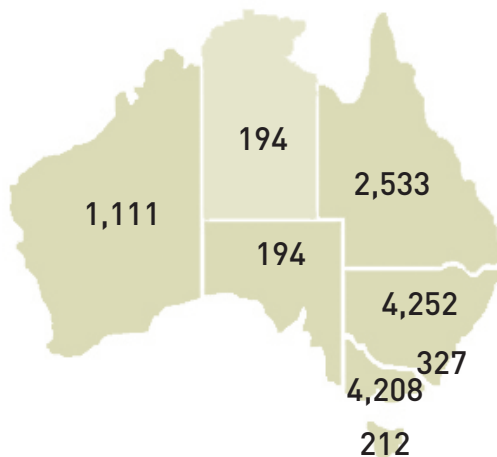
CONTENTS ...

SNAPSHOT 2017	03
AUSTRALIA'S ARCHITECTURE SECTOR	04
THE BUSINESS OF ARCHITECTURE	07
ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION	09
PATH TO REGISTRATION	11
MIGRATION AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION	14
KEY ARCHITECTURAL BODIES IN AUSTRALIA	16

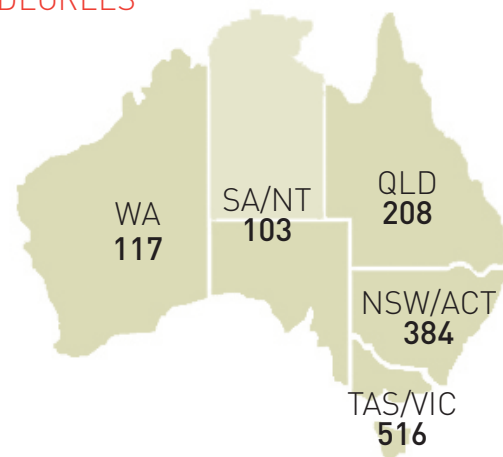
SNAPSHOT 2017

...

13,567 ARCHITECT REGISTRATIONS



1,328 MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE DEGREES



ARCHITECTS IN THE CENSUS

	31% were women
	80% worked full time
	52% worked more than 40 hours
	34% business owners or sole traders

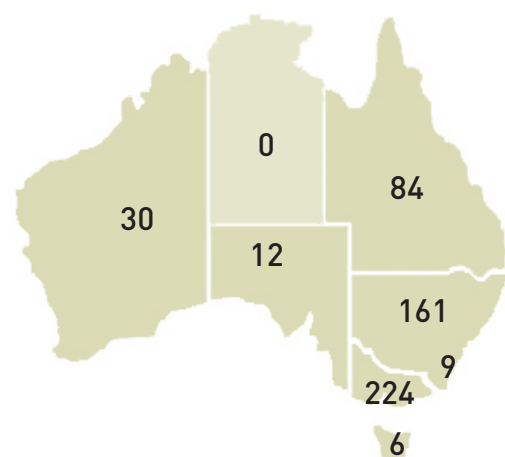
ARCHITECTURAL BUSINESS

\$5.8 bn	income
0.5% pa	growth to 2022-23
13,000	enterprises with 40,000 employees
98.4%	of businesses have <20 employees

OVERSEAS ARCHITECTS

129	temporary skilled visas
284	permanent skilled visas
222	successful stage I overseas skills assessments
33	successful stage II overseas skills assessments
48	successful experienced practitioner assessments
34	APEC architects registered in Australia
14	Australians registered in USA
13	Americans registered in Australia under mutual recognition agreements

578 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS OF ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE EXAM

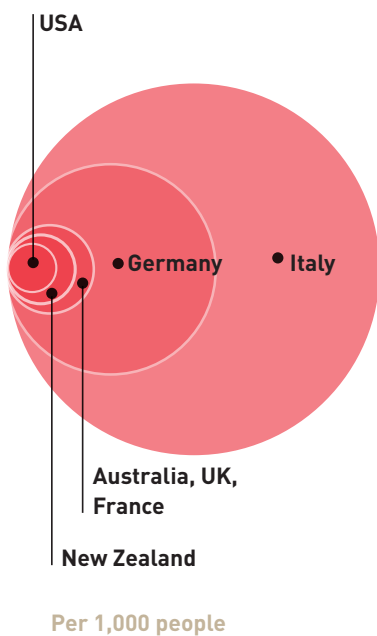


AUSTRALIA'S ARCHITECTURE SECTOR



Architects are skilled professionals at the centre of Australia's \$100 billion built environment sector. This sector is significant for both its size and for the critical national role played by the provision of dwellings, commercial spaces, public buildings and infrastructure. The AACA estimates that, in December 2017, there were approximately 11,800 registered practising architects in Australia, almost unchanged from 2015. This is based on total registrations of 13,567 discounted to account for registrations in multiple jurisdictions.¹

The figure equates to 0.5 architects per 1000 people, similar to the UK and France, higher than the US (0.3 per 1000 people) and New Zealand (0.4 per 1000 people), but lower than Germany (1.6 per 1000 people) and Italy (2.4 per 1000 people).



According to industry analysts IBISWorld, in 2017-18 the architectural sector will generate an income of \$5.8 billion, a small decrease from 2016-17, creating a profit of \$1.1 billion.³ This includes a range of businesses providing architecture-related services, not simply registered architectural firms. IBISWorld estimates that architectural services revenue will grow by an average 0.5% per annum to 2022-23, to reach \$6.0 billion.⁴ Research undertaken for the NSW Architect Registration Board suggests that the real value of architecture to the economy may be around 15% greater than this, once benefits from innovation, research, education, cultural products and tourism are taken into account.⁵

Architects work with building contractors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, tradespeople, plant operators, drivers and many other occupations to deliver finished building projects to clients. In addition to their core design function, the architect traditionally plays a 'trusted adviser' role with clients that can cover the whole of a project lifecycle from feasibility to tendering for contractors to contract management.

To prepare for this role, architects study a wide range of subjects including design, technology, history and philosophy of architecture, communications, environmental sustainability and professional practice. Architects must be both talented designers and skilled communicators, able to balance client wishes, aesthetic values, planning and environment requirements, building codes, good design principles and construction costs in the delivery of a project.

Architects must be both talented designers and skilled communicators, able to balance client wishes, aesthetic values, planning and environment requirements, building codes, good design principles and construction costs in the delivery of a project.

¹ Based on figures provided by State and Territory Architects Registration Boards; an exact figure of unique registrations is impossible to determine as there is no consolidated national register and the current number of architects registered in multiple jurisdictions is not known.

² Based on figures provided to the AACA by international architectural bodies.

³ IBISWorld, *Industry Profile: Architectural Services in Australia*, September 2017, p. 4.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ NSW Architect Registration Board/University of Technology Sydney, *Measuring Up: Innovation and the value add of architecture*, April 2016, p. 5.

All Australian architects are registered by one or more **state or territory architect registration board**. For individuals to apply for registration as an architect, they must usually:

- complete a ten semester higher education program leading to an accredited Master of Architecture qualification or accepted equivalent;
- obtain at least two years' experience working in the industry; and
- pass a three-part competency assessment process – the Architectural Practice Examination – including completion of a logbook, a written paper and an interview with current practitioners.

There are also alternative pathways to registration offered by the AACA in certain circumstances.

Most states require architectural firms as well as individuals to be registered or listed, although there are substantial differences in company requirements from state to state. Mutual recognition of individual registration applies between the eight Australian jurisdictions and also with New Zealand via the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement. This is, however, not automatic, and must be applied for in each jurisdiction where an architect intends to practise. Automatic mutual recognition (the so-called 'drivers licence' approach) is something that the sector may pursue in the future.

For individuals to apply for registration as an architect, they must usually complete a ten semester higher education program, obtain at least two years' experience working in the industry, and pass the Architectural Practice Examination.

Australia and New Zealand use a 'title registration' model: to lawfully call yourself an architect and/or offer architectural services to the public you must be registered. Unlike some countries, where architects have a sole licence to undertake specified classes of work, there are few professional services that are reserved to architects in Australia. One consequence is that people who are not registered as architects (who may or may not hold architectural qualifications) are able to offer similar services as 'building designers' or related titles.

The number of registered practicing architects by state and gender is shown in the table below. As this number includes multiple registrations, the number of unique registrations is approximately 13 per cent lower.⁶

Although the national number is little changed from the 13,228 architects registered in 2015, there has been some change in the geographical composition, with increases in NSW, Victoria and Western Australia offset by falls in other jurisdictions.

While architect registration boards don't collect detailed demographic information on those obtaining registration, according to the 2016 ABS Census, of the 16,991 people who nominated their occupation as 'architect':

- 62 per cent were based in Sydney or Melbourne
- 10 per cent were based outside capital cities
- 31 per cent were women (up from 28 per cent in 2011)
- 80 per cent were working full time
- 52 per cent worked more than a 40 hour week
- 34 per cent were business owners or sole traders (down from 37 per cent)
- 54 per cent of those working full-time earned above the average income of \$78,000s (but only 39 per cent of women working full time).

Registered practicing architects at December 2017

	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	AUST
Architects	4252	4208	2533	1111	730	212	327	194	13567

Source: State and Territory Architect Registration Boards

⁶ Based on a count undertaken by Gill Matthewson in 'Dimensions of Gender: Women's careers in the Australian architecture profession', PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 2015.

The number of self-identified architects in the Census at 16,991 is somewhat larger than the number of registered practising architects at around 11,800 due to the likelihood that the Census figure includes a number of non-practising architects and people working in architectural practices who are not themselves registered.

A significant number of architects were overseas-born, predominantly from a small number of countries as shown in the table below. The most noteworthy change from the last Census is a more than doubling of the number of Chinese-born architects between 2011 and 2016.

Country	Architects 2016	Position 2016	Position 2011
Australia	9,972	1	1
England	855	2	2
Malaysia	583	3	3
China (ex. Hong Kong)	499	4	7
New Zealand	375	5	4
Hong Kong	296	6	6
India	291	7	7
South Africa	287	8	9
Italy	202	9	10
Germany	198	10	4
Vietnam	167	11	-
Other countries	2,643		

Source: ABS, Census of Australia 2016/2011

THE BUSINESS OF ARCHITECTURE

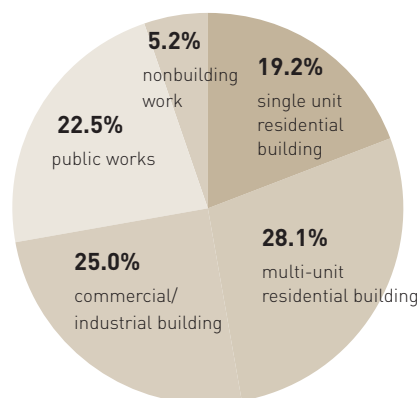


Architectural practice in Australia is highly dispersed. There are a handful of large firms employing hundreds of people each, but none with more than two per cent of the market for architectural services. Although the proportion of work undertaken by large practices has been growing, a large majority of architects in Australia still work in small practices. A few architects also work in State and Local Government agencies. According to IBISWorld, there are around 13,000 enterprises in the Architectural sector employing around 40,000 people, but only 1.6 per cent employ 20 or more people.⁷ Around half of all enterprises are sole traders.

The range of roles undertaken by practising architects is wide and can include:

- Pre-design, scoping and feasibility work
- Building design
- Documentation
- Procurement of building services
- Contract administration
- Oversight of building works
- Post-occupancy evaluation
- Other design services (e.g. interior design, urban design, landscape architecture)
- Consultancy work, including project management and strategic planning
- Training and education (e.g. adjunct and sessional university teaching)
- Service to the profession (e.g. boards, committees and juries)

IBISWorld estimates that core pre-design, design and documentation work (items 1-3 above) typically constitute around two thirds of work undertaken by architectural businesses. The architectural client base split is shown in the following diagram.⁸



Australian architecture is diverse, reflecting the country's European, Asian and Indigenous cultural influences, as well as the widely varying climate conditions across the continent. Australia is well known both for its heritage architecture from the colonial period and its many world-class contemporary public buildings. Some renowned 20th Century Australian architects include Harry Seidler, Roy Grounds, Robin Boyd, Glenn Murcutt, Sean Goodsell, Mary Turner Shaw and Phillip Cox.

An estimated 5 per cent of single residential homes in Australia are architect designed, while architects are involved in the majority of public buildings, commercial spaces and multi-unit developments. Architects are expected to be knowledgeable about the history of architecture on the continent, as well as current expectations about liveable and environmentally appropriate development, including management of risks such as bushfires and cyclones.

After a number of years of solid growth, driven mainly by buoyant demand for residential housing, the Australian architectural services sector declined by 3.6 per cent in 2016-17 and is expected to decline again in 2017-18. Residential housing growth has come off the boil in many locations, while the number of commercial and public works projects has shrunk, meaning that many architectural firms face an outlook of flat revenue and squeezed margins. This has in

⁷ IBISWorld, op cit. at Note 3, p. 27.

⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹ Ibid.

turn contributed to a consolidation of mid-tier firms into larger architecture practices and a growing role for firms such as GHD Woodhead and AECOM that combine architecture with engineering and project management (sometimes known as A+E firms). The focus of these companies is on delivering 'turnkey' projects at the lowest cost, within which framework architecture is only one practice element (and often not the most influential).

After a number of years of solid growth, driven mainly by buoyant demand for residential housing, the Australian architectural services sector declined by 3.6 per cent in 2016-17 and is expected to decline again in 2017-18.

UCLA Architecture Professor Dana Cuff has written that:

In an unstable, risk-averse economy, clients with large and complicated projects seek new qualities like ability to manage potential litigation, endurance to withstand the long timespan of projects, and a menu of specialists that can handle any contingency.¹⁰

There are a number of architects and architectural firms looking at alternative models focussed on creating markets for their services with an eye to tackling complex problems in our communities and the built environment. For example, the Nightingale housing model supports a community of architects using a new development approach in the construction of multi-unit residential buildings that are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Another area of change is the increased interest among architectural firms in strategic partnerships and in broadening their revenue base by taking on more diverse consultancy work and seeking overseas commissions. Professor Sandra Kaji-O'Grady of the University of Queensland wrote in a recent article on Australian architectural exports:

Australia has been reluctant to recognise or boast about the scale of the professions international efforts [...] yet many of our larger practices, and even some of our smaller ones, get over half their revenue from exporting design services.¹¹

According to the 2017 survey by British Building Design magazine, the largest Australian owned architectural firm is Woods Bagot (ranked 7th internationally), which has 15 studios located across Australia, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America.¹² The other Australia-based firms making the Building Design list of the world's 100 major architectural firms were Bates Smart (45), the Buchan Group (55), GHD Woodhead (71), Architectus (97) and Hames Sharley (100) – the last two being new entrants for 2017.

Although difficult to quantify, major overseas-based companies have been increasingly engaging with the Australian market through a range of mechanisms, including local buy-outs (e.g. HDR Architecture from the USA purchased local firm Rice Daubney, and DWP of Thailand bought out top 10 firm Sutera Architecture). Another leading Australian firm, the Buchan group, has entered an alliance with the Japanese giant Nikken Sensei. Major US based A+E companies such as AECOM and Jacobs, the world's third and eleventh largest architectural concerns respectively, have also been expanding their operations in Australia. In addition, other prestigious global firms – such as Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners (UK), Gensler (USA) and 3XN (Denmark) – have opened Australian offices.

¹⁰ Dana Cuff, 'Architecture's Undisciplined Urban Desire', *Architectural Theory Review*, 19:1 (2014), pp. 93-94.

¹¹ Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, 'Architectural Exports', *Architecture Australia*, Jul-Aug 2017, p. 50

¹² Building Design, World Architect 100, available at <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/wa-100>.

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION



The AACA maintains the **Architecture Accreditation Procedure in Australia and New Zealand** that facilitates accreditation by each architect registration board of programmes offered in its jurisdiction.

In common with other comparable countries, accredited architecture programs of study in Australia and New Zealand require ten semesters of study or equivalent, typically comprising two academic qualifications, a three year (or six semester) bachelor degree followed by an accredited two year (four semester) Master of Architecture. In general, the minimum timeframe required for a student (without advanced standing or credit for previous studies) to complete ten equivalent semesters of study is a five year full time program of study, though some universities may allow for completion of ten semesters in less than five years.

The Master of Architecture is the program accredited for the purpose of registration by the architect registration boards in Australia and New Zealand. Pre-professional degrees (e.g. bachelor degrees) or other preparatory programs that may serve as a pre-requisite for admission to a professional degree program are not accredited. Students with a successful performance in a relevant pathway bachelor degree are generally guaranteed admission to the accredited Master's program, while students with other suitable initial degrees are admitted on a case-by-case basis in accordance with an individual provider's policies and procedures.

As tertiary study has undergone innovation and change, other models of study are emerging that need to be considered in the context of accreditation. These include three year programs at the Masters level for eligible students without an architecture-related pathway degree, blended academic delivery models (as opposed to the face-to-face model traditionally used in architectural education) and entirely online degrees.

Regardless of the delivery mode, all programs must meet the required performance criteria in the **National Standard of Competency for Architects**, and meet the outcomes required at **Australian Higher Education Qualifications Framework Level 9**.

The Accreditation Procedure includes a review of architecture programs at least every ten semesters (usually five years) by an expert Accreditation Review Panel, which assesses the ability of a program's graduates to meet 37 competencies drawn from the National Standard of Competency for Architects. The Accreditation Review Panel then makes a recommendation to the relevant architect registration board, which has ultimate responsibility for the accreditation decision.

Each architect registration board makes the decision to accredit, to not accredit, or to withdraw accreditation of architectural programs of study based within its jurisdiction. **Accredited programs of study** are then recognised by the other architect registration boards in Australia for the purposes of architectural registration, as are accredited programs from New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore. While the architect registration board bases its consideration on the findings of the Accreditation Review Panel, the final accreditation decision rests with the architect registration board alone.

There are 18 Australian universities that are accredited to offer the Master of Architecture degree:

- Bond University
- Curtin University
- Deakin University
- Griffith University
- Monash University
- Qld University of Technology
- RMIT University
- University of Adelaide
- University of Canberra
- University of Melbourne
- University of Newcastle
- University of New South Wales
- University of Queensland
- University of South Australia
- University of Sydney
- University of Tasmania
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Western Australia

Australia's architecture schools produced around 1300 graduates from accredited Masters programs in 2017, which is consistent with preceding years.¹³ Overall, architecture schools enrolled over 10,000 equivalent full time students in bachelor and masters level architectural study in 2017, collectively bringing approximately \$225 million to the university sector.¹⁴ The proportion of overseas students in Masters programs is 34 per cent, compared with 30 per cent for all program levels, and this reflects the fact that a proportion of Masters students complete their Bachelor qualification in their country of origin before undertaking masters study in Australia.

According to Department of Education and Training data, there are also 451 higher degree by research (PhD and MPhil) students studying architecture-related topics,¹⁴ while it's estimated that \$11 million in competitive research grants was obtained by architectural academics in 2015.¹⁶

Overall, architecture schools enrolled over 10,000 equivalent full time students in bachelor and masters level architectural study in 2017, collectively bringing approximately \$225 million to the university sector.

A ten semester (generally over five years) course of study for architects is needed to cover a large amount of academic ground that can include:

- design and documentation (up to 50 per cent of total study)
- architectural theory, history and philosophy
- building science, materials and technology
- communication, visual representation and information technology
- professional practice and building law
- urban planning and environmental sustainability
- elective studies

A detailed study of architectural education in Australia was published in 2008 by Michael Ostwald and Anthony Williams with support from the Australian Teaching and Learning Council.¹⁷ The report found there were around 300 full time academic staff in Australian

architecture schools (76 per cent male) and that this number had been gradually falling since the 1990s. More recent research by Gill Matthewson suggests the number reduced further to 270 by 2012 (64 per cent male).¹⁸ According to Ostwald and Williams, academic staff divided their time between 40 per cent teaching, 27 per cent research, 23 per cent administration and 10 per cent other activities.¹⁸ The student: staff ratio of around 25:1 could be considered high for a professional field of study. Many academic staff felt challenged by the pressure from university management to be more research active, while still maintaining high teaching and administration loads. An additional challenge was the aspiration that architecture academics retain a connection to professional practice, with 56 per cent no longer practising and nearly half of these having last practised over a decade ago.²⁰

In terms of curriculum, Ostwald and Williams found that the tight requirements of the Architecture Accreditation Procedure had led to a 'de-facto national curriculum'. This maintained national standards, but created a somewhat homogenised student experience.²¹ In common with other professional areas of study, there is an expectation that small group practicum (commonly called Design Studio in the architectural context) will form a substantial part of degree study. As universities have faced reduced funding-per-student, architecture schools have tended to preserve the Design Studio and architectural theory elements of study, while in some cases limiting building science and professional practice offerings and arguably not engaging sufficiently with newer elements of practice such as sustainable building.

An area where there is significant variation among universities is the treatment of electives and general education ('breadth') subjects. Some degrees have very limited scope for electives outside the architecture school, while others require students to take external courses, particularly during the pathway bachelor degree. External subjects may be from other design-related areas (e.g. interior design or landscape architecture) or in unrelated science, social science or humanities fields.

¹³ Correspondence from the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia.

¹⁴ Based on a 70/30 split of domestic and international students, a funding amount of \$19,328 per domestic (CSP) students, and a typical annual fee of \$30,000 for an international student.

¹⁵ Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Statistics: Students, 2015.

¹⁶ NSW Architect Registration Board, op. cit. at note 5, p. 81.

¹⁷ Michael J. Ostwald and Anthony Williams, *Understanding Architectural Education in Australia*, Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2008.

¹⁸ Gill Matthewson, op. cit. at note 5.

¹⁹ Ostwald and Williams, op. cit. at note 17, p. 96.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

²¹ Ibid., p. 142.

PATH TO REGISTRATION

...

Only a proportion of those who study architecture go on to be architects. The number of people completing a second stage (two year Master of Architecture degree) is approximately two thirds of the number of completions for the first stage three year bachelor degree.²² In turn, the number of people completing the Architectural Practice Examination on the basis of an Australian qualification was around half the number of people completing a Master of Architecture degree.

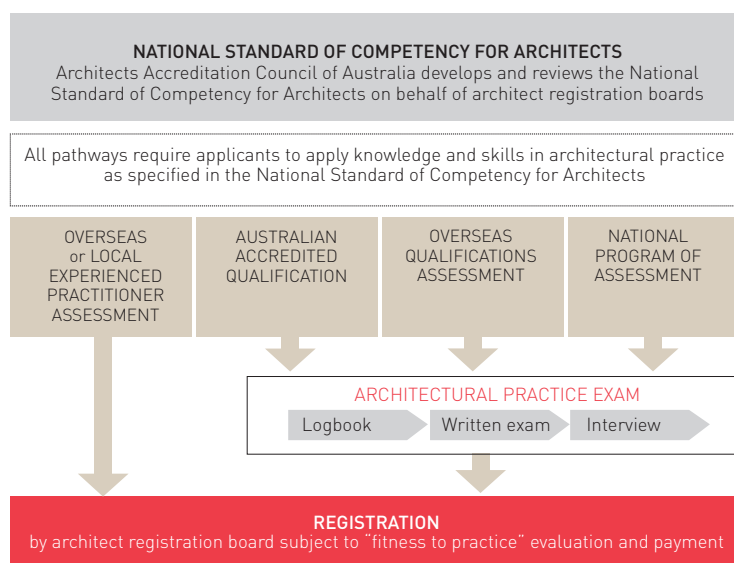
For people who but do not hold an accredited academic qualification, but who have extensive experience in architectural practice, the AACA provides an alternative pathway towards registration, known as National Program of Assessment. The National Program of Assessment is an annual two stage process involving an eligibility stage, followed by a design exercise which takes the form of responding to a complex architectural project brief. Candidates are expected to demonstrate an ability to make judgements and decisions at a level that would enable successful candidates to pursue the Architectural Practice Examination. In 2016-17, there were eleven successful and eight unsuccessful candidates in the second stage of the Program. A separate Built Work Program of Assessment is offered by the NSW Architect Registration Board for those with ten years' experience in providing design and construction

management services similar to those offered by an architect, and who are able to put forward a complex project for assessment 'as built'.

It should not be a surprise that many architectural graduates do not go obtain architectural registration. There are a range of alternative career paths for those with architectural qualifications, from generalist management and policy positions, through work in architectural firms not as a registered architect, to work in other fields of design (e.g. landscape architecture, interior design, urban planning, industrial design, jewellery, fashion). It is also important to note that, as Australia uses a 'title registration' model, people can work in architect-like roles indefinitely – including rising to senior management and even partnership positions in firms – without there necessarily being an imperative to undertake registration. At the same time, registration conveys key benefits in terms of public and peer recognition, and is particularly important for those wanting to start their own practice.

Registration conveys key benefits in terms of public and peer recognition, and is particularly important for those wanting to start their own practice.

Pathways to registration as an architect in Australia

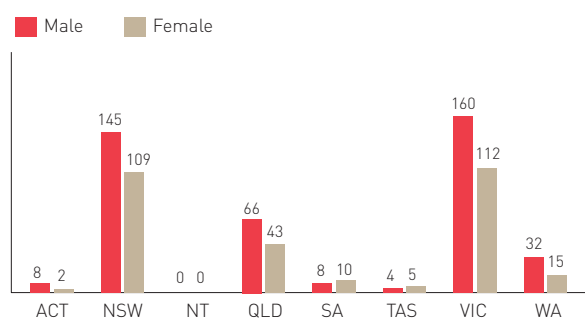


²² Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, op. cit. at note 14.

Those graduates seeking registration first need to find employment under the supervision of an architect and must then develop the capacity to offer professional services to the public in a 'real world' environment. There is a minimum two year period of practical experience before graduates can sit the Architectural Practice Examination (APE). Some of this experience can be gained prior to completion of the Masters program. However, the average time from qualification to professional exam is generally at least five years, owing to the need to complete 3300 logbook hours for the APE Part 1, and to gain experience across a range of practice areas, which are not always readily available in graduate positions.²³

Average time from qualification to professional exam is generally at least five years

In 2016-17, 667 Australian trained candidates and 52 overseas trained architects successfully completed the final APE Stage 3 in 2016-17 (compared with 622 Australian trained candidates and 69 overseas trained architects in 2015-16). APE candidates by jurisdiction and gender are shown in the diagram below.



While all states accept the Architectural Practice Examination as the basic registration requirement, state legislation varies in the other matters taken into account in considering whether to grant registration as an architect (such as Queensland's more detailed fit-and proper-person tests). Some states also have different categories of registration. Queensland, NSW, Victoria and Western Australia have non-

practising categories, restricted to those wishing to transfer from the practising category. South Australia has a 'Limited Practice' category, while NSW has a temporary registration category for overseas registered architects. None of this constitutes a major impediment to the effective operation of Mutual Recognition between states. Although the path to registration is somewhat different in New Zealand, the use of common architectural competencies and university accreditation requirements have meant the wider Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement largely operates quite smoothly.

There are nonetheless certain elements of the current registration system that may create issues for architects working across multiple jurisdictions, for example the lack of common Continuing Professional Development requirements and inconsistency in the manner of registering companies. This latter issue is a major concern that was discussed in the AACA submission to the 2015 Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mutual Recognition Schemes.²⁴

The AACA advocates for further harmonisation of requirements between states and territories over time. This would ideally lead to automatic mutual recognition (the so-called 'drivers licence' approach).

The AACA advocates for further harmonisation of requirements between states and territories over time. This would ideally lead to automatic mutual recognition (the so-called 'drivers licence' approach).

There has been at various times discussion of wider reform, e.g. a fully harmonised system based on template legislation. In practice, mutual recognition based on substantially common registration requirements has been found to work well, and so the significant adjustment needed to move to a fully national system has not been a key priority for governments or the profession.

As the proportion of women graduates obtaining registration is lower than for male graduates, there is ongoing discussion within the sector as to whether there are impediments to registration that apply

²³ Australian Institute of Architects, Graduate Survey, 2013, p. 5.

²⁴ AACA, Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mutual Recognition Schemes, February 2015, available at http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/187296/sub020-mutual-recognition.pdf.

particularly to women. The Australian Research Council funded Parlour project led by Naomi Stead of the University of Queensland (with much of the research undertaken as part of her PhD by Gill Matthewson) found in 2012 women comprising only 21 per cent of registered architects and 14 per cent of practice partners despite being nearly half of all graduates.²⁵ The study recommended changes to a range of areas – including practice culture and the nature of the examination process – that may contribute to this shortfall. Another detailed study of architecture graduates in South Australia suggested that women valued the ‘prize’ of registration less than men, relative to the long hours and relatively low pay involved in graduate positions prior to registration.²⁶ In addition, this study found some women graduates believed it was difficult for them to obtain suitable mentoring and/or the range of experience required for registration, while some also felt architectural firms did not do enough to accommodate family responsibilities.

There are also notably low numbers of architects in rural areas of Australia. For example, there is only one registered architect in the entire of NSW west of Wagga Wagga. Partly this reflects a difficulty experienced by all professions in attracting suitable people to rural practice and sustaining a critical mass of work to keep them there. There are moreover no architectural schools outside of major centres, and fewer than 10 per cent of Master of Architecture students come from regional areas.²⁷ In addition, with few existing architectural businesses, it is hard for graduates wanting to live in the regions to get a start, prepare for registration, and have access to a broader community of professional support.

Indigenous architects remain extremely uncommon, with 28 recorded in the 2016 Census (compared with 27 in the 2011 Census). This compares to a population parity number of around 500 Indigenous architects. This outcome is particularly disheartening given that Indigenous architecture and design more broadly have exerted a major influence on Australian architectural practice. The first known Indigenous graduate of an Australian architectural school only graduated from the University of Sydney in the 1980s. Architecture has so far not had the concerted effort to attract and

retain Indigenous practitioners that other professions such as medicine have pursued, although this may be changing through the establishment of organisations such as **Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria**. The number of Indigenous students studying architecture has also been somewhat higher in recent years and this will hopefully flow through to a larger number of registrations over time.

²⁵ *Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession: Women, Work and Leadership*, see <http://archiparlour.org>. This study has resulted in the publication of the ‘Parlour Guides to Equitable Practice’ which address a number of challenges to improving retention of women.

²⁶ Susan J. Shannon, Naomi Webb, Yishu Zeng & Jenna Holder, ‘Why Architecture Graduates Do Not Register as Architects: A Quantitative and Qualitative South Australian Study 1999-2011’, *Creative Education*, 5:16 (2014), pp. 1540-1558.

²⁷ Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, op. cit. at note 12.

MIGRATION AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION



Australia has a significant annual intake of migrants with architecture qualifications, with the 2016 Census showing 41 per cent of architects were born overseas, although this includes a proportion of people who came to Australia as children.

In the last three years, for skilled migrants nominating architecture as their occupation (noting that some architects may also come to Australia on family, partner or humanitarian/refugee visas), the Department of Immigration issued the following Visas.

Main skilled Visa categories for migration of architects

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Temporary Skilled Sponsored (457) Visas	85	98	129
Permanent Employers Sponsored (186) Visas	18	29	15
Permanent Independent (189) Visas	186	274	269

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection

The most notable change is the increase in the number of 457 Visas and Independent Visas. This suggests a growing internationalisation of the architectural profession, and possibly some skill shortages in specialised areas. It remains to be seen whether the government's abolition of 457 Visas from March 2018, and their replacement with more restrictive Temporary Skills Shortage Visas, will have any significant effect on the use of temporary visas in the sector.

The increase in the number of Temporary Skilled Visas and Independent Visas suggests a growing internationalisation of the architectural profession, and possibly some skill shortages in specialised areas.

According to Commonwealth Department of Education and Training data, around 30 per cent of architecture students in Australian universities in 2015 were overseas nationals. Of those who complete a Master of Architecture, around 40 per cent remain in Australia through obtaining a temporary 485 Visa, and many of these will in time progress to one of the permanent visa classes.²⁸

There are also six Master of Architecture programs from three jurisdictions outside Australia that are accepted at face value as equivalent to Australian qualifications:

- University of Auckland
- Victoria University of Wellington
- UNITEC Institute of Technology
- National University of Singapore
- University of Hong Kong
- Chinese University of Hong Kong

For accredited Australian and these recognised overseas qualifications, the AACA provides a streamlined Verification for migration eligibility purposes. For other qualifications, a more detailed process – the Overseas Skills Assessment Stage One – is applied. The AACA in 2016-17 conducted 367 Verifications of Australian and recognised overseas qualifications, up from 290 in 2015-16. It also conducted 222 successful Stage One (formerly 'Provisional') skills assessments for other architectural qualifications in 2016-17, together with 189 unsuccessful assessments. This is up from 121 successful Stage One assessments and 155 unsuccessful assessments in 2015-16.

Overseas qualification holders who wish to register as an architect in Australia go through both Stage One and Stage Two of the Overseas Skills Assessment process. The Stage Two assessment involves a detailed interview based on a candidate's submitted portfolio of work, which can be drawn from both their student portfolio and their work portfolio. There were 33 successful Stage II completions in 2016-17, compared with 53 in 2015-16. This decrease may be attributed to the introduction of the Experienced Practitioner Assessment in 2017. Prospective architects who have had their Australian or overseas qualification

²⁸ Ibid.

recognised – and who have gained at least two years' professional experience (one of which must be in Australia) – are eligible to sit the Architectural Practice Examination and seek registration from the relevant state or territory Board.

It should be noted that the majority of migrants with overseas architectural qualifications do not register as architects in Australia. In 2016-17, only 52 overseas trained architects successfully completed the final stage of the APE. Although hundreds of overseas qualified architects migrate to Australia each year, the number of overseas-trained candidates taking the APE has been around 50 for many years, suggesting that many are working as employees and/or building designers without seeking registration.

Partly to address this situation, in 2016 the AACA introduced a new **Experienced Practitioner Assessment Program**, which provides a more streamlined path to registration in Australia for overseas architects who have a five year architecture degree plus seven years' practice experience, and are not eligible for registration under existing mutual recognition agreements.

Through an interview based on a portfolio of complex projects, applicants must demonstrate relevant experience in the practice of architecture at an executive level. Successful completion of this program allows applicants to bypass the Architectural Practice Examination entirely and apply directly for registration as an architect with a state or territory Architects Registration Board. In its first year of operation, 48 architects obtained registration on the basis of this Program, and given the large amount of interest this number is expected to grow in future.

In 2016 the AACA introduced a new Experienced Practitioner Assessment Program, which provides a more streamlined path to registration in Australia for overseas architects [...] in its first year of operation, 48 architects obtained registration on the basis of this Program.

For highly experienced architects from selected countries, the AACA's participation in the **APEC Architect Program** offers another 'fast track' to registration for architects with at least seven years' post-registration experience in their home jurisdiction. Reciprocal rights are in turn available to experienced Australian architects. Currently APEC Architect mutual recognition arrangements have been reached with Japan, Singapore and Canada. Suitably experienced architects from these countries need only go through a short Supplementary Assessment Process by interview in order to obtain registration in any Australian jurisdiction (and vice versa). The Supplementary Assessment Process provides Registration Authorities with confidence that those seeking registration understand the general principles and requirements governing practice in the jurisdiction they are seeking to work in, and have the capacity to apply such principles safely. There are currently 34 active Australian registrations from overseas registered architects under the APEC Architect Program.

There is further potential for Australia to expand mechanisms for mutual recognition in the future – through both the APEC Architect Program and other arrangements – and discussions are ongoing with a number of countries. In 2017, a mutual recognition agreement with USA was signed between the AACA and the USA National Council of Architecture Registration Bodies, applicable in 29 USA jurisdictions. Already 14 Australian architects have used this pathway to registration in the USA, and 13 USA architects are now registered in Australia under this Agreement.

It should, however, be noted many countries have substantially different licensing arrangements to Australia that may make mutual recognition problematic. For example, not all countries have a specified period of graduate practice/internship prior to the professional exam (e.g. Italy), while others specify a graduate practice period but do not require a professional examination (e.g. Germany). Many countries (e.g. Spain and Latin America) register architects on the basis of qualifications alone, while other countries (particularly in Scandinavia) do not have registration of architects at all, although they may specify professional standards by different means. Even for countries which on the surface have similar arrangements to Australia, close investigation would be required to ensure that qualification and examination requirements were of an acceptable standard.

KEY ARCHITECTURAL BODIES IN AUSTRALIA



ARCHITECTS ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

The **Architects Accreditation Council of Australia** is a not-for-profit company owned by the state and territory architect registration boards. It is responsible for advocating, coordinating and facilitating the National Standard of Competency for Architects which provides the benchmark for all assessment on the path to registration as an architect in Australia.

The AACA has developed and maintains the Architectural Practice Examination, a nationally consistent, competency-based assessment for candidates seeking registration as an architect in Australia. It manages the process for accrediting local architecture; assesses overseas qualifications and experience and negotiates mutual recognition agreements between Australia and overseas jurisdictions.

STATE AND TERRITORY ARCHITECT REGISTRATION BOARDS

Each state and territory of Australia has its own architect registration board established under legislation to register architects, conduct disciplinary investigations, pursue unregistered use of the term architect, accredit programs of study and educate the public on architectural issues. The Boards have a responsibility to the public, users of architectural services, the built environment industry, and Architects who employ graduates.

The eight Boards (and their respective establishing laws) are:

- **NSW Architects Registration Board** – Architects Act 2003 (NSW)
- **Architects Registration Board of Victoria** – Architects Act 1991 (Vic)
- **Board of Architects of Queensland** – Architects Act 2002 (Qld)
- **The Architectural Practice Board of South Australia** – Architectural Practice ACT 2009 (SA)

- **Architects Board of Western Australia** – Architects Act 2004 (WA)
- **Australian Capital Territory Architects Board** – Architects Act 2004 (ACT)
- **Board of Architects of Tasmania** – Architects Act 1929 (Tas)
- **Northern Territory Architects Board** – Architects Act (NT)

The members of architect registration boards will generally have a mix of expertise, and may include architects in private practice, government practice and academia, as well as government and community nominees. Members may be directly appointed, or there may be a mix of appointed and elected. The eight Architect Registration Boards are collectively the owners of the national standard setting body, the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

The **Australian Institute of Architects** is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia, representing 11,000 members (not all of whom are registered architects). The Institute works to improve our built environment by promoting quality, responsible, sustainable design.

Memberships include student, individual, corporate and affiliates. Membership provides access to a professional community and a range of other benefits including:

- continuing education programs
- law and practice advice, including Acumen advisory notes
- bulletins and publications, including Architecture Australia magazine
- sustainable design advice through the Environment Design Guide
- an ongoing program of awards, networking opportunities and speaker events; and
- engagement with university architecture schools, including by participating in accreditation visits.

The Institute represents architects on a range of broader built environment bodies, including the Australian Construction Industry Forum and the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council. Through its policy and advocacy work, the Institute promotes innovative and appropriate architectural design, and lobbies to improve the quality of the built environment.

ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHITECTS

The **Association of Consulting Architects** is the peak body representing architectural employers in Australia. The Association of Consulting Architects helps architectural firms navigate the changing world of practice by providing regular advice and information on business and employment matters, by promoting awareness of and discussion about business issues, and by advocating for better business practices and legislative frameworks. Membership includes a range of business types from sole practitioners to large architectural firms.

ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURE SCHOOLS OF AUSTRALASIA

The **Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia** comprises the heads of the faculties, schools and departments offering accredited degrees in architecture in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The Association provides leadership and advocacy on issues including quality professional undergraduate and graduate education of architects and related professions; research and scholarship in relation to architecture and the built environment; and policy and community engagement in relation to architectural education.

GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTS NETWORK OF AUSTRALIA

The **Government Architects Network of Australia** is a national collaborative network offering each Government Architect's Office the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge, experience and resources of other Government Architects around the country. The position of Government Architect exists in each Australian State and Territory, except Tasmania where the position lapsed in 2012. Each Government Architect has a whole-of-government leadership role providing strategic, independent, expert advice to Government about architecture and urban design, particularly concerning the design and procurement of public buildings and spaces.