



Australian Institute of Architects

17 January 2012

Mr Mark Warburton
Funding and Student Support Branch
Higher Education Group
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Warburton

**Response to the consultation paper on allocation and funding of non-research
Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places**

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the November 2011 consultation paper on future arrangements for the allocation and funding of non-research Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places (CSPP). We appreciate the extension of time granted for our response. We trust this submission will assist DEEWR in developing an appropriate allocation and funding model for architecture programs.

Please find enclosed our submission for your consideration. As you will see, we have drawn on our earlier submission to the Review of Higher Education Funding and we have raised an additional issue concerning the limitations of the CSPP in relation to new Master of Architecture courses. We seek a meeting with you to discuss our submission and this issue.

In the meantime if you require further information or clarification of any aspect of our submission please do not hesitate to contact me through the Institute's National Education Manager, Martha Liew at 02 6121 2000 or martha.liew@architecture.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Ross Clark
Chief Operating Officer and
Acting Chief Executive Officer

**The Australian Institute of Architects' Response to
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
consultation paper**

***The Allocation and Funding of Non-Research Commonwealth Supported
Postgraduate Places***

About the Australian Institute of Architects

The Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) is an independent, national, member organisation with over 10,000 members across Australia and internationally. The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our community, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design. The Institute contributes globally through its membership of the International Union of Architects (UIA)¹ and the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) and is closely associated with the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA).² The Institute is also one of the founding members of Canberra Accord, an Architectural Education Agreement which was signed by the Institute, the United States' National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB), Asociacion de Instituciones de la Ensenanza de la Arquitectura (ASINEA), Consejo Mexicano De Acreditacion de la Ensenanza de la Arquitectura (COMAEA), Consejo Nacional de Registro y Certificación (CONARC) Mexico, Korea Architectural Accrediting Board (KAAB), the National Board of Architectural Accreditation of China (NBAA), Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB) and the CAA in Canberra in 2008.

Architectural Education – Trends and challenges

To register as an architect in Australia it is a mandatory requirement by State and Territory Architects Acts that a candidate undertakes a rigorous professional training process, including the completion of five years of full time study in accredited architecture courses, two years of professional practice with completion of a log book and a successful Architects Practice Exam.

As the consultation paper notes, postgraduate qualifications have increasingly been required for entry to various professions. The consultation paper also notes that there is continuing debate about appropriate requirements for entry to some professions however it is important to distinguish architecture from that debate because as stated, eligibility for registration as an architect is mandated by legislation and is

¹ The International Union of Architects (UIA) was founded in Lausanne (Switzerland) on 28th June 1948, to unite the architects of the world without regard to nationality, race, religion, or architectural doctrine, and to federate their national organisations. UIA has grown to encompass the key professional organisations of architects in 116 countries and territories, and now represents more than 1,300,000 architects worldwide. <http://www.uia-architectes.org/>.

² AASA is a non profit organisation representing 19 architecture schools in Australia, 3 architecture schools in New Zealand and 1 school in Papua New Guinea.

predicated on successful completion of five years of study in an accredited architecture course.

Between 2006 and 2008, Universities, State and Territory Architects Registration Boards and the Institute, supported by the Federal Government, nationally adopted the Bologna Process by changing the five year undergraduate courses in architecture into a 3-year Bachelor and 2-year Master degree program.³ This has seen the introduction of coursework postgraduate courses as the key pathway for entry into the profession. This new structure allows for broader undergraduate student experiences that equip architects to deal with the complexities of contemporary practice, while receiving a high level professionally relevant education through the Master of Architecture course. This new structure also caters for individuals wanting a career change or an upgrade of qualifications to a professional entry level, enabling architecture schools to attract quality students who want to gain registration as an architect.

There has been a marked increase in student numbers in professional postgraduate architecture courses. In 2007 the number of first year architecture students enrolled was 1776. Since the introduction of the 3 + 2 degree structure for an architecture degree, Institute records show that the annual architecture student intake has increased from 2024 in 2008 to 2490 in 2010. The significant increase in student intake attests to the strong reputation of Australian architectural education nationally and internationally. In response to increasing market demands in the private and public sectors there have been a number of new architecture programs in Victoria and Queensland. In 2008 Monash University introduced its Master of Architecture program, followed by Griffith University (2010) and Bond University (2011). It is worth noting that until these recent additions, Australia had not seen a new architecture program set up for almost 30 years.

One of the current challenges architecture schools face is their ability to deliver quality programs within the constraints of limited funding and increasing student numbers. This is compounded by significant changes in technology and infrastructure, sustainable design requirements, work-integrated learning requirements, and the complexities associated with a professionally accredited program that has clear and measurable international benchmarks.

As we raised in our submission to the Higher Education Base Funding Review last year, in order to be effective, an architecture program is necessarily multidisciplinary, including studies in environmental science, engineering, theory and history studies, and computing. In this way it has a broad appeal as an area of study, but incurs higher delivery and management costs.

The Institute advocates that the maximum student contribution for architecture programs should not be increased, in the light of lower expectations of graduate salary levels, and higher personal costs to the students for materials and production of educational outputs. This means that increased government funding is required to deliver high quality programs of significant duration and technical complexity. Furthermore, student contributions in the coursework Masters programs in architecture should not be as high as other postgraduate research Masters programs

³ One variation to the Bologna Process is Queensland University of Technology's 4 year Bachelor + 1 year Master program.

because it is a required entry level for the registration of an architect. To facilitate greater public access to designers means greater and more equitable access to architectural education. Affordability of architecture programs for people from lower socio economic groups, and the sustainability of their enrolment at university, continues to be a major issue.

There are increased teaching, research and infrastructure resource requirements for professional postgraduate architecture courses. As the Master of Architecture is now the “exit degree” which receives accreditation by the State/Territory Architects Registration Boards, and professional recognition by the Institute, there is increased pressure in the course to ensure students meet the National Competency Standards in Architecture (NCSA) criteria for the accreditation of schools.⁴

Demand for the Architectural Profession

There is a continued demand for architects in Australia through their contribution to the construction and creative industries, both of which contribute significantly to the economic wealth of the nation. Architecture is one of the key professions that contribute to the sustainable design and development of the built environment, and will continue to make a significant contribution to a carbon-economy. Prior to the global financial crisis in 2008/9 architects were included on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) to meet the skills shortage requirements in the building and construction industry. In addition, architects were also listed on the Skills Migration to Australia – Skilled Occupation List, reflecting that shortages of building and engineering professionals were a national concern.

With the demand for housing and infrastructure continuing to grow, climate change challenges architects in their approach to an environmentally sustainable built environment and the design of buildings for the longer term climate. These new challenges not only apply to new buildings but also to existing dwellings and infrastructure to prepare them for climate change mitigation and adaptation. According to the Property Council of Australia (PCA), the replacement cost for existing buildings is approximately \$4.43 trillion dollars and the number of development applications per annum is 250,000. It is imperative that universities and the profession adequately prepare new generation architects to meet these current and new challenges.

Additional consideration for the design of the Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places

Although the specifics of the design of Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places are not encompassed within the consultation paper, the Institute wishes to raise an important issue with the current design of the CSPP program as it relates to the development of new courses in Master of Architecture degrees.

⁴ National Competency Standards in Architecture (NCSA) are assessed through an accreditation process known as the “Australian Architecture Program Accreditation and Recognition Procedure” which is jointly conducted by the State/Territory Architects Registration Boards, AACA and the Institute. All accredited architecture programs in Australia must undergo an accreditation process in order to meet architects registration requirements. Students not graduating from an accredited program will not be accepted into the architect registration process.

As stated previously, there have not been any new architecture programs developed until recently, but with the development of these new courses, limitations of the CSPP program have become apparent.

The Institute understands that Universities are ineligible to apply for CSPP funding for new Master of Architecture programs if their courses are not accredited. However the accreditation process for architecture under the Australian Architecture Program Accreditation and Recognition Procedure is lengthy. This lack of Commonwealth funding while the course is being assessed for accreditation, can act as a significant deterrent to new courses being developed as universities face significant extra expenses to conduct the degree.

With several new architecture programs currently being developed it is critical that the Department resolve this issue as a matter of urgency.

Institute response to the options in the Allocation and Funding of Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places Consultation Paper

In light of the growing challenges for the profession and universities outlined earlier, the Institute believes that the allocation and funding of Commonwealth Supported Postgraduate Places must consider and include Master of Architecture, as a priority as the completion of this course is required for registration as an architect in Australia. A reduction in Commonwealth support for postgraduate places in the Master of Architecture could see a reduction in its offering by universities due to its high cost of delivery.

We have considered all options as presented in the consultation paper and the Institute has commented on the options as follows:

Option 1: Government allocates additional postgraduate places for specific courses or course types

The Institute strongly supports the specific allocation of postgraduate places for professional architectural education at universities. Following the national move by architecture schools in adopting the Bologna Process in 2007-8, the Master of Architecture is the *only* professional entry qualification for architecture offered in Australia. With recent developments and variations in undergraduate courses as the baseline academic pathway into the Master of Architecture, the Institute believes Commonwealth support for Master of Architecture student places will ensure its consistency and sustainability across all schools of architecture, hence providing students, universities and the profession with clear expectations for its delivery.

Uncertainty or decline in funding of the Master of Architecture will see a decline in students completing their qualifications for professional registration as an architect. Architecture is a resource and time intensive educational endeavour, as the Institute has outlined in our response to the Higher Education Base Funding Review. Any additional burden of full fees will severely undermine the demand by students to undertake an architectural education, endangering what is a high growth area in

higher education, and a professional sector essential to the national wellbeing and growth.

Option 2: Government to allocate additional places to ensure universities have a guaranteed level of Commonwealth supported postgraduate places.

While a guaranteed level of CSP for the Master of Architecture is reassuring to an extent, the effectiveness of the actual number of places that this translates into is less certain if it is based on a percentage of, for example, the overall CSP load of a university. The Institute is concerned that this option will restrict the universities' flexibility to be responsive to their internal capacities in educating architects, and the demand fluctuations in the profession and the economy.

Option 3: Allow universities to negotiate their allocation of postgraduate places within an overarching funding envelope for the university.

The Institute is very cautious about this option as it subjects architecture courses to the vagaries of university strategic plans and their compacts with the Government. This option will also place great uncertainty from year to year for architecture schools as the number of architecture graduates they are able to educate will be exposed to the volatility of university-based decisions. Such volatility will also impact on the effectiveness of architecture schools to deliver what is a resource-intensive postgraduate course

Option 4: Government to guarantee to fund all Commonwealth supported postgraduate student places: demand driven funding

Ideally, the Institute's preferred option is demand driven funding for all postgraduate coursework student places. This funding model is equitable as it ensures the number of Commonwealth supported postgraduate places matches the demand for architects and architecture-related professionals, and thus the health of the construction industry and the national economy in general. It also ensures that Australia's significant contribution to the leading edge of design and construction in the global economy is maintained. Lastly, demand driven funding will support diversity in the provision of professional education in architecture by universities within established accreditation requirements, which the Institute advocates for the future health of the profession.

However, as it would be up to universities to decide how many and which eligible students were Commonwealth supported in this demand driven funding approach, it will mean that the funding of postgraduate student places required for the professional registration of architects continues to be subject to the vagaries of university strategic plans. Given the current financial climate, the Institute understands that Option 4 may not be feasible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Institute strongly recommends the continued provision of Commonwealth Supported Student Places for professional Master of Architecture courses. It is imperative that Australia continue to produce highly skilled and

technically innovative architecture professionals that are internationally competitive, ensuring Australia's contribution to the global economic and creative economies, and environmental sustainability. To fulfil the Government's commitment to addressing the future challenges of the built environment will require, amongst other measures, a strong commitment to funding Commonwealth Supported student places for the Master of Architecture courses.