



Tas Chapter Membership Survey Results - MAY

We surveyed our Tasmanian members on the impacts to their practice due to COVID-19, and the information below reflects the period between May 11 and May 25 when the survey was open. From this survey, 52 members responded across a variety of practice types, from sole practitioners and small to medium-sized firms, including city-based and regionally-based firms. Respondents also included a cross-section of position descriptions including directors, architects and graduates, however most of the responses are from directors.

Q1: Gender

Answer choices	Responses	
Male	38	73%
Female	14	27%
Total responses	52	

Q2: Location

Answer choices	Responses	
Regional	18	35%
Capital city	30	58%
Student / academia	4	8%
Total responses	52	

Q3: Practice size

Answer choices	Responses	
Sole practitioner	16	31%
Small	28	54%
Medium	4	8%
Large	0	0%
Student / academia	4	8%
Total responses	52	

Q4: Position

Answer choices	Responses	
Director	36	69%



Senior architect	1	2%
Architect	4	8%
Graduate of architecture (5+ years' experience)	0	0%
Graduate of architecture (1-4 years' experience)	5	10%
Student	3	6%
Contractor	1	2%
Other	2	4%
Total responses	52	

Q5: Employment status pre-Covid-19

Answer choices	Responses	
Director	25	48%
Sole practitioner	12	23%
Employer	2	4%
Full-time employee	8	15%
Part-time employee	1	2%
Casual employee	2	4%
Contractor	1	2%
Unemployed	1	2%
Total responses	52	

Q6: Employment status during Covid-19

Answer choices	Responses	
Director	25	48%
Sole practitioner	12	23%
Employer	2	4%
Full-time employee	6	12%
Part-time employee	3	6%
Casual employee	2	4%
Contractor	0	0%
Unemployed	2	4%
Total responses	52	

Total number of respondents with change in employment status	4	8%
Full-time to part-time	2	4%
Contractor to casual	1	2%
Casual to unemployed	1	2%

Q7: Is COVID-19 affecting your practice?



Answer choices	Responses	
Yes, significantly	14	27%
Somewhat – but not significantly	35	67%
Not at all	3	6%
Total responses	52	

Q8: How is COVID-19 affecting your practice?

Respondents were able to select all that applied.

Answer choices	Responses	
Not applicable – not being affected	3	6%
Site issues (ie. restrictive access requirements)	14	27%
Caregiving responsibilities	14	27%
Delays/postponements of existing projects	36	69%
Difficulties in identifying & securing new prospects	18	35%
HR issues – low staff morale	8	15%
HR issues – redeployment of staff	6	12%
HR issues – layoff of staff	1	2%
Cancellation of jobs	19	37%
Increased delays in statutory approvals	12	23%
Overall effect on your financial position	18	35%
Technology issues – problems in adapting to remote work	10	19%
Decrease in marketing resources	3	6%
Other (please describe in additional comments)	4	8%

Additional comments	Date
I am a sole practitioner. I have enough jobs to keep me going for now. Two that have stalled and all others are progressing very slowly due to issues with communication with clients and consultants.	21/05/2020
I guess I don't fit meaningfully into the sweep of this survey being a retired member who occasionally dabbles.	21/05/2020
Many building companies are having to lay off staff numbers which is directly affecting performance of building programs and hence trade path. This then affects the performance of the Building Contract and generates delay, leading to Extension of Time claims, additional costs and supply chain disruption (timing and other related delays). It also generates additional time required for Architects administering Building Contracts as they are having to administer and broker exceptional circumstances through the contract.	21/05/2020
Material supply to building sites has been slowed down	12/05/2020
Numerous construction programmes are being affected by extended lead times on overseas products. This will prolong our Contract Admin duties, for which we may not necessarily be reimbursed.	20/05/2020



opportunities for fresh graduates are not enough - cannot even step into the door to gain experience after finishing master	22/05/2020
Please ensure the regional architects are represented, as well as those in the capital city.	20/05/2020
Re number of staff affected - all staff have been affected as their hours have been reduced. However we have not stood down or layed off staff. Re how Covid is affecting our practice - 'other' is selected as we have reduced our operating hours so therefore staff hours are reduced. Re the 'hold on' timeframe - this relates to the timeframe we can keep holding on a team of 14 people if projects do not come back on board within the next month.	25/05/2020
Support for people who have been made redundant.	22/05/2020
The delays have allowed more time for reflection by both the clients and myself, which has been a good thing	20/05/2020

Q9: What type of projects have been affected?

Respondents were able to select all that applied.

Answer choices	Responses	
Tourism	16	31%
Education	11	21%
Accommodation and food services	11	21%
Residential - multi-res	11	21%
Residential - new	19	37%
Residential - alts & adds	16	31%
Commercial	16	31%
Public architecture	4	8%
Retail trade	4	8%
Healthcare	5	10%
Urban design	3	6%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1	2%
Agricultural	1	2%
Other	9	17%

Q10: If you have lost work, what is the approximate value of lost earnings?

Answer choices	Responses	
Less than \$1 million	28	54%
Between \$1 million and \$5 million	5	10%
Between \$5 million and \$10 million	1	2%
Over \$10 million	1	2%
Other - please use the comments section for more details	4	8%
Total responses	39	



Q11: If you have lost work, how many projects has this affected?

Open answer – answers grouped below	Responses	
1-5 projects	27	52%
6-10 projects	3	6%
11-15 projects	1	2%
16-20 projects	0	0%
21-25 projects	1	2%
Total responses	32	

Q12: Have you been forced to lay off or stand down staff?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	5	10%
No	39	75%
Total responses	44	

Q13: If so, how many staff (FTE) have been affected?

Open answer – answers listed below	Responses
1, 1, 2, 3, 10	
Total responses	5

Q14: If you have had to reduce hours, approximately how many hours per week?

Open answer – answers listed below	Responses
10	
two staff 7.5hrs per week	
10-20	
15	
20	
25	
38 down to 10	
150	
The practice 'open' hours has been reduced to 3 days per week. 12 team members' hours are reduced to either three or two days per week. The two Directors are working full-time but on a reduced salary.	
Total responses	9

Additional comments:

Additional comments	Date



I have increased hours in the one part time job that I still hold, due to JobKeeper	20/05/2020
Not as yet but this may occur depending upon how current projects track.	21/05/2020

Q15: Have you required staff to take leave (paid or unpaid)?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	6	12%
No	32	62%
Total responses	38	

Q16: Have you been able to negotiate reduced costs for your practice? If so, please state what these are (eg. rent).

Open answer – answers listed below	Responses
N/A	4
No	1
no - but will no longer be having an office in future	
No landlord will not adjust rent	
Not an issue	
Only somewhat	
Our Super fund owns our building and (our practice) pays rent, which then goes to paying off the loan. We are lucky that we went into this situation a little ahead with rent payments, but will need to start paying again soon.	
Rent, electricity, cancellation of subscriptions.	
rent, energy and insurances reduced	
Seeking suspension of AIA membership fee. Cut levels of insurances, but this has meant forfeiting compliance to undertake Govt. work... Catch 22. Delayed loan repayments	
Wages	
We gave notice and departed our premises in the CBD, as our landlord was not prepared to offer any mitigated rental. We are now working from home for a period until we have a better understanding of how this period may affect the market and client confidence.	
In our view the BANKS need to take a hit to their super profits and provide actual payment holidays including interest holidays (with no latter compounding affect), so that it flows right down the line to businesses, landlords and mortgage payers.	
We were able to negotiate reduced rent with our landlords	
Work at home	
Yes - a+ membership, advertising, rent, parking	
Total responses	18



Quantified responses	Responses	
Yes (not inc. wages)	6	12%
No	32	62%
N/A	4	8%

Q17: If you are experiencing supply chain issues, what are these?

Respondents were able to select all that applied.

Answer choices	Responses		Of those 40% who are experiencing supply chain issues
Consultant/sub-consultant hold-ups	11	21%	52%
Lack of communication from clients	11	21%	52%
Procurement issues	9	17%	43%
Contract re-negotiations	2	4%	10%
Other	3	6%	14%
Total responses	21	40%	

Q18: How helpful have the government relief issues been to date?

Answer choices	Responses	
Extremely helpful	11	21%
Moderately helpful	22	42%
Not at all helpful	4	8%
Haven't accessed any government relief	15	29%
Total responses	52	

Q19: Have you or your employer applied for JobKeeper?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	26	50%
No	18	35%
Not yet, but planning to	3	6%
Total responses	47	

Q20: Has JobKeeper been helpful?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	21	40%
No	12	23%
Total responses	33	

Q21: Do you have any comments about JobKeeper?



Answers	Date
As well as JobKeeper, the ATO also needs to write-off small business TAX debt. Small business is the most crucial business sector the Government needs to supercharge to maintain economic momentum. Not providing direct TAX relief for small businesses makes it unsustainable for many, including architecture practices.	21/05/2020
It is a bit like trying to stop a hole in the dyke.	20/05/2020
It is not clear whether it is allowed for an employers to request more hours, on account of increased income, if these increased hours cannot be guaranteed beyond JobKeeper Payments	20/05/2020
it working	13/05/2020
JobKeeper helps to keep staff working minimal hours - so that's how it's been helpful when there has not been enough work to keep all staff occupied and therefore has prevented us from making them redundant, for the time being. However it doesn't generate work. We would prefer for projects to come back online through govt stimulus so we didn't need to rely on JobKeeper. It is a bandaid rather than an enabling measure.	25/05/2020
Not applicable	22/05/2020
Our last months invoicing was down 25% so we don't qualify for job keeper. I suspect this will be ongoing in the short term. Therefore we are not eligible. If you are down 25% each month things quickly become unsustainable.	13/05/2020
Overly complex for how simple it needed to be	21/05/2020
Unfortunately as I was employed casually for under 12 months, I was not eligible and do not qualify for any benefits.	11/05/2020
Very hard, if not impossible, to get as a sole practitioner	20/05/2020
Very slow in the uptake, and I have used accountants to sort it out.	12/05/2020
We are a small business that turns over approx \$1M PA by myself and 1 x independent contractor service. I bring in staff as casuals from time to time. My overheads are considerable (Insurances, Rent, Fees, Rates, Computers, IT, Accounting, Legal, etc)... so the JobKeeper is only helpful for myself as 1 person, and while grateful it is nowhere near enough going forward to cover my outgoings. Essentially, we need some construction project stimulus or our business vaporises.	11/05/2020
will need to access in 3 months	11/05/2020
Total responses	13

Q22: At this point in time, realistically, how long do you feel you can continue to 'hold on'?

Answer choices	Responses	
2 – 4 months	10	19%
4 – 6 months	14	27%



For the next 12 months	6	12%
We are able to continue as we have been doing	18	35%
Total responses	48	

Q23: What support do you need from the Institute?

Answers	Date
A stronger connection between university and real practice	22/05/2020
<p>As per last survey.</p> <p>Results from the last survey and more information on what specifically the Institute has been doing to help the profession.</p> <p>A louder voice and more visibility - for instance a couple of scenarios that indicate the Institute is not seen: it would have been a worthwhile opportunity for the President to be invited on the Tasmanian Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council which may have happened if the Institute was seen more of a leader and enabler. Another example is when the government is talking about investing in affordable housing, which is likely to be a focus of an initial stimulus package - where are architects in the conversation? Currently they are being bypassed.</p> <p>Lobby the government (State and local), decision makers, advisors and influencers more effectively about:</p> <p>*</p> <p>instilling confidence in clients to get paused projects going again (whether through incentives, stimulus funding, interest free loans etc) particularly in the public, tourism and commercial sectors.</p> <p>*</p> <p>when it comes to communicating about the construction industry, educate them to stop bypassing architects and communicate the critical role architects have in not only 'feeding' the industry but also ensuring builders/developers don't impose mediocrity on communities. If architects are quiet now, the building contractors won't be hit with the real impact of this for another six plus months - so the worse is yet to come unless investment is made in getting projects off the ground and ensuring work is created for a broader cross-section of the industry. The Institute needs to be communicating this - save money on the JobKeeper by getting paid work up and running for the whole construction industry food chain - not just building companies that cookie-cut inferior design.</p> <p>*</p> <p>many clients in various sectors have undergone developing masterplans - these need to be the primary focus of any stimulus, which will prevent reactionary, knee jerk responses creating compromised developments.</p> <p>*</p>	25/05/2020



<p>support for visa holders. It is critical for Tasmania's growth and diversity to hold onto the skilled migrants that help Tasmania operate at a global level. Tasmania cannot afford to let them go.</p> <p>*</p> <p>raising the capped value for 2nd Party Certification of Quality Assurance systems. The change to reduce the value of projects that can be undertaken with 2nd Party Certification should never have been reduced to \$10M when previously it was capped at \$25M. A relaxed concession from the government should be considered to provide maximum opportunities for local practices to jump back on their feet again rather than have these projects delivered by larger, interstate practices.</p>	
<p>Good to have information on how the building industry is going & potential work</p>	21/05/2020
<p>I am working on innovative sustainability programs focused on diverting products and materials from the building industry usually ending up in landfills and defining new roles for the architect, linking with waste minimisation experts. Can we investigate funding opportunities for such projects through the AIA</p>	21/05/2020
<p>If/when we see Government Stimulus work ... we need to advocate to Treasury to share the work around and not just give huge tranches of work to a few large firms.</p> <p>We need to ensure work flows to all firms, including those that are not 'prequalified' with Treasury.</p>	20/05/2020
<p>Just keep doing what you are doing.</p>	12/05/2020
<p>Lobby for prolonged or even delayed financial assistance to small practice architectural service providers. Ive attended a conference about how covid19 will affect small businesses in the service industry. It described that practices in our industry are usually trying to procure work based on a delay of a safe minimum of 3 months ahead of time (this piece of information was specific to the scale and work our practice undertakes to maintain workflow). The current financial assistance (job keeper) is (to my understanding) to be withdrawn from offer from government as of September. This is a time when our industry will have just started to see the effects this pandemic has brought to pur industry. The offer for job keeper needs to be prolonged for the construction industry.</p>	20/05/2020
<p>lobby for sustainable projects as a chance to positively return to business</p>	11/05/2020
<p>lobby state and federal governments to bring forward projects to enable local consultants to prepare predesign, schematic design and design development and where possible contract documentation to reduce time frames to get projects out for tendering</p>	12/05/2020



Lobbying or equitable broad ranging stimuli projects	22/05/2020
more applicable to the more commercial practices than me	20/05/2020
None	13/05/2020
None	22/05/2020
None	13/05/2020
None, thank you	21/05/2020
Nothing at the moment.	20/05/2020
Planning reform. Once we have work it just keeps getting held up by councils (especially Launceston City Council)	11/05/2020
Provide social distancing for meetings and events as long a possible.	11/05/2020
Provision of regular updates in the architectural consulting market. Maintain Lean In Sessions and Webinars to allow continuation of CPD plus maintain feedback from other architectural practices.	20/05/2020
Push government to bring online public infrastructure projects / fitout etc	20/05/2020
Reform of planning especially in Launceston to allow projects once they come back to progress smoothly. Too many barriers to get projects start and to much burden at planning phase puts a lot of clients off.	20/05/2020
regular information updates about government support that is specific to local practice, in particular stimulus package role outs	24/05/2020
Representation to government Local, State and Federal to motivate developers, building owners to undertake construction projects. In Tasmania the tourism sector particularly needs support in this regard.	11/05/2020
Strong, persistent Government advocacy explaining the direct effect that stalling projects has on both Architects and (consequently) the entire building industry, right down the lone.	21/05/2020
the Institutes general information is always useful	20/05/2020
There is a lot of discussion around larger scale infra-structural works, but not seems to be suitable to smaller scale sole-practitioner scale projects. Tasmania has a lot of small scale practices and they are often overlooked in lieu of the big few commercial offices that get all the education, public, infrastructural works. Understandable that you can get more bang for your buck in a bigger office, but having worked in small practices other than my own, where we worked on project up to \$5-10million - small offices can generate some outstanding outcomes, very cost effectively without the fat of bigger offices. Some greater support in obtaining Q.A to be able to go for these bigger jobs?	21/05/2020
Totally grateful for the shift in advocacy that the RAlA is pushing more for. We need to dig deeper into LGAT, State Govt procurement methods and protocols. Too much emphasis on project manager attitudes to architecture services. Poor understanding, STILL, of what we do and how - notwithstanding responsibilities for all secondary/sub-consultant services...	21/05/2020
we're ok	20/05/2020



Total responses

28

The following is the breakdown of the practitioners that data was received from, noting that 16 respondents were sole practitioners, 28 respondents were from small practices, and 4 were from medium practices (the remainder of respondents were students/academia):

- 56% of **sole practitioners** listed that the government relief initiatives have not been accessed or aren't helpful, with 25% responding that they were moderately helpful, and 19% responding that they were extremely helpful.
- 19% of **sole practitioners** responded that they had applied for JobKeeper, with 31% responding that JobKeeper wasn't helpful.
- 6% of **sole practitioners** reported they could 'hold on' for another 2-4 months, 31% reported they could 'hold on' for another 4-6 months, 6% reported they could 'hold on' for the next 12 months, and 50% responded they could continue as they have been.

- 22% of **small practices** listed that the government relief initiatives have not been accessed or aren't helpful, with 61% responding that they were moderately helpful, and 18% responding that they were extremely helpful.
- 64% of **small practices** responded that they had applied for JobKeeper, and 7% responded that they hadn't yet but were going to, with 11% responding that JobKeeper wasn't helpful.
- 25% of **small practices** reported they could 'hold on' for another 2-4 months, 25% reported they could 'hold on' for another 4-6 months, 14% reported they could 'hold on' for the next 12 months, and 32% responded they could continue as they have been. The remainder did not answer the question.

- 50% of **medium practices** listed that the government relief initiatives have not been accessed or aren't helpful, with 25% responding that they were moderately helpful, and 25% responding that they were extremely helpful.
- 75% of **medium practices** responded that they had applied for JobKeeper, and 25% responded that they hadn't yet but were going to, with 50% responding that JobKeeper wasn't helpful.
- 25% of **medium practices** reported they could 'hold on' for another 2-4 months, and 50% reported they could 'hold on' for another 4-6 months. The remainder did not answer the question.