

Dear architect

Hello from the NZRAB.

This newsletter is our end-of-year wrap up. There are a number of things we need to update you on, and these are outlined in the newsletter below.



The most important is that we are implementing substantial changes to the way we operate our complaints procedures, starting in January. Also, we are currently working on changing the way we send you invoices for your Annual Certificates of Registration.

I came on board as Chair at the beginning of the year and one of the first things we did was update the NZRAB's Strategic Plan. As part of that, the NZRAB's vision statement was streamlined to: "New Zealand architects equipped to make the best possible contribution to the built environment." I think that says it all, and that is our focus.

As 2019 winds to a close, I want to thank the Board's registration assessors, the members of our various committees and working parties, everyone who has responded to our consultation requests, the Board members themselves and our staff for their effort and commitment.

And may I wish everyone a very happy and safe Christmas.

Gina Jones
Chair

The News

New Complaints Procedures

Our Minister (Hon Jenny Salesa) has given her final approval to rule changes which will reform the way the NZRAB deals with complaints. Starting on 10 January 2020, we'll have a new fast track procedure by which most complaints will be dealt with at a single "interview". Architects will have a right to elect a formal disciplinary hearing if they want with all the cross checks, costs and risks, but we expect very few will do that.

Perhaps more interestingly, we'll also have in place what we are calling our Architectural Service Concern Procedure. This means when a client or other person contacts us with a concern about the service they've received from an architect, we'll try to solve the problem without a formal complaint being laid. So rather than having a complaint form on the NZRAB website we'll ask callers to fill out a "Concern Form". We'll then look at the issues raised and if it is appropriate ask a senior architect to contact the caller and the architect and see if something can be sorted out. We have available a panel of senior architects – all are or have been registration assessors – who have agreed to do this work.

Any solution will have to be agreed to by both parties. Of course, if there's no solution, then the caller will have the choice of letting the matter go, or laying a formal complaint, or raising a

competence concern about the architect.

We hope these two changes will mean more disputes settled quickly and amicably, with fewer formal complaints and fewer formal disciplinary hearings.

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Theory

Some very interesting theoretical thinking is underway. We have a working party asking the question: "Has the practice of architecture changed sufficiently in recent years that the minimum standard for registration needs to change too?"

That begs the question: "What is the minimum standard?" The question is simple, but the answer isn't. Firstly we share a substantial listing of competencies with the Australians; secondly there's the minimum standard described in the Registered Architects Rules 2006, and thirdly there's the shared consensus among the assessors about what architects need to know and be able to do. In effect the minimum standard is a composite of these three reference points.

The working party has met twice so far and is asking existential questions about what an architect is nowadays. Watch this space.

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Going Digital

Those of you recently registered will remember all the palaver of having to put case studies and application documents on memory sticks and courier them to the NZRAB. That's all gone now. We are receiving applications now via shared links and likewise sharing them that way with the assessors. It makes things much easier for applicants and also for the team here in the office.

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Lost Souls

One of our more curious tasks in the office is tracking down architects who haven't paid for their current annual Certificates of Registration. There are always a few architects that just seem to be lost, or we find them and they say they will pay, but they never do. Our "lost souls" list is now down to just a handful of architects, who are currently recorded on the register as "expired" and that we can't find. We are still trying to find them, but pretty much we are reaching the end of the line.

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Invoicing

We are looking into arranging our invoicing for annual certificates in a different way. Currently roughly over 50 per cent of architects get their invoices by post and the rest receive theirs by email. We are investigating changing this so that:

- all architects receive their invoices by email unless they explicitly request otherwise
- electronic invoices have direct links to payment systems
- invoices can be sent to practice accounts departments if the architect wants that.

More work is needed on this, but we'll let you know once anything has been decided.

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Your photographs

Finally, your help please. We want to refresh our NZRAB website and we'd like to make it more interesting from an architectural point of view. To that end, if you can, please send us any photos that you have of details of your designs of projects that we can use on our website. We don't want photos of recognizable buildings, rather we are looking for interesting components or aspects or detailing from buildings that you've designed. There won't be any attribution but if you have anything, please send it to consult@nzrab.org.nz. Thankyou.

And that's our news for the end of 2019.