



NZRAB Strategic Plan 2017 2020

Introduction

This Strategic Plan spans the period 2017 2020. It sets high level benchmarks for excellence for the NZRAB and provides specific outputs for 2017 2018.

Background

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) is a statutory entity tasked by the Registered Architects Act 2005 (the Act) and the Registered Architects Rules 2006 (the Rules) with ensuring that Registered Architects are competent, so the public can rely on them.

In addition, the NZRAB has articulated a broader vision of how it contributes to architecture in New Zealand, as follows:

The task of architecture is to lead the way in terms of what the built environment can and should be. This goes beyond designing for function, essential though that is. In so far as architecture articulates the national imagination, it contributes to nation building. If the built environment in New Zealand is the best that it can be, then it contributes to the realisation of this nation's potential.

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board determines who can be Registered Architects. In doing this, the NZRAB is mindful of the broader contribution to New Zealand that the profession makes.

Looking forward

Overall, the NZRAB is successfully carrying out its statutory functions, which are, in summary, to:

- register architects and undertake continuing registration assessments
- maintain a register of architects
- investigate complaints
- provide the public with information about the registration system.

The NZRAB is also managing its finances prudently and meeting its reporting requirements.

In 2017 2018, the main challenge facing the NZRAB will be responding to the Government's review of occupational regulation in the building sector, if it goes ahead.

Looking to the longer term, possible trends that the NZRAB may need to be aware of include:

- New Zealand changing demographically and culturally (noting New Zealand will change significantly in terms of demographics and culture in the medium term).
- the political and regulatory environment changing (noting the occupational regulation review and legislative changes spanning health and safety, procurement, and liability).
- the role of the architect changing (noting increasing diversity in the way architectural practices are organised and changes in the way the building sector is organised)
- technology and science changing the building sector (noting potential disruptive impacts of Building Information Modelling (BIM), artificial intelligence, virtual reality technology impacting design, and cloud based services)
- environmental risks and liabilities changing as they impact on the built environment (noting the potential impact of climate change and expectations in regard to water and air quality)
- design literacy and intelligence changing (noting increased public interest in building design in recent years)
- the commercial practice of architecture changing (noting the increasing complexity of contracts and an increasing tendency to litigate).

Three Year Strategic Goals and Issues

The following are Benchmarks for Excellence for the NZRAB that the NZRAB either has or ought to achieve.

Sector

- 1) **A work focus that contributes positively to the quality of the built environment in New Zealand**

The NZRAB has articulated a vision which focuses on the contribution that architecture makes to nation building. The challenge for the NZRAB is to make sure that the way it carries out its functions and duties contributes to that broader goal.

Governance

- 2) **Institutional arrangements that allow the NZRAB to work effectively and flexibly**
The NZRAB needs to adapt its policies and procedures as circumstances change and as it learns from experience. For this to occur in a timely way, institutional arrangements are required that are enabling, as opposed to being prescriptive.
- 3) **Board procedures that accord with best practice and good governance principles**
The NZRAB Board needs to ensure that its activities and decision-making processes are effective and accord with the duties and requirements set by the Act and the Rules.

Initial Registration

4) **Applicable minimum standards for registration that are appropriate in terms of the public interest**

The applicable minimum standards for registration need to be sufficiently rigorous to protect the public interest but also they must not impede the aspirations of competent persons who wish to be architects or create unnecessary scarcities in the availability of architectural services. They also need to reflect the practice of architecture as it is currently and be updated when the practice of architecture changes.

5) **A standard for recognised qualifications which ensures that graduates have the required skills, knowledge and attitudes to progress to registration**

The standard for recognising tertiary qualifications for initial registration needs to be such that graduates with these degrees are being provided with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude reflecting of the practice of architecture as it is currently and the way it is evolving and can be expected to evolve in the future.

6) **Initial registration procedures which:**

- a) **ensure that those being registered for the first time meet the applicable minimum standards for registration with a high degree of consistency**
- b) **are credible, efficient and fair**
- c) **are not unnecessarily onerous or expensive.**

The NZRAB's initial registration procedures are standards-based. This means there are no predetermined outcomes, success rates or quotas. To this end, the standard, and the standard alone, should guide registration decisions, and the standard should be applied consistently. The procedures may need to change when the applicable minimum standards for registration have changed to continue to ensure that the standard is being applied with a high degree of consistency. In addition, the procedures in place for doing this needs to be credible, efficient and fair, and they must not impose any unnecessary burdens or expenses on applicants.

7) **Information available to potential registration applicants explaining the NZRAB's initial registration requirements and procedures that is clear and accessible.**

Persons considering or intending to apply to be registered as an architect need to be able to obtain clear and accessible information explaining what is required of them, the standards they have to meet and the registration process.

Continuing Registration

8) **Annual registration procedures and requirements that are efficient and fair**

Registered Architects are required to hold a current certificate of registration, these certificates being issued annually. The NZRAB's administration of this needs to be efficient and fair.

9) **Competence Review procedures and requirements that are compliant, credible, efficient and fair**

The Act and the Rules require that every five years the NZRAB quality assures all architects to make sure that they meet the minimum standard for continued registration. These procedures need to comply with the requirements of the Act and the Rules, and be credible, efficient and fair.

- 10) **A Continuing Professional Development framework that is fit for purpose**
 Rule 21(1)(b) requires that for continuing registration each architect must demonstrate that “he or she has taken reasonable steps to maintain the currency of his or her architectural knowledge and skills since the last assessment.” The NZRAB assists architects to do this by funding a system which provides architects with professional development opportunities and a way of recording what they’ve done. This system needs to provide a reasonable service to all architects regardless of the stage of their architectural careers, whether they are generalists or specialists, and where they live. It also needs to avoid imposing unfair financial burdens or other obligations on participating architects and genuinely assist architects to maintain the currency of their architectural knowledge and skills.

- 11) **A register that is fully compliant with the requirements of the Registered Architects Act 2005**
 The Act and the Rules describe what information about individual Registered Architects must be available on the New Zealand Architects Register. This is provided via an online register which must be compliant with the Act and the Rules, and useful to the public.

Protection of Title

- 12) **Effective protection of title**
 The purpose of the Act is to protect the title “Registered Architect” (section 3). The Act (section 7) specifies the NZRAB’s powers in that regard. The NZRAB should be ready and willing to take legal action against persons who knowingly misrepresent themselves as architects for financial or other gain. In addition, the NZRAB should intervene where practicable when third parties falsely claim that a person is an architect or that a property was designed by an architect when this is not true.

Public Protection

- 13) **Complaints and discipline procedures that accord with natural justice, are timely, and assist the profession to perform better**
 The Act and the Rules specify how the NZRAB must investigate and make decisions in regard to complaints against architects. These requirements need to be implemented in a manner that is lawful, timely, accords with the requirements of natural justice, is fair to both complainants and architects, and protects the public. In addition, when discipline cases are completed, information should be made available to help other architects avoid similar difficulties, where applicable.
- 14) **An appropriate Code of Ethical Conduct**
 The Architects’ Code of Ethical Conduct is specified in the Rules. Over time the context in which architects practice changes and the code needs to be appropriate relative to the environment within which architects currently work.

Communications and International Liaison

- 15) **The NZRAB well connected with its New Zealand stakeholders**
 The NZRAB needs the support of its key stakeholders in New Zealand, including architects who assist its activities (eg registration assessors), architects more generally, policymakers, tertiary providers, the NZIA, graduates and others considering registration, other occupational licensing organisations in the building sector, and other related organisations. The public also needs to be able to access clear information about the registration of architects and the NZRAB’s complaints and discipline procedures.

16) **The NZRAB well connected with its international stakeholders**

The architecture profession operates in an international context. This is expressed formally with shared competencies with Australia for initial registration, shared procedures with Australia for recognition of courses in architecture, and New Zealand's participation in the APEC Architect Project, including its resultant bilateral relationships. The NZRAB needs to play its part in these relationships.

Administration

17) **The NZRAB financially secure and well managed**

The NZRAB needs to be financially viable, which the Board has determined as meaning having net current assets sufficient to fund the NZRAB for three months. The NZRAB is also required to set its fees on the basis of cost recovery unless there are good policy reasons to do otherwise. To these ends, annually the NZRAB should:

- a) review its finances
- b) if net current assets look set to fall below the stated threshold, consider seeking an increase in the Annual Certificate of Registration fee
- c) review its other fees in terms of cost recovery or other policy considerations
- d) monitor all expenditure and contracts.

18) **The NZRAB organised efficiently and effectively in terms of its office and secretariat functions**

The NZRAB needs to be well organised and appropriately resourced in terms of its office systems, data bases technologies and personnel in order to achieve the NZRAB's goals.

19) **Key-person and business recovery risks well managed**

The NZRAB is a small organisation. This creates the risk that important institutional knowledge will be lost when office holders or staff resign or are unavailable. This needs to be managed by an inclusive management style and the retention of institutional knowledge in ways that remaining office holders or staff can access, including after a natural disaster.

NZRAB Annual Plan for 2017/18

Based on the benchmarks for excellence outlined above, the following are issues that need to be addressed and outputs that need to be delivered during 2017/18.

Sector

1. **Benchmark: A work focus that contributes positively to the quality of the built environment in New Zealand**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

Governance

2. **Benchmark: Institutional arrangements that allow the NZRAB to work effectively and flexibly**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

3. **Benchmark: NZRAB Board procedures that accord with best practice and good governance principles**

Issue: The NZRAB Board needs to actively review its performance as a governance board to ensure a high level of performance.

Output: NZRAB Board to undertake its annual assessment of its performance as a Board.

Initial Registration

4. **Benchmark: Applicable minimum standards for registration that are appropriate in terms of the public interest**

Issue: As the practice of architecture evolves the minimum standards for registration and the way they are interpreted may need to evolve as well.

Output: Develop a procedure that annually the NZRAB Board reviews the minimum standards for registration and the way they are being interpreted and either:

- confirms that they continue to be appropriate; or
- decides that they need to be amended or interpreted differently and, if so, how that change would be given effect in terms of benchmarks 6 and 7 and any other ways as appropriate.

5. **Benchmark: A standard for recognised qualifications which ensures that graduates have the required skills, knowledge and attitude to progress to registration**

Issue: The NZRAB uses the Australian and New Zealand Architecture Programme Accreditation Procedure (ANZ APAP) for degree recognition and the procedures therein are current under review.

Output: Respond to the ANZ APAP Review

6. **Benchmark: Initial registration procedures which:**

- a) **ensure that those being registered for the first time meet the applicable minimum standards for registration with a high degree of consistency**
- b) **are credible, efficient and fair**
- c) **are not unnecessarily onerous or expensive.**

Issue A: To maintain the credibility of the NZRAB's initial registration procedures, the process needs to be efficient and fair, and perceived as such by applicants.

Output A: Survey registration applicants after their applications have been completed against a benchmark that at least 90 per cent of respondents perceive the Board's initial registration procedures as being credible, efficient and fair.

Issue B: Increasing specialisation and the way some practices are now organised is resulting in some potential registration applicants struggling to get the necessary breadth of professional experience

Output B: Investigate whether ways can be found to assist potential registration applicants better acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for registration where their architectural work is not exposing them to all aspects of the architectural process.

7. **Benchmark: Information available to potential registration applicants explaining the NZRAB's initial registration requirements and procedures that is clear and accessible.**

Issue: The initial registration section of the NZRAB website is overly complex.

Output: Revise and simplify the initial registration section of the NZRAB website

Continuing Registration

8. **Benchmark: Annual registration procedures and requirements that are efficient and fair**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

9. **Benchmark: Competence Review procedures that are rigorous, efficient and fair**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

10. **Benchmark: A Continuing Professional Development framework that is fit for purpose**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

11. **Benchmark: A register that is fully compliant with the requirements of the Registered Architects Act 2005**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

Protection of Title

12. **Benchmark: Effective protection of title**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

Public Protection

13. **Benchmark: Complaints and discipline procedures that accord with natural justice, are timely, and assist the profession to perform better**

Issue A: The Justice Collins ruling interpreting Rule 69(A) as a ground for dismissing a complaint has clarified a long-standing difficulty of interpretation, but having the principle on which that ruling was based stated explicitly in the rules would better encourage understanding and sound decision making

Output A: Seek a Rule change that a new ground for dismissing a complaint is enacted, being that there is no real prospect of grounds of a successful prosecution.

Issue B: Currently the Rules do not allow the NZRAB Board to dismiss a complaint prior to a Disciplinary Hearing if an Investigating Committee has decided that a Disciplinary Hearing is required, but circumstances have changed so there is no real prospect of grounds of discipline being proven

Output B: Seek a Rule change to enable the NZRAB Board to dismiss a complaint prior to a Disciplinary Hearing if an Investigating Committee has decided that a Disciplinary Hearing is required, but prior to the hearing circumstances have changed.

14. **Benchmark: An appropriate code of ethical conduct**

Issue: The Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects has been reviewed and proposals prepared for updating the code.

Output: Seek a Rule change implementing a revised Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects.

Communications and International Liaison

15. **Benchmark: The NZRAB well connected with its New Zealand stakeholders**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

16. **Benchmark: The NZRAB well connected with its international stakeholders**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

Administration

17. **Benchmark: The NZRAB financially secure and well managed**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

18. **Benchmark: The NZRAB organised efficiently and effectively in terms of its office and secretariat functions**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

19. **Benchmark: Key-person and business recovery risks well managed**

No specific issues or required outputs for 2017/18.

NB: “No specific issues or required outputs” means either that the “benchmark for excellence” has been achieved or work in that area is not a priority currently.