
From: Rod Cuevas (office)
Sent: Friday, 21 June 2019 1:47 PM
To: Ray Williams
Subject: Rod Cuevas - Full building verification by Architects

Dear Ray

Sorry it took a bit longer to get back to you but small businesses are busy places.....

The below is a bit rushed but my comment in response to the current building standard issues.

[Full building verification by Architects: The practice of designing and constructing buildings - Architects Act 2003, NSW Architects Registration Board and SEEP 65.](#)

The recent media coverage on poor building and apartment construction standards are the tip of the iceberg as discussed by Ross Taylor on Tuesday night on the evening ABC24 program.

As an architect with my own practice, I've had personal experience in the design and construction of apartment blocks and other types of residential including low, medium density and unauthorised works.

As things stand, the procurement of construction and its quality from conception to occupation is a mine field, with varying results.

Fundamentally, because no one in particular is ultimately responsible and so many 'specialists' are involved, all wanting to earn a living and save a dollar, no one is eventually responsible. One blames the other and the responsibility reverts back to government, thru media pressure.

In NSW we have the Architects Act and from here the Board of Architects maintains a register of Architects. The role of the Board of Architects is to protect the consumer from Architects.

Objects of Act

The objects of this Act are:

- (a) to ensure that architects provide services to the public in a professional and competent manner, and*
- (b) to provide mechanisms to discipline architects who are found to have acted unprofessionally or incompetently, and*
- (c) to ensure that the public is appropriately informed about the qualifications and competence of individuals or organisations holding themselves out as architects, and*
- (d) to promote a better understanding of architectural issues in the community.*

The Board's primary role is to protect the consumer.

Architecture is defined by many references as *'the art or practice of designing and constructing buildings.'*

There is no one more qualified nor more at risk in losing their status than an architect in the *'practice of designing and constructing buildings'*.

There is no one that better understands the intimate construction issues than the individual that designs the building and determines the structural solution. This is the same individual that determines the external wall cladding and infill internal walls, the weather tightness and waterproofing systems, the intricate system of services and the environmental measures to be adopted to meet sustainability objectives. And this individuals most important objective is, duty of care to the occupier.

It is my opinion that thru the architect it is the Architects Act that ensures building standards are ultimately upheld.

In order to protect the public and ensure legislative objectives are upheld Seep 65 or similar, needs to be expanded to all building typologies in design documentation, supervision of works and verification thereof by the registered architect at occupation. And if government needs to subsidise this process similarly to Medicare and Legal Aid then this is what should be considered.

Anybody can be an artist and design, it is only an architect that is qualified in the *'practice of designing and constructing buildings'*.

The best warranty that any building can have, is the verification by a registered architect that the building procurement was supervised by the architect from conception to occupation and underwritten by the architects name and professional indemnity.

This is a massive topic to discuss but there are countries where not even a flag pole goes up without the signature of a registered architect. I would hate to see an earthquake hit Sydney. As an architect, irrespective what engineers or authorities would say, I would consider that proposition for the risk in question in the holistic design. An engineer or a private certifier or anyone for that matter would not and cannot because they are specialist in their own fields and not in the whole. In the event of an earthquake, in Sydney, whilst no structures may collapse, I'm sure a great deal of material would dislodge and free fall.

Full building verification by a registered architect needs to be enacted.

From financial transparency to better education and safety on site, there are too many benefits to mention.

Regards Rod

Regards

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ARCHITECTS – PROJECT MANAGERS – CONSTRUCTION MANAGERS

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