



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

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Mr Geoff Harper
Registrar
Board of Architects of Tasmania
GPO Box 457
Hobart TAS 7001

By email to: registrar@architectsboardtas.org.au

Re: Architectural Practice Examination (APE)

Dear Geoff,

The Australian Institute of Architects Tasmanian Chapter (the Institute) has been working to support the architectural profession during the Covid-19 crises. We are experiencing significant impacts on business as usual due to the “lock-down” and have had to adapt quickly to continue to offer member services through an online environment, including supporting initial registration through the Institute’s highly regarded PALS preparation for registration course online and the Board of Architects of Tasmania re-registration Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements, through increased CPD offerings online.

The Institute has noted that the Architectural Practice Examination (APE), previously scheduled to be held this month has now been postponed until August 2020 at this stage. Given that no one knows how long the current Covid-19 crisis will continue, we would be keen to discuss new ways to support the delivery of stage 2 of the APE, the examination component, in an online environment at a place of convenience for the candidate.

Our understanding is that one of the reasons stage 2 of the APE continues to be held in each capital city has been due to concerns about cheating, and that there is a strong preference for the 2020 examination to be delayed until it can be held as usual. This continues to perpetuate the situation where many candidates are asked to travel long distances and at great expense in order to participate in the examination, with rural and regional candidates disproportionately disadvantaged.

With finite resources and significant economic pressure ahead for all sections of the Australian community, including the architectural profession, it is essential that we all work now to minimise the costs associated with registration. Asking candidates to incur significant travel and accommodation costs to participate in an examination process that could instead be appropriately delivered remotely online, does not fit comfortably alongside these aims and increasing pressures on us all. It is also at odds with the current need to be physically distant

from co-workers, friends and family during the Covid-19 crisis, and wherever possible stay at home. A situation that is likely to continue for many months yet.

We strongly believe that there are appropriate ways to embed an auditing and moderation process into the overall APE assessment to ensure the successful online delivery of the stage 2 examination in each candidate's home or place of convenience for the candidate. For example, an audit process could be designed to pick up anyone who excelled in the stage 2 examination but was unimpressive to panel members during the following Stage 3 interview process.

Each applicant could also be required to sign a statutory declaration confirming that they had complied with the online examination requirements and that they have not used any additional material to complete the examination. It could also be feasible for applicants to be supervised by a registered architect while completing the online examination. This would be allowable under the current social distancing rules, and if thought necessary, the supervising architect could also sign a statutory declaration.

Changes in outcomes from the examination before and after the introduction of the remote online method could also be undertaken, and shifts towards higher scores could be monitored, and changes investigated.

There is no doubt several other useful and fit for purpose ways the delivery of a remote online examination could be undertaken. While this change will be absolutely necessary during the Covid-19 crises, this should also be seen as an opportunity to support change in the APE process, where required, to deliver a dynamic and responsive examination process, reflective of modern architectural practice.

The Institute stands ready to support the Board during the Covid-19 crisis and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues above at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Shamus Mulcahy
Tasmanian President
Australian Institute of Architects



Jennifer Nichols
Tasmanian Executive Director
Australian Institute of Architects