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Monday, 6 July 2026

Migration Queensland
Department of Trade, Employment and Training
Queensland Government
Via email: dama@migration.qld.gov.au

Re: Submission to Queensland Government consultation on a potential state-led Designated Area Migration Agreement and Queensland Skilled Occupation List

Date	06 July 2026
Prepared by	Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter

Introduction

The Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Queensland Government's consultation on a potential state-led Designated Area Migration Agreement and the Queensland Skilled Occupation List for state nominated skilled migration.

The Institute is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia, representing architects, graduates, academics and students across the country. The Queensland Chapter represents members across metropolitan, regional and remote Queensland and has a strong interest in ensuring the State has the built environment workforce required to deliver housing, infrastructure, regional growth, climate resilience and high-quality public places.

Position

The Queensland Chapter supports, in principle, further investigation of a state-led Designated Area Migration Agreement where it is targeted, evidence-based and responsive to demonstrated workforce needs across Queensland.

Migration settings should be considered as one part of a broader workforce strategy. They should complement, rather than replace, investment in local education, graduate employment, supervised practice, professional development, registration support, regional workforce retention and procurement settings that support sustainable architectural practice.

The Institute's view is that Queensland's built environment workforce needs should not be understood solely through the lens of construction trades or project delivery. The capacity to deliver housing, public infrastructure, regional development and climate-responsive communities also depends on access to architects and related design professionals.

Queensland's migration settings should support a complete workforce pipeline: attracting skilled professionals where shortages are demonstrated, retaining international students who have trained in Queensland, supporting local graduates into employment, and ensuring clear pathways to registration and long-term professional contribution.

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Recommendations

The Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter recommends that the Queensland Government:

1. Support further development of a state-led Queensland DAMA where it responds to demonstrated workforce shortages and complements local workforce development.
2. Review the Queensland Skilled Occupation List to ensure architecture and related built environment professions are appropriately recognised.
3. Include, prioritise or reinstate Architect — ANZSCO 232111 within relevant Queensland skilled migration settings, particularly where regional shortages are demonstrated.
4. Consider inclusion of Landscape Architect — ANZSCO 232112, recognising the importance of green infrastructure, urban heat mitigation, open space, public realm and climate resilience.
5. Ensure skilled migration settings support, rather than displace, Queensland-trained graduates by strengthening graduate employment, supervised practice, mentoring and pathways to registration.
6. Recognise the relationship between international education, graduate employment and skilled workforce retention, including opportunities for international built environment students trained in Queensland to transition into local practice.
7. Avoid creating structural incentives that substitute draftsperson roles for properly supervised graduate architect pathways or limit progression toward registration.
8. Consider regional employment and settlement incentives for architects and built environment professionals, drawing on approaches used in health and other essential workforce sectors, including relocation support, employer support, professional mentoring and retention measures.
9. Ensure any DAMA concessions do not dilute professional standards, registration requirements, workplace protections, local salary standards, building safety or consumer protection.
10. Engage with professional bodies, including the Australian Institute of Architects, the Board of Architects of Queensland, universities, regional councils and employers, to identify workforce shortages and support migrant workforce integration.

Regional workforce challenges

It has been clearly articulated by our members that recruitment of architects in regional Queensland is difficult.

Regional practices often face challenges attracting and retaining suitably experienced architects, graduates, project leaders and contract administration expertise. These challenges are particularly acute where practices are competing with larger metropolitan markets, where there are limited local graduate pipelines, or where project workloads fluctuate but still require highly skilled professional input.

Regional Queensland faces uneven population growth, workforce retention challenges and constrained access to professional services. This matters because regional communities require architectural capability to support housing delivery, community infrastructure, schools, health facilities, tourism projects, civic buildings, regional planning outcomes, heritage conservation, disaster resilience and climate-responsive design.

The issue is not simply one of construction labour. Many projects rely on skilled architectural input well before construction begins. Architects contribute to feasibility, design, documentation, planning approvals, procurement, stakeholder engagement, consultant coordination, contract administration and quality outcomes through delivery. Shortages in these professional skills can delay projects before they reach site and can reduce the capacity of regional communities to deliver well-designed, buildable and sustainable outcomes.

Architects as an enabling profession

Queensland has significant ambitions in housing supply, infrastructure delivery, regional development, sustainability and preparation for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. These objectives require a complete built environment workforce.

Architects are an enabling profession within that workforce. They support the translation of policy, investment and planning intent into buildings and places that can be delivered, maintained and adapted over time.

The Institute considers that skilled migration settings should better recognise the role of architects and related built environment professionals in supporting Queensland's growth. This includes the role of architectural practices in regional communities, where access to professional design capability is often more limited but no less important.

Student visas, graduates and workforce retention

The Institute encourages the Queensland Government to consider the relationship between international education, graduate employment and skilled workforce retention.

Queensland universities educate both domestic and international students in architecture and related built environment disciplines. Many international students who have studied in Queensland may be well placed to transition into local practice, including in regional areas, provided there are clear employment pathways, appropriate visa settings, supervised practice opportunities and support to progress toward registration.

Skilled migration settings should therefore not only focus on attracting experienced professionals from overseas. They should also support the retention of people already trained in Queensland who understand the local context, have established community and professional connections, and may be able to contribute to regional workforce needs.

However, skilled migration must not be used as a substitute for investment in local graduate employment. The profession continues to identify challenges in graduate employability, and any expansion of migration settings for architecture should be accompanied by measures that strengthen employment opportunities for Queensland-trained graduates, both domestic and international.

A successful workforce strategy should support graduates to move from education into meaningful architectural employment, supervised practice, mentoring, professional development and registration pathways.

Queensland Skilled Occupation List

The Institute recommends that the Queensland Government review the Queensland Skilled Occupation List to ensure architecture and related built environment occupations are appropriately recognised.

In particular, the Institute recommends that the occupation of Architect — ANZSCO 232111 be included, prioritised or reinstated within relevant skilled migration pathways where it is not currently available, particularly where regional shortages are demonstrated.

The Institute also supports consideration of related built environment occupations that contribute to housing, infrastructure, planning, sustainability and regional delivery, including:

- Landscape Architect — ANZSCO 232112;
- Urban and Regional Planner — ANZSCO 232611;
- Building Inspector — ANZSCO 312113;
- Construction Project Manager — ANZSCO 133111;
- civil, structural, services and environmental engineering occupations; and
- environmental consultant and sustainability-related built environment occupations.

These occupations should not be considered in isolation. Queensland's housing and infrastructure delivery pipeline depends on integrated teams of architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, building professionals, sustainability specialists and construction practitioners.

Architectural graduates, documentation roles and professional progression

The Institute notes that architectural drafting and documentation skills are important to practice delivery. However, migration settings should be carefully designed to avoid creating structural incentives that substitute draftsperson roles for properly supervised graduate architect pathways.

Architectural graduates play an important role in practice and require opportunities to build experience across design, documentation, project coordination, contract administration, client engagement and professional practice. These experiences are essential to support progression toward registration.

The Institute therefore recommends caution in relation to migration settings that prioritise architectural draftsperson roles without also supporting graduate architect employment and registration pathways.

The priority should be to ensure that architecture graduates are able to access meaningful supervised employment that builds professional capability and supports long-term contribution to the profession.

Designated Area Migration Agreement

A state-led DAMA may provide an opportunity to address specific regional and sectoral workforce constraints that are not adequately met through standard skilled migration settings.

The Institute supports consideration of architecture and related built environment occupations within any state-led DAMA where regional workforce shortages are demonstrated. This should include consideration of regions where there is a constrained supply of registered architects and experienced architectural staff, and where that constraint affects the delivery of housing, community infrastructure, public works and private-sector development.

A DAMA should be designed to respond to genuine regional workforce needs while maintaining professional standards, consumer protection and public interest outcomes.

Regional incentives and retention

The Queensland Government could consider regional employment and settlement incentives for architects and built environment professionals, drawing on approaches used in health and other essential workforce sectors.

Incentives could encourage skilled professionals, including internationally qualified architects and Queensland-trained graduates, to take up roles in regional Queensland where workforce shortages are demonstrated.

Any such model should focus on long-term retention, not short-term placement alone. It should include appropriate employer support, relocation assistance, professional mentoring, access to continuing professional development, connection to local professional networks and clear pathways to registration where relevant.

Regional incentives should also be designed in consultation with regional practices, local governments, universities and professional bodies to ensure they respond to local workforce conditions and do not create unintended consequences for small practices or early-career professionals.

Professional standards and safeguards

The Institute does not support migration settings that would dilute professional standards or undermine registration requirements.

Any migration concessions should be carefully calibrated and should not compromise:

- professional registration requirements;
- consumer protection;
- building safety;
- workplace rights and fair employment conditions;
- local salary standards;
- quality of design, documentation or contract administration;
- public confidence in the architectural profession.

For architecture, skilled migration pathways should align with the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia assessment processes, Board of Architects of Queensland registration requirements, supervised practice pathways and Australian professional standards.

The Institute would also encourage the Queensland Government to consider support mechanisms that assist internationally qualified architects and built environment professionals to understand and navigate Australian practice requirements. This could include guidance on assessment, registration, continuing professional development, local procurement settings, regional practice expectations and pathways to professional integration.

Conclusion

The Institute supports the Queensland Government's consideration of a state-led DAMA and review of the Queensland Skilled Occupation List as part of a broader response to workforce needs across the State.

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Queensland's housing, infrastructure, sustainability and regional development ambitions require a complete built environment workforce. Architects and related design professionals play a critical role in shaping projects before they reach site and in ensuring that growth is delivered in a way that is functional, sustainable, resilient and responsive to place.

It has been clearly articulated by our members that recruitment of architects in regional Queensland is difficult. Migration settings should recognise this challenge and ensure that architecture is appropriately included within Queensland's skilled workforce planning.

At the same time, skilled migration should form part of an integrated workforce strategy that supports domestic graduates, retains international students trained in Queensland, protects professional standards and incentivises regional practice.

The Queensland Chapter would welcome further engagement with the Queensland Government on the built environment workforce needs of the State and on practical measures to support regional recruitment, retention and professional integration.

Yours sincerely,





Peter Gardiner
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