Dear……………………….

I am writing to you to alert you as the member for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Victoria’s [Legislative Assembly/ Legislative Council] about the current Building, Planning and Heritage Amendment Bill 2022 which is making its way through the Victorian Parliament. We are asking you to consider an important amendment to the bill.

The bill will introduce positive changes to help improve building quality such as creating a Building Monitor for residential buildings and establishing a legislated requirement for electronic building manuals.

The bill will also make a number of changes to the Architects Act 1991 which regulates the Architects Registration Board of Victoria (ARBV). Clause 88 of the bill overhauls Section 47 of the Architect’s Act which sets out the current 10-member board’s composition and appointment process.

**The national architectural peak body and professional association, the Australian Institute of Architects, supports Clause 88’s introduction of a legislated set of skills under the new subsection 47(2)(b) to ensure a stronger skills-based board. However the overhauled Section 47 will remove the requirement to have any registered architects on the board. This is a critical mistake.**

The current act requires five registered architects from various backgrounds alongside important consumer and construction industry representatives nominated by various bodies. The overhauled Section 47 will remove all of these requirements.

Under the proposed new subsection 42(2)(a) the Minister must ensure that at least 3 of the members of a 9-member board to have architecture qualifications *only* and demonstrated experience in a leadership role within the building industry. They will not be required to be registered architects. Many people have undertaken an architectural degree and then entered other roles in construction without completing the long path to becoming a registered architect.

The full path to becoming an architect takes about 10 years. It requires both an undergraduate and masters degree. After this a ‘graduate’ then works for five years under the supervision of an experience architect to acquire and demonstrate additional nationally set competencies before undertaking oral and written exams with a state or territory Architects Board.

The move to requiring no minimum quota of registered members of the profession is markedly out of step with other professional registration and regulation boards such as the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, the Medical Board of Australia, the Victorian Legal Admissions Board and the Council of the Victorian Institute of Teaching, whose composition include at least two-thirds being members of their respective professions.

**The move to a skills-based board needs to retain registered architects and consumer and construction industry representatives. The bill’s proposed change will weaken consumer protection by removing the important insights into the conduct and competency standards of registered architects as well as the insights of consumers and construction sector professions.**

**We ask you to ensure Clause 88 is amended to provide for a minimum number of experienced registered architects to be present on the Board.** At least four would help to reflect the diversity of architect practice required across our buildings and associated development and modern procurement models as well as the practice insights from government architect and teaching and research (universities).