

19 October 2020

Ms. Nadine Williams  
Deputy Secretary, Skills and Training,  
Department of Education, Skills and Employment  
GPO Box 9880,  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

## 2020 FEDERAL BUDGET BOOSTING APPRENTICESHIP COMMENCEMENTS FUNDING

Dear Ms. Williams

Thank you for recent engagement with our Institute's Victorian Chapter Advocacy and Policy Manager, Mr. Paul Zanatta, about extending Apprentice and Trainee wage subsidies to employers of architect students and graduates. On behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) I am very pleased to follow up and continue this conversation with you.

The Institute has conducted significant internal and external discussions regarding eligibility for employers to claim the wages subsidy under the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements funding since its announcement in the 2020 Federal Budget.

This is an interest of national concern. Covid-19 has had a detrimental impact on construction and architecture, and especially in Victoria. Across Australia, Job Keeper has been critical in maintaining the employment of architects in many practices.

The serious risk that the profession is confronting is that new graduates will not only fail to obtain a position in a practice, they will therefore not be able to attain their registration as an architect.

In order to obtain registration, graduates of architecture with a Masters degree must undergo *at least* two years of supervised practice, maintain a journal of work, undertake regular competency appraisal and pass both written and oral exams prior to gaining registration with a state Architects Registration Board.

Registration candidates (usual referred to as 'graduates') accrue the supervised practice experience required for registration by working for a practice. This can occur while still an undergraduate student, between their Bachelor and Masters degrees, or after completion of their Masters degree. This model, which combines learning on the job and formal learning, is similar to apprenticeship or traineeship programs in other areas of the construction industry as a prerequisite for practitioner registration.

Separate to the universities, the Institute also provides professional development targeted to these students and graduates, alongside our Continuing Professional Development program to assist them in gaining knowledge to achieve all required competencies required for registration.

These competencies are scoped in the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA)<sup>1</sup> that are governed by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.

From our enquiries about the “Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements” budget initiative, we understand this funding is being channelled through the traditional apprenticeship and training provider system that our profession is not normally involved with (that also involves Registered Training Organisations delivering VET level qualifications).

We would appreciate an opportunity to discuss extending the program, with a number of checks and balances that would be agreeable to the Commonwealth, so that employers are supported to maintain and recruit architecture graduates preparing for registration. This would prevent the loss of several years of investment in their tertiary education and also the potential loss of these young people permanently to the profession and the broader design and construction industry sectors.

To add, we understand from our discussions with Engineers Australia and the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors that a similar concern exists in relation to their respective graduates from university who require supervised employment before attaining registration.

Advocacy and Policy Manager, Paul Zanatta, will contact your office to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet to discuss how we can progress this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a long horizontal line with a stylized vertical stroke and a small checkmark-like flourish at the end.

Julia Cambage  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.aaca.org.au/the-national-standard-of-competency-for-architects/>