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Editorial

Who are the women of Victorian Architecture?
Justine Clark, Tania Davidge, Elycia de Guia,
Anna Jeffery and Bernadette Wilson

Contributors

Angelucci, Bastow, Blazey, Bright, Cassaignau,
Charlesworth, Cousins, Dovey, Dwyer, Dyring, Edelis,
Edmond, Edwards, Freeman, Giannini, Green, Lardner,
Madabhushi, Marcello, Maskiell, McGirr, McWilliam,
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Rees, Ryan, Slicer, Teschendorff, Waldron, Willis

Slice

Brett Seakins

Messages

Victorian Chapter President – Jon Clements
Office of the Victorian Government
Architect – Jill Garner

VISION OF HER FUTURE

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY architecture student Margaret Suchestow, of Black Rock, studies a plan for a city block — and dreams of the future . .

The design by Leslie M. Perrott and Partners was one of the many on show at the Architectural Convention's city development display at the Cultural Centre yesterday.

A city of charm but . . .

MELBOURNE was not as richly endowed with natural beauty as other Australian capitals — Adelaide excepted — the Treasurer, Mr Holt, said yesterday.

"Other cities have natural assets which give them something which we can achieve only by artificial effort," he said.

Mr Holt was opening the Architectural Exhibition, part of the 14th Australian Architectural Convention, which opened in Melbourne yesterday.

He said that men of vision had given Melbourne open spaces, wide streets and attractive buildings.

"Because of them we are living now in a dignified, gracious city," he said.

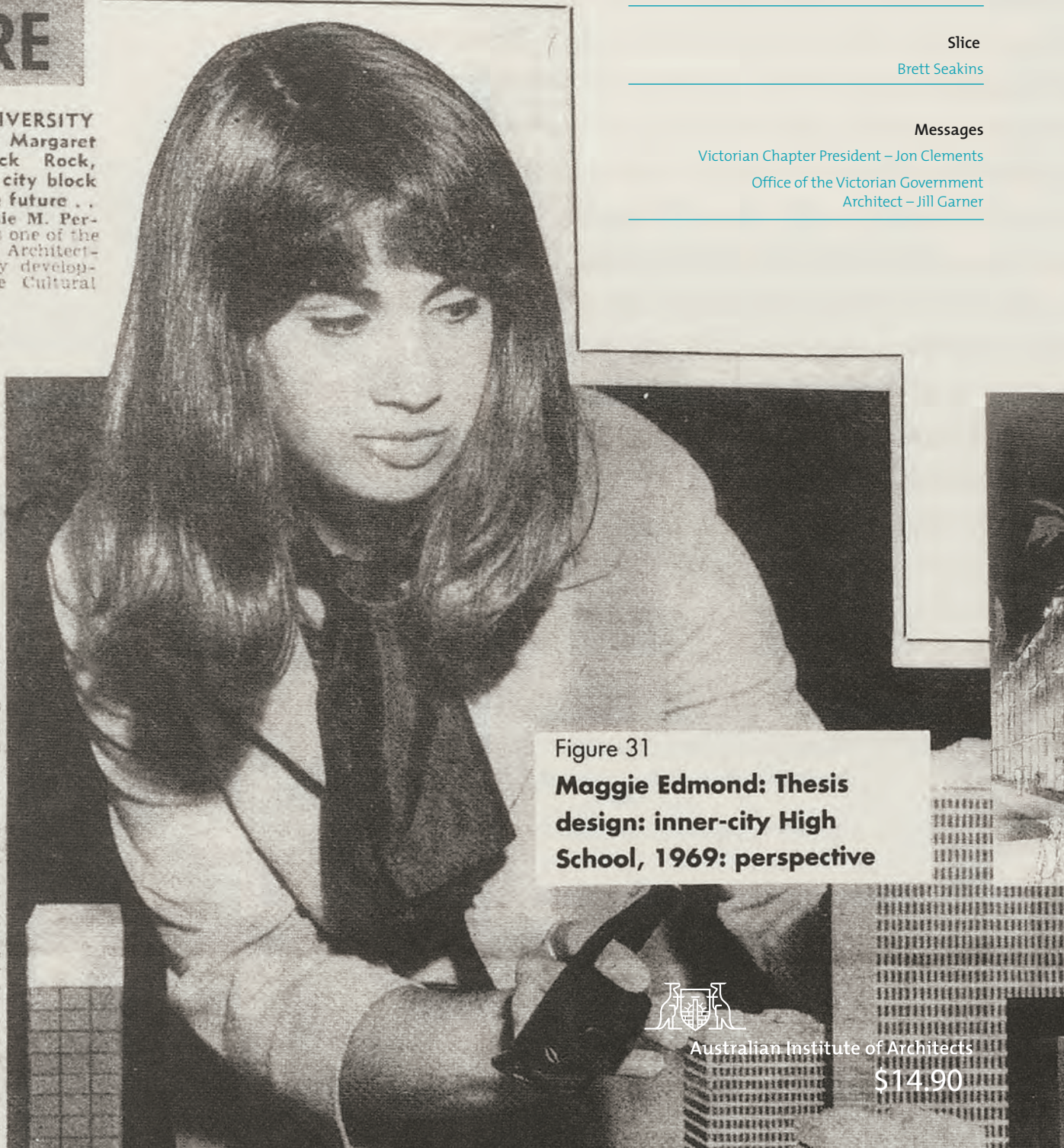


Figure 31

**Maggie Edmond: Thesis
design: inner-city High
School, 1969: perspective**



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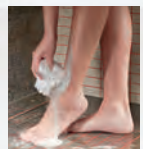
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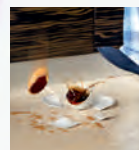
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Who are the Women of Victorian Architecture?

Justine Clark, Tania Davidge, Elycia de Guia, Anna Jeffery and Bernadette Wilson

Welcome to the 2013 Summer edition of *Architect Victoria*, celebrating the contribution women make to architecture across the state. In considering this issue, our first task was to think about how we might celebrate the women of Victorian architecture, while also contributing to the burgeoning discourse around gender and the profession. We decided we'd like to hear directly from some of the women practising about their experiences, aspirations and projections for the future.

But, who to include? We began by listing the amazing women in Victorian architecture we knew – between the five of us, this quickly became a very long list. But we were also conscious of the many interesting women outside our personal networks. We decided to use word of mouth to extend our range. We cut back our long list – a painful task – and sent an email asking for responses to a set of questions. We also asked our respondents to pass the questions on to one other woman whose voice they would like to see represented, but whom we may not know.

The result is a fascinating array of women. It is neither comprehensive nor representative, but it does provide a snapshot of the wide range of ways

that women contribute to architecture here, along with glimpses of the opportunities and challenges they face. Included in this edition are women who are well-established in their architectural careers, women who are 'emerging' as architects and those who are less visible in terms of the public life of architecture, but who are integral and valued members of larger practices. We also have the voice of the next generation – the students – and of women who are not defined through being registered architects, or graduate architects, but who make valuable contributions to our profession in other ways. The 37 women represented here are just a tiny proportion of the many women active in Victorian architecture. In highlighting these particular women, we also aim to hint at the wide range of other women who participate in our industry in diverse ways.

The questions we asked were fairly broad – What do you do? How did you get there? Where do you hope to be? What would you say to a woman starting out in architecture? What do you think the future of architecture is/should be? The personal reflections occasioned by these questions are complemented by an overview of what we know statistically about women in Australian architecture and a very fine essay by

Dr Karen Burns, which considers the complexities of identifying oneself as a 'woman architect' and the strategic value of doing so, on occasion.

We also asked our respondents to submit two images – one a portrait of themselves in a context that is meaningful in terms of their architectural engagement, the other an image that intrigues or inspires them architecturally. The portraits aim to widen the idea of what an architect 'looks like'. Unfortunately we couldn't reproduce many of the images that intrigued or inspired due to copyright constraints. Nonetheless, the images scattered though the responses do convey the rich array of material that our architects draw on.

One image that we did have permission to reproduce was the famous portrait of Denise Scott Brown in 1966, submitted by Suzannah Waldron. This remarkable image shows Scott Brown confidently poised to change the world of architecture. Paired with the newspaper of a young Maggie Edmond in 1969, used on the cover, this reminds us of the women who have gone before us, here and elsewhere.

The Strip seen from the desert with Denise Scott Brown in the foreground, 1966. Photographer Robert Venturi© Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc., Philadelphia. Courtesy of Graham Foundation, Chicago. Submitted by Suzannah Waldron.



Where are the
Women of Victorian
architecture?

Melbourne



THE LOCATION OF INSTITUTE WOMEN MEMBERS ACCORDING TO POSTCODE

- 0-5 women
- 6-10 women
- 11-15 women
- 16+ women

864 women members in Victoria

327 registered architect women
members in Victoria

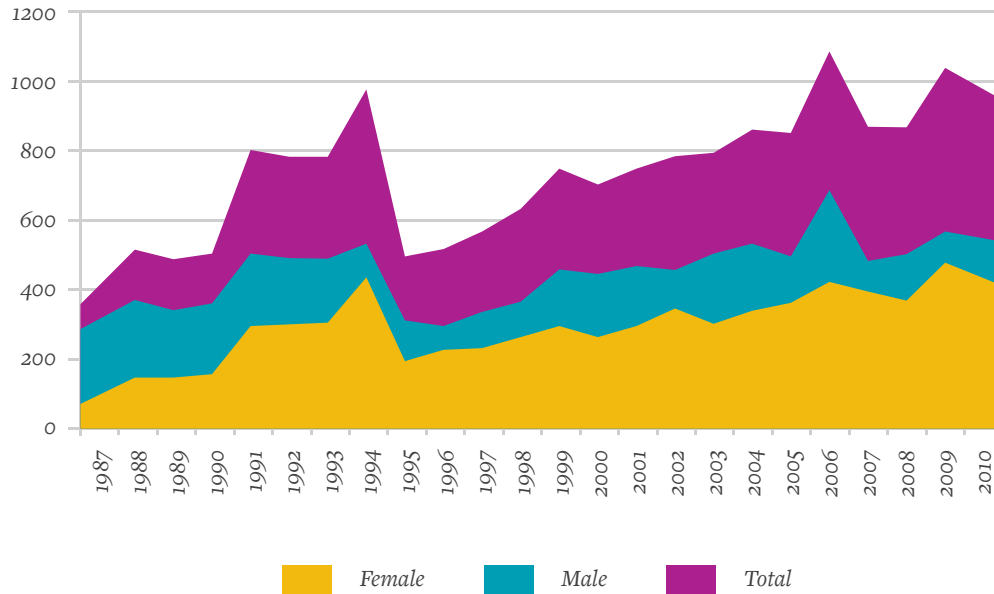
Approximately 1,000 registered
architect women in Victoria

The Statistics

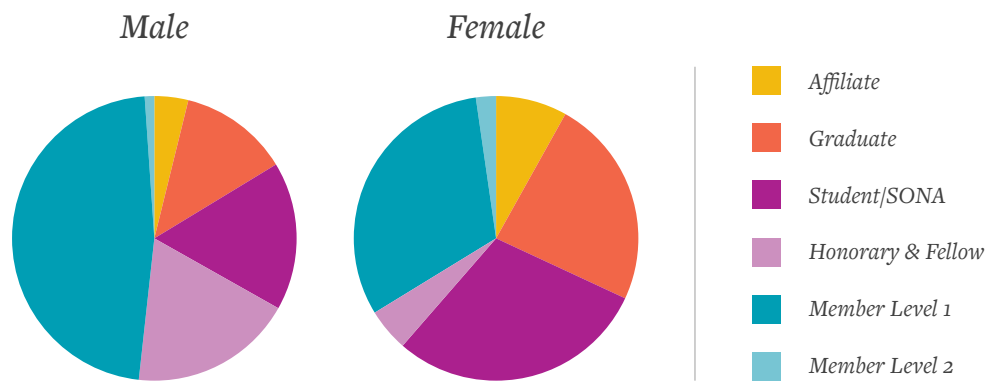
The information provided in the graphs below has been extracted from the Institute's membership statistics, 30 March 2012, and the results from the Institute's Graduate Survey 2012. This survey was sent to members of the Institute who graduated in the last ten years. Membership with the Institute is not compulsory, so these statistics do not provide a comprehensive picture of the whole profession. Nonetheless, they do provide one important measure of women's participation in the profession.

With thanks to Gill Matthewson for the additional analysis. For more detail on the statistics, see Gill's two recent updates on Parlour (www.archiparlour.org): "Updating the numbers, part 1: at school" and "Updating the numbers, part 1: at work".

Numbers of Graduates from all Schools of Architecture, 1987–2010



Membership Categories By Gender



In 2011 there were 9,222 students enrolled across the 18 schools of architecture in Australia, 42% were women.

In 1987, 23% of graduates were women.

By 2012 that figure had increased to 44%.

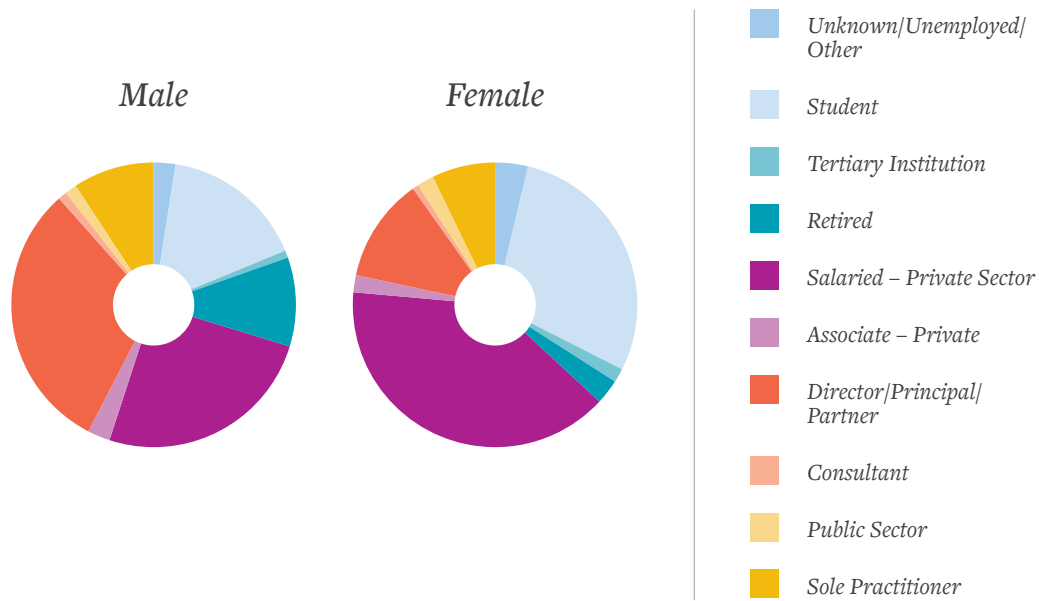
At the beginning of 2013:

- 29% of Institute members were women (3,275)

- 17% of Institute members were registered women architects (1,069)

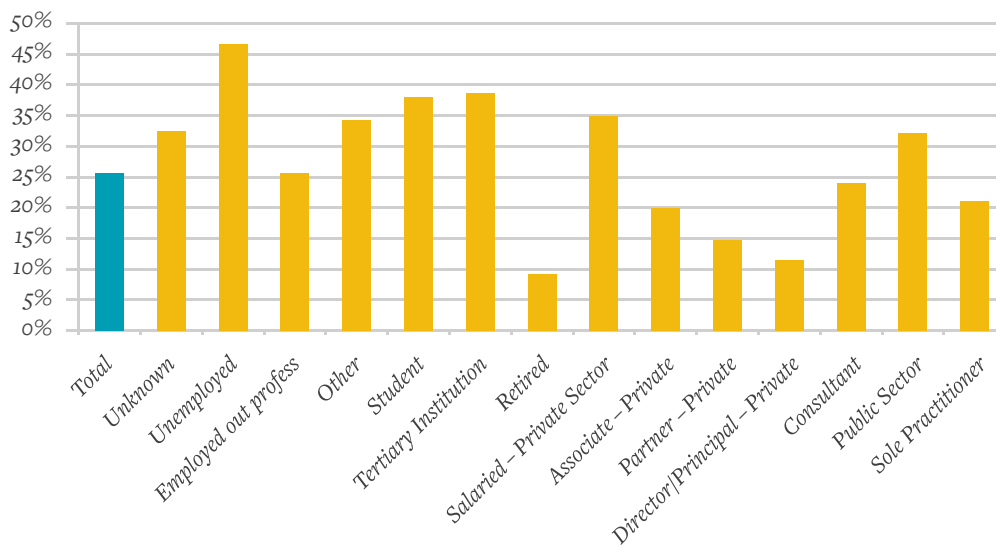
Currently 32% of the Victorian Chapter's members are women.

Membership by Employer Category



The largest percentage of male members are employed as either a Director/Principal or Partner, whereas for women, it is Salaried in the Private Sector.

Women as a Percentage of Each Employer Category



The pattern of membership differs according to each category however, Member Level 1 is the category reserved for those who are registered (architects) or have been or are eligible for registration. Member Level 2 is the optional non-voting status reserved for Member Level 1 who are neither directors, partners or equity owners. Some other categories such as Fellow or Honorary may or may not be registered.

85.2% of women are employed within architectural practice compared to 81.4% of men. However, 9.1% of men are self-employed, compared to 3.6% of women.

The main concern for 29.6% of the respondent's to the Graduate Survey 2012 is 'the profession's low salaries and request for salary information'.

Concerns with being underpaid and excessively high workloads are common themes in regards to the expectations graduates held about the workplace.

Why Women in Architecture?

Justine Clark, Tania Davidge, Elycia de Guia, Anna Jeffery and Bernadette Wilson

Why is an issue of *Architect Victoria* dedicated to women in architecture important? What is the point and what can we learn from it?

In guest-editing this issue we were well aware that some women feel uncomfortable about being singled out based on their gender and worry that this simply perpetuates the gender divide. And, as some respondents comment, many women have not directly experienced marginalisation due to gender. So, what is the big deal? Shouldn't we just get on with it and be recognised for the quality of our work?

Unfortunately, both statistics and anecdote suggest that things are not so straightforward. Individual experiences and opinions aside, we believe that everyone – men and women – need to consider the issues facing the profession and the women in it. We also need to be strategic in finding effective ways to address them and, as Karen Burns points out in her essay "Who Wants to be a Woman Architect?", overtly claiming this identity at appropriate moments can be a strategic, political move.

Just as we were finishing off this issue the Workplace Gender Equality Agency released a fact sheet that highlighted the astonishing statistics that in 2012 architecture and building had a graduate gender pay gap of 17.3%.¹ This means that, in our broader field, female graduates earned, on average, \$9,000 less than male graduates of a comparable age and education.

We know this 17.3% figure does not represent the architectural profession alone – it is skewed by combining architecture with building and urban planning. However, it does remind us that architecture is part of the broader construction industry – and this is the wider professional context we all work within.

The 2012 statistics for architecture as a separate profession have not yet been released by Graduate Careers Australia, but material from 2011 suggests the difference in starting salaries for architecture graduates alone is 6.25%. The findings in the Australian Institute of Architects *Graduate Survey 2012*, which covers graduates up to twelve years post-graduation, indicates a pay gap of 8.2%.² That is, the female architects surveyed earned, on average, \$5,000 less per annum than their male counterparts. We don't know how this gap arises, but it is almost certainly the outcome of

multiple factors. Nonetheless results such as these are not encouraging. Other statistics are equally dispiriting, as are anecdotal accounts of growing expectations for employees to work overtime, generally low salaries and fewer senior job opportunities for women.

But this issue of *Architect Victoria* is not about doom and gloom. In the face of this grim material, it is important to celebrate the voices of some women in Australian architecture and to recognise the valuable contribution they make. Without them our profession would be infinitely less rich and varied.

It is also important to remember the strong and influential legacy of women who, with great determination, have forged a path for us to follow. In 2012, we celebrated a century since Ruth Alsop qualified as the first female Victorian architect. Just under a decade later, Eileen Good became the first female to graduate from the University of Melbourne's Diploma of Architecture and in 1921 she became the first female member of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. Dimity Reed became the first female president of the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects in 1984 and in 2002 Eli Giannini was also elected Chapter President. Currently Shelley Penn is the Institute's National President. Many, many other women have contributed in other less immediately visible ways over the last century and we now have 864 women members of the Victorian Chapter.

As readers peruse the following pages they will draw their own threads between the responses. Some will resonate with readers' experiences, thoughts and ambitions, others will not. That is the point of this issue. Some themes stood out, however, as we compiled and edited the responses.

What do we want from our profession?

More flexibility and more respect. Of the women surveyed in this edition, many practise architecture in a 'traditional' way. Others are working at the boundaries of what we understand architectural practice to be, dividing their time between a variety of projects and workplaces while juggling family and/or other external commitments. Many felt that the profession needs to be more flexible to accommodate a greater diversity of needs and experiences. The responses suggest that many

women start their own practice to attain this flexibility. But where does this leave those who do not have the inclination or financial ability to go out on their own? Women in the profession have a range of skills and ambitions for their careers. For some working in an established practice is the best way to achieve their goals and to contribute in a meaningful way. But for many this becomes more difficult once they require more 'balance' in their lives. Women are not alone in this. According to the Institute's *Graduate Survey 2012*, finding a work/life balance is the primary challenge for all those surveyed, regardless of gender.³

We need to ask, why are so many architects, male and female, willing to work for nothing, and to do so in their own time? Does it really produce better work? Or is it simply an entrenched culture that does an injustice to men and women and further excludes those who cannot commit to the extended demands of the workplace? How can employers adapt to reflect social change and provide greater opportunities for women without compromising productivity? In a challenging economic climate and rapidly changing work culture, it is increasingly important that the profession adapts to accommodate a broader range of people.

Many respondents also felt that architecture should be better respected and remunerated as a profession. Karen McWilliam writes: "We don't sell ourselves or our services well and possibly we don't 'earn' the respect we believe we should be afforded". This feeling is backed up by the Institute's *Graduate Survey 2012* findings, where many of the graduates see low pay and lack of respect as a significant issue.⁴ It is also reinforced by GradStats 2012, which shows that architecture and building ranks equal seventeenth, according to level of starting salary, of all the professions surveyed. Professions, notorious in the media for low rates of pay, such as education and social work, both rank higher. Christine Phillips believes architects need to get "much smarter at promoting the value of architecture to the broader public" and Maud Cassignau writes, "If we want to actively shape the future of our environment and contribute to urban processes we need to reach a wider audience. Strong community engagement, better communication and unconventional modes of engagement are key to this and to establishing more resilient ways of thinking our cities".

How can we help ourselves?

Eli Gianinni sums up many of our respondents thoughts succinctly when she writes “Put your hand up if you want to go anywhere – don’t wait for someone to come to you. Try and say yes more often”. There was resounding agreement among the respondents that it is vital to seize the opportunities that come our way – to say ‘yes’ to the challenges that help make us better architects. A number of people also point out that opportunities might be found in unexpected places – keep your eyes and mind open. Anyone working in architecture needs to confidently assert their ambitions and desires for experience and to make sure colleagues and employers are aware – they can help us on our way. Take Debbie Ryan’s advice “Make yourself visible and have something purposeful or meaningful to say”. Or, if it all gets too much, listen to Sam Slicer who tells us, “If the boys don’t want to play with you, then play by yourself”.

What do we bring?

As the following pages show, women in architecture are a diverse group. We need to be wary of the traps of essentialism, while acknowledging that women as a group may bring different and productive experiences to bear on their work. Many of the responses demonstrate a strong commitment to the public realm, and to helping provide improved opportunities for communities and Australian society. As Amy Muir writes, “We have a social responsibility to constantly challenge the status quo and to provide quality outcomes for the public”. This is evident both in the ambitions for the respondents’ own developing careers, and in their projections of the future of the profession.

Despite the increasing numbers of women in the architectural profession, many of the key decision makers are still men, both in practice and education. Women have the potential to bring different approaches and understanding to architecture, enhancing the outcomes for society, and the public’s perception of the profession.

As Sarah Wigglesworth writes in an essay in *The Architects Journal* special issue on Women and Architecture: “As people who tend to have portfolio careers, juggle competing needs, diversify their experience and make do financially, women are well placed to invent ... new forms of practice”. But she also warns, “Time is critical, for if we don’t do it soon, we may have no profession at all”⁵

What is the future of architectural practice?

There is a strong sense in the responses that future practice needs to be more diverse and more broadly defined. Charity Edwards comments, “I think it should be a lot more fluid, less restricted in scope, more engaged in politics and local economies, and with about a million more options than currently exist in mainstream practice”. We need to open our profession to the possibilities that architecture offers.

The importance of recognising women’s contributions cannot be understated. However, it should be part of a larger strategy to recognise that a diversity of voices within the profession creates resilience. While this issue focuses on women, we must also recognise that the voices of different social and economic groups, different ethnicities, abilities, and cultures should also be heard otherwise we are promoting a narrow view in a heterogeneous society. Esther Charlesworth writes: “Being trained in spatial problem solving offers many doors to working with other disciplines and cultures”.

While there are many attributes of the profession that could be improved, the future of architectural practice in Australia for many of the respondents is positive. Architecture, as it effects the built environment, is a public profession. We are educated in the design of buildings and spaces, yet too often we play little or no part in the construction of our society. Diversifying the profession, we can broaden the client base and modes of working to make architecture more inclusive, for both the public and those within to educate people on the role architects can play. To play a bigger role in shaping policy and reform, the profession needs to engage with the complex issues within our environment and global culture and not be limited by out-dated modes of practice and tradition.

Despite all of its problems there is an overwhelming consensus that architecture is a rewarding profession. Architecture can be an exciting and inspiring career. It offers a variety of pathways. Some of us will continue as architects in a traditional sense, others will enjoy a rich array of experiences in related disciplines and artistic and business endeavours. Architecture is a career that can last a lifetime but it requires patience and endurance. All of the women in this issue, and many others not profiled at this time, provide role models for the next generation. From them,

the profession can learn new ways of engaging with a changing society and create a workplace of diversity and equality.

So finally, what does it take to be an architect?

Persistence, endurance, conviction, collaboration, vision and perseverance to name some of the qualities mentioned. Perhaps the best advice to us all comes from Shelley Penn who writes, “Don’t feel constrained by perceptions of the ‘right way’ to be a credible architect”.

Justine Clark is an independent architectural editor, writer, critic and researcher. She is the editor of the website *Parlour: women, equity, architecture* and a researcher on the ARC – funded project *Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession*. Justine writes architectural criticism for *The Age* and is a former editor of *Architecture Australia*.

Tania Davidge is a registered architect and co-founder of the not very traditional practice *OpenHAUS Architecture*, which she runs with Christine Phillips.

Elycia de Guia is the communications and events person and the *Architect Victoria Magazine* Coordinator for the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects.

Anna Jeffery is an architect at SJB. She is a member of the Australian Institute of Architects’ Victorian Chapter Editorial Committee and VYAG – Victorian Young Architects and Graduates.

Bernadette Wilson is a registered architect, the National Prizes Manager at the Australian Institute of Architects, a volunteer on the Open House Melbourne building council and a new mother to Liam.

1. The data in the WGEA Fact sheet is drawn from Graduate Careers Australia, GradStats 2012. For more detail on the graduate pay gap see Justine Clark, “The Graduate Gender Pay Gap Part 1 – What do the numbers mean?” on *Parlour: women, equity, architecture*. www.archiparlour.org/the-graduate-gender-pay-gap-part-1-what-do-the-numbers-mean/
2. Australian Institute of Architects, *Graduate Survey 2012*.
3. Sarah Wigglesworth “*Women in Practice*” *Architects Journal*, 19 January, 2012.
4. Australian Institute of Architects, *Graduate Survey 2012*.
5. Sarah Wigglesworth “*Women in Practice*” *Architects Journal*, 19 January, 2012.



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The Questions

What do you do?

How did you get to this position? Is it where you expected to be when you embarked on a career in architecture?

Where would you like to be in the future?

If you could share one insight about architecture with women entering the profession what would it be?

What do you think the future of architectural practice is/should be?

Amy Muir



I am a practicing architect and director of Muir Mendes. I combine practice with sessional design tutoring at RMIT University.

—
Persistence, building on experience and enjoying what I do. Collaborating and seeking autonomy was always part of the quest associated with practicing architecture.

—
Combining traditional architectural practice while also investing and engaging in our own projects, which provides the testing ground for all other facets of architecture and their explorations.

—
Be yourself. Have conviction and focus on what you want to gain from the industry.

—
Every architectural project and proposition is an opportunity for producing a considered piece of architecture. It is imperative that we don't waste opportunities as architects and that we are continuously pursuing the quest for the evolution of the built environment. It's a process that should be totally engaged with its brief and more importantly its 'place'.

We have a social responsibility to constantly challenge the status quo and to provide quality outcomes for the public. It is important that projects trigger debate and discussion in order for the public to be directly engaged. This is an age old pursuit, which should not be discarded in the face of cultural politeness.

Anna Maskiell



I explore and re-imagine ways of inhabiting space, sites, and streets to make them varied environments that are flexible, fun and connected to air, light and texture. I combat generic solutions that stymie joy and calmness. I do this as an architect at SKM-S2F, collaborating with engineers, economists, planners and builders in designing and delivering environments for research, health, and education. I do this as an educator at Melbourne and Monash Universities by modelling the process. I do this for families and friends as House Lab, helping people create homes that are nuanced, complex and supportive of how they wish to live.

—
I am privileged and constantly surprised that I get to do the work that I do. I am consumed by the spaces in which we live our lives, how they shape us and what they say about our values and imaginations. My frustration about how bad it often is, always outweighs my doubts. I have been lucky that several teachers, mentors, collaborators and clients have created roles or projects for me to test my ideas. A few years out of university and I am now finding the confidence to describe what I'd like to do and to look for ways to make it happen.

—
I want to continue balancing research, teaching, advocacy, small projects with close collaborators and larger, complex projects. Each mode offers different opportunities to frame what good architecture is and why it is important. Each endlessly informs the others. I would like to emulate the fashion house model – where a designer maintains their own brand

and output but partners with major empires to deliver at scales the designer could not achieve alone.

—
The process of conceiving and delivering architecture is unbelievably terrifying for clients. They can't see what you can see, don't understand your language, processes or documentation. They don't think that their current house or office is too bad and they are terrified that they or their friends (or boss) won't like the new one. I wish I had known sooner that the critical task of fostering a relationship with clients based on trust runs parallel to all design, technical and project management activities. They have to trust you to know that it will look fantastic, will work and that they can make it their own. These relationships are one of the most challenging, time-consuming and frustrating aspects of being an architect, but are also hugely rewarding.

—
I am influenced by my experience, which has only been in very small or very large practices (and of mergers and acquisitions), as well as the current data. I think that by the end of my career there will only be small hyper-networked ateliers and very large, roaming, multi-disciplinary practices. I don't think that this is necessarily a bad thing – not for architects, clients or our cities. The biggest concern should be how much of the traditional architect's role we retain or, ideally, expand. The aggressiveness with which other professionals encroach on our areas of practice enrages me, almost as much as our behaviour as a profession that has made it possible.



Anonymous



I am a project architect with a medium-sized firm.

I moved to Melbourne from Sydney to move my children closer to grandparents and extended family. In Sydney, I was at a firm for a number of years as an associate. After I had children I started working part-time. When I moved to Melbourne I did not maintain an associate role. I am now working more intensely on fewer projects, designing, documenting and detailing. I am working specifically on single residential projects.

I am very happy in my current position. There is room for creativity and growth.

To try to establish the role you most want to take within this diverse profession. It is important to establish what you enjoy doing, and to pursue this over the roles that are handed to you or that you proactively pursue.

We should maintain a connection to the material, despite the advances in graphic software.

Charity Edwards



I am a project architect at Williams Boag and a sessional tutor.

I got here by constantly pushing to be involved with projects past schematic design, and making sure I got registered. Tutoring happened along the sidelines, initially through volunteering to guest crit at friends' studios. **I totally thought I would always just do competitions when I started! It seemed so exciting and the late-night bonding over screaming deadlines was a real kick.** Almost unbelievably though, your interests change, new ideas develop and suddenly you really care about how that fascia turns the corner...

Running my own firm, some teaching, some building and a whole lot of other miscellaneous projects yet to be determined. I don't want to define it too much because firstly, it's never gone according to plan in the past anyway, and secondly there's so much more to being an architect than what I currently do.

Talk up! Regardless of how annoying you think you may seem, it's a good strategy to keep asking questions. How do you do that? Why did you do that? Could we do that another way? Why is that tap so ugly?

More of the above. **I think it should be a lot more fluid, less restricted in scope, more engaged in politics and local economies, and with about a million more options than currently exist in mainstream practice.**

Christie Petsinis



I am co-founder and director of Folk Architects, with my good friend Tim Wilson. We established Folk in 2011, inspired to create inclusive places that engage with people. We now have a diverse range of projects on the go, including adaptive reuse of single and multi-residential buildings, commercial, urban renewal and site activation projects. Under the moniker 'Utopian Folk', we collaborate with Utopian Slumps art gallery founder Melissa Loughnan and our current project involves temporary activations in Melbourne's Docklands.

Tim and I have been friends for many years and have complementary skills and interests – establishing our practice was a natural progression. Prior to Folk, I worked at Denton Corker Marshall on a range of architecture, urban design and infrastructure projects that specialised in innovation and sustainability. In addition, I have initiated and curated art/architecture interventions and events that have activated urban spaces and raised public awareness of environmental issues.

I'd like to be in a position to encourage people to understand architecture and design – to improve the way we live and our environment. There is still a perception that architecture is unaffordable and exclusive only to the elite, but good design should be available to everyone as it can make a big difference to society, culture and commerce. In 2012, I began a Masters in Architecture, Art and Urban Culture at the Centre of Contemporary Culture in Barcelona. I hope to continue to research and work collaboratively in creative, social and stimulating environments – with enough time

to enjoy the things I love outside architecture – surfing!

Be confident! While it is still a male dominated industry, there should be no distinction in terms of value, contribution or salary. **Fortunately, I've rarely encountered situations where I've felt marginalised by my gender – I need to thank previous generations of women for paving the way.** Women

who simultaneously manage the demands of architecture and parenting are the real heroes! I have the utmost respect for these women. Architecture can be seen as an older person's profession, so ageism has possibly been a bigger issue for me. People are often curious of my age after commenting that I look like I am only in my mid-twenties. However, if you contribute effectively and professionally, people of differing genders, ethnicity and ages all have a valuable role. What is important is to establish a group of people with a shared vision and complimentary skills and attitudes.

Participation. Sharing ideas and information, encouraging people to become involved. Crowd-funding initiatives such as Kickstarter are encouraging as they can enable people to initiate projects that they can implement within their communities. Significant global changes in society, commerce, politics and the environment are operating in conjunction with social media and these alternative self-initiated procurement methods. The profession can contribute by facilitating and engaging in collaborative, interdisciplinary and participatory practice that considers broader contexts to create opportunities for architecture that extend beyond the physical.

Christine Phillips



I am a lecturer in architecture at RMIT University and a director of OpenHAUS, with Tania Davidge. I also co-host 'The Architects', a weekly radio show on RRR and am a freelance writer for magazines like *Architecture Australia*, *Steel Profile* and *AR Asia Pacific*.

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Stuart Harrison and Simon Knott asked me to join 'The Architects' three years ago and it has been an unbelievably fulfilling and rewarding experience, which included being part of the 2012 Venice Biennale. Stuart, Simon and Rory Hyde, our international correspondent, have been very supportive, particularly this year when I've been very distracted looking after a baby. **Hear, hear to great men!** My role at RMIT began by teaching design studio in the evenings as a casual tutor with my colleague and friend, Stasinios Mantzis. I have been part-time there, but will be full-time in 2013. I find teaching inspiring and engaging and enjoy the cross-fertilization of ideas between students and staff. Tania Davidge and I joined forces in 2009 to work on 'Advertisements for Architecture', an idea Tania had been tinkering with, and we formed our practice during that time. We share similar interests and views – that architecture is about everything to do with building – writing on building, drawings and representations, architectural projects both real and unrealised and the conversations and communications that surround the act of building. We are interested

Clare Cousins



I am the principal of an architecture practice – Clare Cousins Pty Ltd – based in North Melbourne, established in 2005.

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I worked for two small Melbourne practices while studying architecture, as well as at a construction company working on architect-designed projects. After graduating I started at Wood Marsh Architecture working primarily on residential projects. In 2005 I decided to start my own practice. At the beginning I sustained the studio with retail projects and two residential renovations. Yes, this is what I hoped to be doing, running my own practice.

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Enjoying the practice of architecture while maintaining a balanced family life.

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Find your voice. Ask questions, have an opinion, speak up.

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It needs to better accommodate women (and men) who choose not to work five-plus days a week. Too many women stray from the profession as it is not supportive of part-time roles.

in promoting the value of good architecture to the wider community and aim to engage and connect the architectural academy, institutional bodies, professional practice and the public in new and innovative ways.

—

No idea, I will just keep following my interests.

—

Architecture and working in architecture is not just about working in conventional practices. It took me a while to work this out. **There are many, many other opportunities out there, so don't be dismayed if conventional practice doesn't suit you.** However, if you choose to take an alternate route at some point, I highly recommend getting registered – you never know where you will end up in the future. Obtaining my architect's registration was one of the most rewarding parts of my early career.

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Future architecture practices will need to be much smarter at promoting the value of architecture to a broader public. We need to get much better at explaining what we do and how we can significantly contribute to creating better environments.



Debbie Ryan



Principal of McBride Charles Ryan Architecture, Interior Design and Masterplanning (MCR).

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I started McBride Charles Ryan with two others in 1988. I am where I expected to be when I embarked on my career. However, it has taken much longer than I anticipated to get the practice to where it is today. Financially it has been much more difficult than I expected. Getting enough work to sustain our staff is a constant challenge.

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In a better, more professionally run version of MCR, but more or less what I am doing now. I would like to do more of my own developments.

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Property is still male dominated. You will be constantly overlooked or sidestepped because you are a woman. **Make yourself visible and have something purposeful or meaningful to say.** Support other women: *men support each other*. Constantly look for opportunities – they are not always obvious.

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More than ever before architecture is important. Our expanded population mainly lives in cities, that is, in built environments. We have to fight for a better environment. Architects can handle complex problems. We have to create environments where people want to live. The alternative does not bear thinking about.

Delia Teschendorff



I am principal of my own architectural practice, Delia Teschendorff Architecture and mother of two children.

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My ambition was always to have my own practice. I achieved this, following a rewarding journey of both overseas and local architectural experience.

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Still running my own practice, continuing a rigorous pursuit of research, environmental practice and place making.

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Seek employment in places that are *simpatico* with your philosophical approach to architecture and life, and where you will be further enlightened and developed. Learn good practice habits early on – they will serve you well. You can do it all. Find people who will support and encourage your ambitions, including work and family ambitions.

Architecture is a life-long pursuit, so taking time off to have a family is not detrimental. Instead it

further enhances your depth of understanding of place making. You will re-enter the profession with even more to offer.

—

Architecture is an art and it is also a political, environmental and social pursuit. Architects should respond to the environmental and social needs of the world around them. We are trained to solve problems and provide solutions. Architects in Australia need to find a way to gain more respect and to be more influential in the greater built environment.

Eli Giannini



I am an architect with 35 years experience, director of McGauran Giannini Soon, and of Buchanan + Giannini Collaborative Art Practice. I am also chair of the RMIT Course Advisory Committee. I have been a past Victorian Chapter president of the Australian Institute of Architects and a member of the Institute's National Council. I am also a contributor to *Writings in Architecture*.

—

Hard work! I expected to have more clients to call my own by now.

—

Surrounded by powerful women in leadership positions.

—

Put your hand up if you want to go anywhere – don't wait for someone to come to you. Try and say "yes" more often.

—

It should be to serve the public, but also to advance our discipline in more creative ways.

Enza Angelucci



I am the principal of Enza Angelucci Architects – an architectural practice that focuses on institutional and residential projects. I am a sessional design tutor in architecture at RMIT University.

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I initiated Enza Angelucci Architects as a full-time practice in 2007, following nine years with Norman Day and Associates as a senior associate. The practice had been established in 1998 with several domestic projects. In committing to full-time practice our projects expanded from domestic to institutional, including educational and rail facilities. We pursue a studio-based practice, which incorporates the research I initiated at RMIT through collaborative design studios and ongoing post-graduate research. The practice is continuing to evolve with the involvement of several under-graduate and graduate students.

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We anticipate the practice will grow as a collaborative design laboratory, with cross-disciplinary involvement, investigating explorative design possibilities.

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Patience and longevity are the ultimate tools in architecture.

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Architecture as practice needs to become more holistic in its approach to sustainable and liveable urban environments for contemporary society. Ultimately architecture has a responsibility to the occupants of these spaces and to the environments they are embedded in.

Esther Charlesworth



I am Associate Professor of Architecture and Design at RMIT University. I am currently an ARC Future Fellow exploring humanitarian architecture and housing after natural disasters in Australia, the USA, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Japan. I am also founding director of Architects Without Frontiers – Australia’s first not-for-profit design organisation committed to working with communities in need through designing and delivering health and education projects.

My career ‘epiphany’ about humanitarian design and the spatial possibilities of working with communities after disaster came about when I was a postgraduate urban design student in the USA in the mid 1990s, working on a project called ‘Mostar 2004’. From there I co-founded Architects Without Frontiers (AWF) in 1998 and taught and worked on reconstruction projects in Beirut 2000–2003. Completing my PhD at the University of York’s Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit in 2004, enabled me to work full-time in the reconstruction field. I never dreamed I would be working in conflict/post disaster zones when I originally studied architecture at RMIT 2003–2008. The option for a graduate then was to go and apprentice yourself to one of the big architecture shows in town and eventually you might set up your own practice.

Flavia Marcello



I teach architectural design, history and theory at Deakin University. I also write about Italian architecture of the inter-war period.

It was a way to merge a passion for architecture with a propensity for teaching, not to mention a love of libraries!

Doing exactly what I am doing right now.

A passion for architecture is a great thing, but it should never take over your life. Follow your instinct and find the way that is best for you and your needs. A balanced life doing quiet, high quality work is more rewarding than big pieces of ego-tecture that take it over.

Working with what we have. The future is in adaptive re-use and urban retrofit. Let’s look at improving what we have in creative, discreet and celebratory ways rather than looking for solutions in whizz-bang technology and fancy forms.

Running a successful not-for-profit design agency and the Humanitarian Architecture Research Bureau (HARB), which I have just set up at RMIT. I hope to become a global leader in this much-needed field of design practice and research.

That there are many unconventional possibilities available after an architecture education. Being trained in spatial problem solving offers many doors to working with other disciplines and cultures.

Architectural practice needs to deal with the global economic and cultural forces shaping our planet today. The reality is that unless architects broaden their client base and modes of working with other professional groups, such as health workers, logisticians, economists and environmentalists, our profession may become redundant.



Helen Lardner



I am an architect and director of HLCD, a firm of heritage architects working with complex, often large-scale redevelopment projects across Australia. I work in multidisciplinary teams to keep the best of the past and create opportunities for the future. I am also a member of the Victorian Heritage Council and the Australian Heritage Council. As a member of Mint Incorporated, I work to achieve practical, viable outcomes for state-owned heritage places. I am active internationally, particularly in industrial heritage and twentieth-century design, as well as being an advisor to the Japanese government on potential world heritage sites. I love my work.

It was not clear to me where I was heading when I studied architecture, but in hindsight I can see some indicators. I chose subjects that related to art, history and urban design, as well as architecture. I was always keen to understand what made places inspiring to visit or raised emotions in people. It was the experience of places within the physical and cultural context, as well as links to other places or experiences, that I found compelling. This made me think about the role of our collective and individual cultural backgrounds in future development of the environment and achieving great design. I also enjoy analysis, searching for evidence, a good argument and writing – all essential ingredients for heritage architecture. Luckily I began working in this field quite soon after graduation.

In the future I would like to be actively engaged in contributing to improving architecture and the environment, both locally and in unfamiliar territory. I would like to continue to work in multi-disciplinary teams and to be learning from others, as well as feeling that I've made a contribution.

Architecture is much broader than you realise when you are at university or when you are doing registration. Find your own areas of passion and pursue those. Keep an open mind – you may change or find new things along the way – but most of all enjoy!

In 2012 most of my work has been interstate and some overseas, so I've been forced to embrace the future of architectural practice. I no longer work with the model of having an architectural office with permanent staff, but rather collaborate with a number of other businesses or sub-consultants. Everything is fluid depending on the nature and location of the job at hand. It creates a lot of opportunities for new ways to approach work, but requires attention to process and clearly establishing expectations with good communication or it can feel too much like a movable feast.



Julie Willis



I am a Professor of Architecture at the University of Melbourne and am currently also Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

It is not what I expected when I started studying architecture, although I'm not sure what I did expect. I've mostly followed an academic track since graduating, partly because it provided opportunities to have a job that was architecture-related at key times (when there was little else around in the profession). Progression, thereafter, is a matter of working hard.

Hard to say... in a position where I can make a difference.

Get out and do it your way, whatever that might be. There's a 110-year history of women architects in Australia and there are more women in the profession now than at any other time. Revel in the opportunities that it represents.

Future practice needs to be about working smarter and more efficiently, yet still creatively – it isn't about working harder or longer hours. A more flexible and more family-friendly profession can only be for the better.

Juliet Moore



I do a lot of different things and I often wonder how I came to be doing some of the crazier tasks. Ultimately I run a small practice, Edwards Moore, with my business partner.

We started Edwards Moore in 2009 after several years of practice. I didn't ever think I'd be anywhere in particular. If I had run away with the circus nobody would have been surprised, least of all me. This sense of freedom has led me to where I am now – I am open to ideas and excited by opportunity. Enthusiasm and a belief in yourself can lead to anywhere you wish to go. Even if you don't know where that may be when you begin...

I want to continue challenging myself and making things I am proud of. Whatever path I take will be enjoyable, if not exhausting. I'd like to experience the evolution of the architectural profession as it becomes more dynamic and accepting. The future is exciting, I hope I see as much of it as I can before the circus comes to town...

You are not a 'woman in architecture', you are an Architect. Avoid doubting yourself based on gender. Your opinion is as valid as anyone's and your ideas are an important part of our profession.

We need to stop clinging to the past and accept the changing nature of our profession. This will lead to a more expansive and exciting future, where 'architecture' can apply to a plethora of ideas and practice types. A future where ideas are valued and shared and practices mirror the diversity of the opportunities they harness. We are not there yet, but we will get there.

Karen McWilliam



I am the practice manager of Elenberg Fraser, an architect, an ARBV Examiner, past Deputy Chair of the ARBV and the mother of two gorgeous girls.

I graduated during the 1990s recession, when there was little work for graduates and those that had work were paid very little. I applied for a position as the receptionist at Neometro. This gave me a superb grounding in office, practice and project administration and also afforded me access to a dialogue in contemporary design from the role of architect, developer and builder. Since then I have worked with some great practice 'families' including Hayball and LAB. I was probably a slightly unusual RMIT graduate in that I was more process and delivery directed – management roles have suited my analytical and process-driven skills.

Assisting in the development of Elenberg Fraser, both locally and internationally, with a well balanced work/life! Being a working mother can be very demanding not only in terms of time, but also in terms of your emotional state of mind. I would like to continue mentoring women for similar management positions – I have been approached by some wonderful young women interested in practice management and I look forward to assisting them in developing their careers.

I wasn't successful in my first job interview 25 years ago because 'I was a girl'. The practice told me they felt "a boy would have a better relationship with the builders". Things have changed a lot and I don't that being a 'woman in architecture' has

hampered my career or opportunities or maybe I have been determined enough not to let this get in my way? **I get so mad when I read articles on salary in-equity among male and female architects (graduates in particular) and am proud to say that this would never happen in any of the practices I have worked in.** I hope that I provide a role model to young architects – both male and female. We are all equals – have confidence and believe in yourself.

Only five percent of Melbourne's built environment is designed by architects – this says something about how consumers perceive architects. We don't sell ourselves or our services well and possibly we don't 'earn' the respect we believe we should be afforded. This needs to change. With graduate and registration numbers increasing, the industry won't be able to sustain the growth without substantial change. I believe that practices will reflect the demand for a better work/life balance for staff and environmentally sustainable design will be incorporated as a result of demand by clients, not just for a star rating.

Kristin Green



I am owner and director of a small practice established in 2010. I am also a sessional tutor of design at RMIT University and my spare time is often study touring the architecture of the world past, present and future.

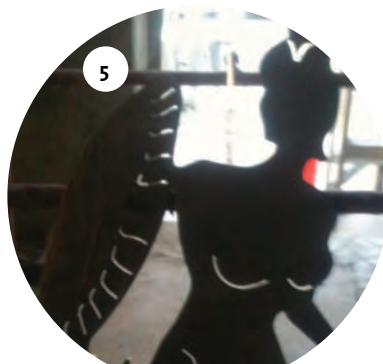
Over twenty years working in small, medium and large practices (including during studying). I was lucky to be exposed to responsibility in all aspects – from concept design through to procurement. I was also involved in theatre set design and festivals with small budgets, tight deadlines and much coordination. I completed many smaller private jobs while working for and in partnership with others. In 2010 I successfully submitted a design concept for a large beach resort. This enabled me to go out on my own and became a platform for winning further work. I've never really been comfortable with expectations. I'm a big one for hopes and dreams and flying blind with enthusiasm. I did hope to be more involved in public work and I still hope to in the future (and I did imagine I might earn more and work fewer hours).

I would like to build a more stable practice and a more reliable work load. I would like to continue to run a small office that offers effective, quality design solutions, but with better systems in place, so I can do what I do best (which does not

include invoicing!) I would love to find a business partner(s) to share responsibility, stress levels and to bounce off. I would like to continue professional and academic collaborations. Fundamentally I'd like to be more confident, more assertive and trust (and act on) my instincts.

An architectural education is an incredible foundation for just about any career pursuit. I'd say the same thing to both women and men in terms of professionalism, rigour, inspiration, listening, patience, endurance, etcetera. However, to a woman I might add the following: be sure that's what you really want to do. Be wary – you may have to work just that little bit (a lot) harder than any man.... it's the construction industry babe! Its bloke city! Deal with it! Be cleverer, smarter, clearer and stronger than any man. **This does not mean you need to imitate blokes, quite the reverse, just be yourself, be proud to be a woman and be good at what you do! And don't take anything personally.**

Spatial relationship activists! Architecture is culture. Future practice is more politically responsible, more playful, greener, bolder, brutal, honest, real and dangerous. Future practice sets up better and more diverse relationships. Future practice is proud to seek and nurture what it is good at and what it can offer the built environment. Every day there are more people – all experts – siphoning off any possible piece of the building industry pie. Find your place, however small, have faith and be the best you can be.



Maggie Edmond



I am a practicing architect and director of Edmond & Corrigan.

I worked continuously after graduation, juggling children until they went to school. I don't think I thought about where I wanted to be – I just wanted to do architecture.

Still doing what I am doing now.

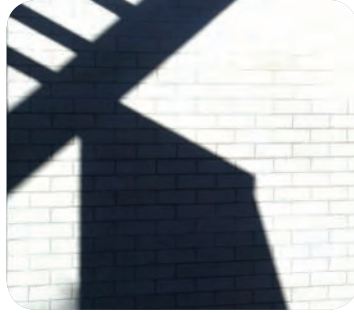
Don't stop or put on hold your engagement with architecture.

I would hope that architects are regarded more highly than they currently are. The small percentage of built work that is under an architect's control is a sorry state. I hope that women architects will be able to turn this around.



6

Matilda Blazey



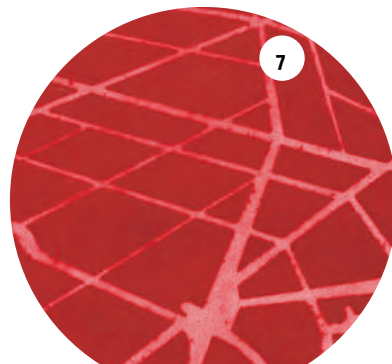
I am a project architect at Kennedy Nolan, working on primarily high-end single residential projects.

Word of mouth that the position was available. The job more-or-less meets my expectation of career position.

I am happy where I am. I would like to work on a wider range of projects, including institutional, government, and commercial.

In a position like mine you need to have a very broad skill base. Interpersonal skills are far more important than I envisaged and include being able to interact effectively with a range of people – clients, contractors and authorities consultants etc.

Architects need greater recognition and remuneration for the complex roles and responsibility we take on. Architects need to reclaim their old place, which has been lost to project managers – we seem to take on all the liability anyhow.



7

Maud Cassaignau



I am a lecturer in Architecture and Urban Design at Monash University and a director of XPACE – a practice I founded with Markus Jung. Our projects range from small and medium-scale built projects to large-urban schemes.

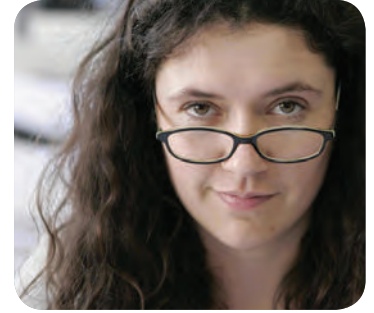
Before arriving in Melbourne prior to founding XPACE, I worked in practices in Paris, New York and Zurich. We realised several buildings in Europe and were very active in urban design. I also travelled extensively, enriching my thinking about design and cultivating opportunities to practice. The exchange of expertise involved in collaborative international projects feeds into my practice: inspiring thoughts about architecture, craftsmanship and construction and innovating methods of processing information, defining, designing and ultimately utilising space. We are keen to discover new perspectives and further enrich our practice and teaching.

In continuation with where I am now.

Every path is very personal, but generally, I believe perseverance is an important quality in architecture.

We need to engage more strongly beyond the borders of the discipline. We need to rethink urban modes of growth and move to more sustainable densification strategies. If we want to actively shape the future of our environment and contribute to urban processes we need to reach a wider audience. **Strong community engagement, better communication and unconventional modes of engagement are key to establishing resilient ways of thinking our cities.**

Meaghan Dwyer



I have been a practicing architect for over 17 years, working directly for, or in association with, a range of practices across Australia. My current role at John Wardle Architects allows me to pursue my interest in public buildings and urban places. As part of the senior team I also contribute to the direction and management of the practice.

My interest in the public nature of architecture became apparent while I was studying. On graduating I sought experience with practices undertaking public projects. I am fortunate to have now worked on a number of projects that have made significant contributions to the public realm.

With many years of practice behind me and a leadership role in a practice I imagine my focus will partly shift to reflecting further on how we practice as architects and what kind of contribution we can make more broadly. I see more study and many more years of practice!

It is important to understand what kind of contribution you would like to make as an architect. It is not always immediately apparent how these aspirations will be met, but understanding what they are will assist you in navigating the opportunities that come your way.

The way we practice will continue to change. There are real opportunities to extend our contribution, but it is also necessary to explore the fringes. I see great benefit in the crossover between research and practice and envisage a more strategic approach to the 'problems' of the built environment. Architecture must continue to express a narrative or an exploration of ideas.

Melissa Bright



I am the sole director and owner of MAKE architecture. I am also a sessional tutor and lecturer at RMIT. MAKE is a small design practice that focuses on residential and commercial projects. Though projects are small, each one is pushed to engage with its local context and to have an urban agenda. Each project attempts to give something back to the community. Larger issues are incorporated where possible. These include ideas of shared space in the city, how a house can connect with the local community and how we can build sustainably and care for our environment.

I have worked at various practices locally and internationally. I am now where I hoped I would be.

I hope that MAKE will continue to grow and to produce good work. I hope I can balance my goals for MAKE with being a good mother to my children and with having a nice life!

The dream is possible. You can have it all – kids, practice, life balance. It is not easy, but is certainly possible. Striving for excellence does not mean that there can't be a good work/life balance.

There should be more focus on flexible working practices that support work/life balance.

Merran Porjazoski



I am a director of BENT Architecture. I didn't really have any preconceived ideas about where I wanted to be in architecture, just that I always wanted to be working on projects that I believed in and cared about. When my husband, Paul, and I designed and built an extension for my parents in 2003, we recognised that it was a great catalyst to launch our own studio. Paul ran BENT Architecture for the first few years while I gained valuable experience (and a steady income!) at a couple of larger architecture practices. I officially joined BENT at the beginning of 2008 and haven't looked back!

I would like to see my practice continuing to work on diverse projects, which make a real difference to people's enjoyment of their surroundings.

At university, I completed a building degree with my architecture degree because I wanted to improve my understanding of construction in order to benefit my design work and to provide me with more confidence on site. I felt that it was important, in an often male-dominated construction industry, to not be dismissed due to a lack of knowledge – for either being an architect or a woman! I have always loved the construction stage of a project. The profession is diverse – it's important to work out what is of most value to you and seek out projects, a working environment, and the skills you need to allow you to enjoy your work and feel a real sense of accomplishment.

I would like to see more of our built environment designed by architects.

Nicola Dovey



I run Drawing Room Architecture and teach design and practice subjects at the University of Melbourne and RMIT University.

Registered, said yes to all the private projects I was offered, left the firm I worked for, bought a printer, made up a name, started working.

Still here, with support staff and projects with increasing potential.

One? It will not be easy, but you can find a good spot doing good work if you're prepared to work for it. Find a good mentor, a successful female in whatever position you're interested in, let them know you'd like them to be your mentor.

This is a large and broad question. What you believe it should be, needs to be. Something you can contribute to, something enabling better processes and better outcomes. Producing smarter, more creative, sustainable outcomes.



8



9

Nikhila Madabhushi



I am an architect at Pleysier Perkins and a volunteer project leader with Community Oriented Design Studio ([co]design studio), a not-for-profit multidisciplinary design organisation.

A wild guess as an unknowing late teen that architecture was where science, art and the humanities might be amalgamated. Having worked for various practices and become registered, the conundrum of what it is that we actually do still distracts me and probably always will. I would rather say that I am satisfied with where I am at this stage of my career than this is where I expected to be.

I hope to continue my architectural learning through practical experience that involves deep thinking and critique of the decisions we make, at every point. I hope to continue bringing to life projects that contribute to society in a thoughtful and challenging way – whether it’s as profound as creating facilities for socially excluded citizens or as humble as creating a sense of home and place for a family. I hope to be able to work on projects that are programmatically rich and where end users benefit greatly from the outcome – architecture that ingrains in its fabric the ideas and philosophies of how the people who ‘own’ it work, live and play within it.



10

Pamela McGirr



I am an architect at Tripledot, a parent, an image-maker, a writer and sometimes an educator.

A traditional start. I began with a corporate job with a reputable design firm and quickly gained registration with the board of architects in Victoria. After a couple of years, the ladder revealed itself and it wasn’t inspiring enough. An 18-month dash to a commercial outfit and the amassing of a small fortune to fund a lengthy overseas sojourn – preferably based in NYC. The overseas plan underpinned by being accepted into a graduate program of study in the United States.

If in Melbourne: Realising a public program of horseback riding within five kilometres of the former GPO. Strategy, stables and social interdependence. Fun, fun, fun!

Architecture is not just bricks and mortar. It is the cultural framework of how we live. Therefore, as an architect, you need to define the cultural framework of your own profession. Participate in change wherever you can. Fitting in is the path of least resistance and source of most frustration.

The Swedish model mentioned on Parlour sounds inspiring.



11

Pheris Edelis



I completed my undergraduate degree in Taiwan where I studied under Chen-Ling, Huang, who had worked with I. M. Pei for many years. I then completed a Master of Planning and Design at the University of Melbourne and worked on high-end residential and mixed-use developments while attaining registration. In 2008, I joined Architectus to work on the Melbourne airport projects, which I still enjoy today.

Architecture is not what I expected when I began. **When I graduated, I understood architecture to be generally about design. However, I quickly learned that it is predominantly based on problem solving and the resolution of competing interests.**

My plan for the future is to keep growing in my role, encompassing all aspects of architectural practice. Specifically I hope to foster the proper integration of design, services and structural coordination via Building Information Modelling (BIM) and continue to work collaboratively with clients, stakeholders, the builder and engineers from the genesis of a project through to hand over.

Finally, I believe that, no single factor leads to success. Good outcomes come from a combination of attention to detail, hard work and a supportive work environment.

Polly Bastow



I am self-employed in a Melbourne architecture practice – Form Architecture Furniture – with my husband Tony Stuart. I work on bespoke renovations and new houses for the finest of patrons.

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After studying architecture and arts at the University of Melbourne, I worked for various Melbourne architectural practices for ten years. I started my own practice in 1999. Initially I was attracted to the art component of architecture and assumed that the majority of architecture was about design. Over the years I have found that design/composition can be a fairly short part of the process and that problem solving and negotiating with all the people who have input to the project can become an art in itself.

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I am happy to continue in this practice as is. I don't want the practice to get any larger, as I think it may lead to less control over the construction of our designs.

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If you work for yourself, you can have much more autonomy in your choice of work, and the hours you work. Having another person to discuss issues with is also very important.

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Smaller houses and a greater investment in green technology.

Sam Slicer



I am a co-director of FloodSlicer – an architectural image and film-making studio with approximately 20 staff. We visualise architectural projects prior to construction for marketing, public education and planning. A number of disciplines work together on this – 3D architectural modelling and rendering, photography and cinematography, various aspects of graphic and architectural design, script-writing and film editing.

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Looking over my career retrospectively, architectural visualisation is, in some ways, a predictable area to find myself in. It blends a passion for architecture with photography. But when I graduated from RMIT there certainly wasn't an obvious career path leading to this – the industry barely existed. I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to be an architect, but I worked in that capacity for five years, using the time to assess my options. As a sideline, I took more and more architectural photos and found myself at John Gollings' studio, assisting with photo-montage work. My 3D and rendering skills were rudimentary but the image-making environment resonated with me – so I threw myself into learning it.

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I aim to continue running a creative, progressive and sustainable studio that balances the requirements of commercial clients with our own cultural and not-for-profit projects. I'd hope our studio will continue to be a place where staff are learning, challenged and fulfilled. This involves supporting staff at different times – for example, when they require further study, or are creating families.

—
If the boys don't want to play with you, then play by yourself.

Sarah Lynn Rees



I am an architecture student at the University of Melbourne and have just completed my undergraduate degree. In 2012 I was a SONA rep and SONA member of the Victorian Chapter Council. In 2013 I am taking a year out to work at Jackson Clements Burrows (JCB) and will be SONA Vice President – the only female on the SONA executive.

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Through a bit of luck and interest I became the 2012 University of Melbourne SONA Rep. This involved creating events and opportunities for students to meet and learn about architects and the professional side of our chosen career. SONA is a great platform – I have met so many amazing people and the opportunities you are given are priceless! I am very happy to be starting my working life at JCB – I fell in love with their work at the 2012 Presentation of Juries .

—
I am currently a candidate for a scholarship that would allow me to complete my studies at the University of Cambridge. Otherwise I'll return to the University of Melbourne after my year out and progress to working life from there. I have not looked too much further into the future for now!

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Get involved and network! You need to make the most of whatever opportunities come your way.

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The short-term future for architectural practice is not overly prosperous, given the forecast state of the economy. However, architecture has the potential to diversify into many areas. We will evolve and develop as generations of architects have done in the past.



Shelley Freeman



I am an architect practicing in a diverse, flexible mode – including as a sessional teacher at Swinburne and RMIT universities, a tour guide with Architours, an architect with Whiteside Homes Design + Build, and an architect (former director) with MAKE architecture.

—
Having resigned as director of MAKE, the company I helped found six years ago, my career has taken an unexpected turn. My answers are very different than they would have been a year ago. I have diversified and become involved in many things. I did not expect this, but I am certainly enjoying it! It gives me the flexibility I require with three young children and allows me to connect with many more people than I would if I was sitting in an office all day. It is much more exciting and fulfilling.

—
I hope to remain in control of the choices I make about how I practice. As my children get older, I imagine this will change but I am not sure how yet. I am interested to return to study, but really I just want to remain open to all types of possibilities and opportunities to practice as an architect.

—
We learn to be creative at university but more of us need to be creative with practice. A 9am-5pm (+) job is not the only way to practice and contribute to the profession.

—
It should be many and varied. **I feel more like an architect practicing as I do now than I have ever felt.** As a professional, it is important to contribute to the culture of architecture – that can be many things.

Shelley Penn



I'm a small practitioner architect – Shelley Penn Architect – and I work on only a handful of projects at any one time. I also work quite a lot on large public projects, not as the architect but as a design reviewer, strategic advisor and advocate for design quality in the built environment. I am also the Chair of the National Capital Authority, and National President of the Australian Institute of Architects.

—
Had a go, stopped and started, kept on going, stepped sideways a few times, tested the alternatives... I don't know what I expected when I embarked!

—
Walking in the bush, toward the ocean (hearing it nearby).

—
Don't feel constrained by perceptions of the 'right way' to be a credible architect.

—
Diverse.

Sophie Dyring



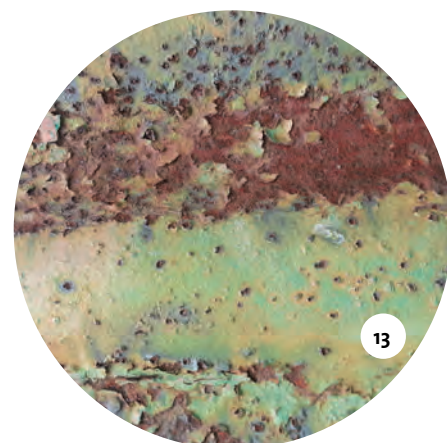
I am a director of a small architectural practice – Gunn Dyring Architecture & Urban Design – along with Graeme Gunn. We are a design-led studio specialising in residential projects – from bespoke housing to multi-residential subdivisions. We also pursue internal research and development projects and I am a sessional teacher at RMIT.

—
I was a sole practitioner for a year or so and met Graeme while contracting with him. We saw complimentary skills in one another and took a leap of faith in 2007. Five years on we are still having fun. I never thought I would be in practice with someone, but after working on my own, it's an asset to have someone by your side.

—
I would like to grow our practice to eight to ten people – a size where I can still be hands on. I would also like to complete my Master of Landscape Architecture, which I hope to begin this year. This would set us up as a multidisciplinary firm and help guide our work – integrating internal spaces, external spaces and landscape.

—
The most important thing is to be true to yourself. When I was younger I felt overwhelmed by big male personalities, as I get older it is easier to stand confidently by my decisions.

—
This year our practice has moved somewhat away from a traditional model – we have been creating our own projects and work. With reduced fee-paying work we have spent time on social responsibility; entering competitions for marginal communities, fundraising for NGO's and R&D into modular housing. I guess this suggests that architectural practice will diversify in the future.



Suzannah Waldron



I run my own practice Searle x Waldron Architecture – an emerging Melbourne studio – with co-founder Nick Searle. I also teach in the architecture program at RMIT.

—
After graduating I worked at OMA in the Netherlands and then at dRMM in London. Searle x Waldron began after we surprisingly won the first stage of an international competition for an 80,000-square-metre Museum of Contemporary Art in China. We have since completed a small annexe at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, which won two state architecture awards. We are now starting to do residential projects. In many ways I've created my own position – there is no one clear route. I was 28 when I launched my practice, which was relatively young. Although working for myself was a possibility, the path was unexpected and happened sooner than I anticipated.

—
I am keen to pursue opportunities to work architecturally at both urban and smaller scales. We will need to build a sustainable business that continues to design interesting projects both public and residential.

—
Persistence is the key. **Architecture is an endurance test – it is a cyclical industry with lows and highs, disappointment and excitement, busts and booms!** Opportunities do come from the obvious avenues but also unexpected ones.

—
I would like to see a future where architecture becomes much more diverse in its range and scope of projects, a shift which would also hopefully be reflected in the diversity of people working in the industry.

Yvonne Meng



I am part of the architecture team in the Design Branch at the City of Melbourne, where I work on public projects with a multi-disciplinary team and community groups. I am a sessional tutor at Monash University and a guest critic at Monash and RMIT. I co-chair the Victorian Young Architects Group (VYAG), which aims to promote young architects through events and initiatives. A big part of this is curating Process, a monthly speaker series that is a platform for architects, designers, and thinkers to share their work and musings.

—
I graduated three years ago so I'm still at the start of my career! I always wanted to teach. I didn't necessarily expect to be working for a government agency, but I knew I wanted to work on public and community projects. The GFC had a pretty big impact – the economy went pear shaped just as I graduated and it was quite difficult to find work. **Looking for a job was soul-destroying at times, with endless applications and few replies.** After a few stops and starts I came to the City of Melbourne as a graduate architect. I am fortunate to have intelligent and engaged friends. I became involved with VYAG, through these networks.

—
To be teaching, practicing, and well-balanced. Having my own multi-disciplinary practice is a goal. Ultimately I want a career that allows me to work in architecture through several different forms and mediums.

—
Have things outside of 'work' that engage and motivate. For a creative profession, the work can be quite dry at times so it is really important to have other outlets.

The future of architectural practice should be about diversity, both in what we define as 'architecture' and how it is practiced. Architecture is still understood as being practiced in a certain way – but the discourse of architecture extends beyond buildings and the profession should respond to the variety of lifestyles and people. Work hours and retention of women are some of the big headlining issues. This could be addressed through accepting and fostering more alternative ways of practice and different forms of 'architecture'. No one wants to be overworked and underpaid, and not all successful careers need to be full-time and office-based. It is great to see people cultivating and working in non-traditional forms and as a young architect this is reassuring to know there are other options available.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Screens, layers, light. Photographer Anna Maskiell.
2. Annette Kellerman, the great Australian swimmer, vaudeville and film star. Image Source: 'A Springboard in the Pond: An intimate history of the swimming pool' by Thomas A.P van Leeuwen.
3. Refugee camps in Port au Prince (Haiti).
4. Accidental architecture on the decaying island of Gunkinjima, Japan, 2009. Photographer Helen Lardner.
5. Athena. Photographer Kristin Green.
6. The shape, the scale and the forms in this image say it all!
7. Melbourne (2000) by Louise Forthun.
8. Vertical backyard - increasing the density. Image by MAKE architecture.
9. 'Living Places' public housing project. Photographer Trevor Mein.
10. The space between - how what is happening outside and around the buildings we create influences the making of architecture. Photographer Nikhila Madabhushi.
11. Bill Forsythe and Brock Labrenz rehearsing. Photographer Pamela McGirr.
12. Pivoting bridge by Percy Grainger's dad. Photographer Polly Bastow.
13. Time Materiality. Photographer Sophie Dyring.
14. The Strip seen from the desert with Denise Scott Brown in the foreground, 1966. Photographer Robert Venturi © Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc., Philadelphia. Courtesy of Graham Foundation, Chicago.



What is the Institute doing about it?

I was recently forwarded a tweet that went something like this, "Great that @AusINSArchitect is a @DivCouncilAus member, but what is the AIA *actually doing* to address gender gap in architecture?"

Good question really. After all, we are the industry body for a profession with relatively equal numbers of men and women graduating from university. Then by the time they get to registration the numbers have shifted dramatically, with approximately only 25% of Victoria's registered architects being women.

So what are we doing? The Institute is responding to what we see as a real challenge for the future of the industry at both national and state levels. Nationally the Institute has been an active industry partner since 2011 in an Australian Research Council funded project looking at equity and diversity in the profession. The Parlour website is one of the early outcomes. Scheduled to complete in 2014, the project will provide the industry with valuable long term data. Stay tuned for more information about anticipated project outcomes and useful tools.

Another national initiative has been the changes made to our membership policy in 2012. In recognition that many members (both women and men) need greater flexibility and support during particular periods of their life we have made access to parental leave and postgraduate membership rates much easier. Parental leave membership is now available to primary care givers of children up to primary school age for up to two years at a time with the option of applying to extend for a further two years.

In addition to this, members who are having financial difficulty but still want to stay connected to the profession are able to apply for special consideration membership (Article 88 application).

Here at the Chapter we are also looking at ways to support and encourage women to stay in the profession. 2013 will be the sixth year that we

run the very successful Constructive Mentoring program for female graduate members.

Constructive Mentoring provides personalised guidance and support to young women architecture professionals. Mentors are drawn from senior members of the architectural profession. The program provides an opportunity for mentors and mentees to:

- Share knowledge, experience and management skills
- Demonstrate leadership capabilities while helping others develop personally and professionally
- Learn and gain a broader perspective of the architectural community

While the program for individual mentees runs for a year, past participants are invited back as alumni to various events throughout the year, with a view to growing the cohort as far and wide as possible.

The 2013 program will kick off on International Women's Day (Friday 8th March) with four facilitated meetings planned throughout the year. There are still a few places left for both mentors and mentees. To qualify for the program you must be an Institute member. Mentors are required to be registered architects with at least four years post graduate work experience under their belts. Mentees can be either graduate or registered architects.

In 2012, with a view to better acknowledging the contribution of members to the profession, Chapter Council invited members, who felt they qualified, to apply to be a Fellow, or to nominate other members they felt qualified. Historically, women are very poorly represented as Fellows and Life Fellows. In Victoria, of the 288 Fellows we have, only 21 of them are women, five of whom achieved that in 2012. Of our 70 Life Fellows, only nine of them are women. In 2013 we aim to bring some change to these figures. I encourage you to nominate women members for elevation to Fellow (and yes you can nominate yourself). To

qualify, members need to have been corporate members for a minimum of 12 years and can display that they have:

- Gained significant experience in the practice of architecture, or
- Gained higher architectural qualification subsequent to obtaining those qualifications for admission to Associate membership, or
- Contributed significant service to the profession

As well as giving you the right to put an 'F' after your name (as in FRAIA), becoming an Institute Fellow also means you qualify to take on a number of senior roles in the Institute. One of these is the Senior Counsellor Service. The Institute's Senior Counselling service is a much valued member service that provides direct guidance and counsel to members through an efficient telephone referral service. Interestingly, of our 20 Senior Counsellors the Chapter only has two women (who do an outstanding job). Again, this is something we are looking to change in 2013.

Certainly, these are all small 'somethings' in the scheme of things, but successful and sustainable cultural change is generally best achieved through incremental steps (and although it could be argued that armed revolution also brings about change I don't encourage it in this case).

I urge you to contact us here at the Victorian Chapter at vic@architecture.com.au if you are interested in any of the programs I have mentioned here, or if you have ideas and thoughts about other ways we can support and ensure a more equitable and diverse profession.

Alison Cleary
Victorian Chapter Manager

Who wants to be a Woman Architect?

Dr Karen Burns

In January 2012 the *Architects' Journal* published the “shocking” results of a survey of 700-odd women working in architecture and construction. The findings reported widespread experience of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and the gendered nature of architectural salaries as well as other data, drawing a dismal picture of women’s professional experiences. As part of pledge to make a difference to women’s participation and quality of work culture, AJ founded the Women in Architecture awards. Judged for the first time this April, categories include the revived Jane Drew Prize and two new awards – Woman Architect of the Year and Emerging Woman Architect of the Year. Both the awards program and the term ‘woman architect’ have prompted this opinion piece. Is the term woman architect pejorative or useful? What tensions are embedded in this phrase? And are single-sex prizes ‘sexist’?

I think my objections to the term woman architect are shaped by my interest in language and identity. I never use the term, opting instead for the unwieldy phrase ‘women in architecture’. I don’t want the ‘woman architect’ phrase used because it implicitly genders the architect as male. At the same time, the architect’s masculine sex disappears or is disguised behind the word ‘architect’ and it is the ‘woman’ part of the phrase that becomes identified with a gender. We reinforce the visible and invisible patterns of gender production by using these descriptions.

However, I also know that some women in architecture refuse the phrase for different reasons. In 2006 *Architecture Australia* commissioned responses to Paula Whitman’s *Going Places*, a report on women’s career progression in the architecture profession. Rachel Neeson, a director of Sydney-based practice Neeson Murcutt described the intersection of gender and architecture in these terms: “I don’t identify myself particularly with my gender – I don’t think of myself specifically as a ‘woman’ architect – and I’m not exceptional in this respect.... Like the majority of the profession, what is important to me is the quality of the work, as benchmarked against the work of peers and as measured by them – both informally with colleagues and friends, and formally via awards, publications and prizes.”

I find myself nodding in agreement. Almost every day I would prefer to be described as an architectural theorist and historian and not as a woman architectural theorist and historian. Like Neeson I also value the measurement of my work by formal and informal means. However, I also undertake feminist research and work on architecture and culture, and this research pulls me in another direction, away from agreement with my everyday self and Rachel Neeson.

In my own work experience, I have sometimes, not always, been pigeon holed and judged differently as a woman (but not at my current workplace).

I have experienced different treatment to male colleagues in terms of retention, promotion, earnings, access to seniority, leadership opportunities or belief that my contribution has been taken seriously. The AJ 2012 survey confirmed that nearly 50% of the women surveyed had experienced these forms of gendered patterns of behaviour. What I know now is that, despite my best efforts to be described in gender neutral terms, I am not always in control of how others see me. My identity is culturally formed in conscious and unconscious ways. There is a gap between these two points of views, between belief in individual agency – our capacity to act in the world and control our destiny – and belief in the actions of culture in producing and supporting non-merit based patterns in workplace treatment. I believe that our life experiences happen in the interactions between individual agency and culture.

My sense of the magnetic power of culture might not be mirrored in the general value systems of our profession. The belief in individuality and individual merit is hard wired into architecture. Our education systems centre on studio training; the teaching and learning of design skills and the development of individual design capacities. Generally student work is evaluated and judged on an individual basis. This should be a merit-based judgment. The value of individuality and meritocracy are learnt early on.



But is a merit-based culture of design evaluation (and by implication the designer) so easily managed and won? One of the most peculiar things about architectural practice is the range of non-merit based factors that may determine the successful practice start up and expansion: access to the dominant socio-economic patronage group, access to capital, access to social networks, access to alternative income streams while the practice is being established, the social advantage of the old school tie or family connections, and even more personal factors – like physical attractiveness, charisma and romantic partners. I have seen radically talented architects fail in practice due to psychopathic personality traits even while their design practice and design innovation were brilliant. (You know who they are.)

The importance of merit-based rewards is built into the architectural prize system. And yet, when I study local systems of design prize choice and juries I find that a small group of people serve on juries, year in and year out, and that jurors are often former recipients of prizes. I am not arguing that the system is corrupt – merely pointing out that it is a taste system maintained by people within the group and by new members admitted to its fraternity. Are prizes distributed purely on the basis of design merit (however determined) or do other factors come into play: prior reputation, connections, familiarity to the group and conformity to the prevailing taste culture? Prizes are a powerful part of architecture's reward

system and confer advantages on recipients: distinction in a competitive market, public legitimation and publicity, for example.

A prize specifically for a 'women architect' raises questions about the desirability of the term itself, and the desirability of prizes based on the star system. We need more architectural prizes for pro bono work, for being an employer of choice, for producing research innovations in service delivery or for client negotiation, for example.

But the argument for the AJ prize is that a prize for women architects focuses our attention on the prize and its context: how reward systems work and who is rewarded. Women-only literary prizes like the Orange Prize have been established against the backdrop of prize shortlists dominated by men or years in which women writers are entirely absent from shortlists. The AJ prize should also force us to gaze at the prize and the background problem. But the relationship between the problem and the solution is messy.

Women-only prizes can be trapped by a circular logic. Women-only prizes draw attention to non-meritocratic preferences such as gender that may influence short-list selection. By building in gender as a gate-keeping device, single sex prizes can be accused of the very thing they contest: non-meritocratic selection criteria. It is very easy for critics to claim that the new single sex prize is sexist.

But perhaps we're using the wrong criteria to think about women-only prizes. I think that single sex awards are acts of political activism. They force attention on the mechanisms of selection, judgement criteria and proportional gender representation in book publishing or building. Establishing a women-only prize is a provocative political act. It is not the same as writing anti-discrimination legislation or building consensus around policy formation. It does not seek to be 'fair' but dramatises inequity, albeit in the most paradoxical way. It seeks to generate discussion and produce publicity. It may also be a useful reward for the prize-winner.

For me terms like 'woman architect' and women-only prizes offer opportunities to discuss these tensions, complexities and contradictions around questions of gender identity. I don't have any straightforward answers. The farcical experience of lacking control over one's image but being in a culture which fetishises an individual's capacity to shape her actions, identity and experience merit-based assessment was dramatised by US Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder. The Huffington Post reported that when Schroeder was running as a candidate in a senate race she was asked whether she was running as a woman. She responded, "Do I have a choice?"

Sometimes we do and sometimes we don't.

Note: This essay first appeared on the website Parlour: women, equity, architecture. www.archiparlour.org.au



Dr Karen Burns teaches in the Architecture program at the University of Melbourne. Her essays on architectural history and theory and reviews of new architecture have been published nationally and internationally. She contributes to Parlour and is a Chief Investigator on an ARC funded project examining gender, work and architecture in Australia.

Photographs by Nick Bassett, taken as part of the 'visual sociology' component of the research project Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architectural Profession: Women, Work, Leadership. The project involves researchers from the University of Queensland, the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney and is led by Naomi Stead. Industry partners include the Australian Institute of Architects, Architecture Media, BVNArchitecture, Bates Smart and PTW. Karen Burns is a Chief Investigator on the project.

By Brett Seakins

If you have a recent project and would like it to be considered for Slice, please email vic@architecture.com.au

House Reduction – Abbotsford
MAKE architecture studio

Located in the dense inner urban Abbotsford, this project, by Melissa Bright of MAKE architecture studio, takes the unique approach of reducing the building footprint. In line with the practice philosophy of carefully investigating the project requirements and increasing planning efficiency, the resulting creation features a flexible part indoor, part outdoor space with sliding slatted screens, slatted glass roofs, outdoor fireplace and built-in daybeds. The building efficiently accommodates various uses while reducing the overall footprint and with additional open space in the backyard it will no doubt be appreciated by the owners.



Merricks House
Robson Rak Architects

This house, designed by Kathryn Robson of Robson Rak Architects, is located in Merricks on the Westernport Bay, south of Melbourne. Designed as a second house for a 'dynamic' couple based in the city, the focus is on maximising their getaway time and keeping everything as low maintenance as possible. The house is built with robust materials, which ground the building firmly on the site. Rammed earth and formwork give the surface an off-form concrete like appearance. The house opens up to terraces and gardens at every opportunity and incorporates a number of intelligent sustainable design solutions.



Forever House
WoodWoodWard

This 1938 Surrey Hills triple fronted clinker brick dwelling randomly positioned on its sloped triangle corner block was, from the outset, disorienting by nature. By replacing the front tier with a kitchen, living and dining pavilion that neatly tucks under the existing roof line, the original character of the clinker house is preserved, while the strong geometry of the addition announces itself as contemporary. Inside the pavilion, the spaces unfold in such a way that the house seems to move around the residents, rather than the alternative. From a distance, the Forever House addition wears its camouflage – the passer-by could be forgiven for thinking it's the 'real deal'.





Photographer Neiyu Sun

Myrtleford Residence ***Kendall Strong Architect***

Designed to accommodate an artist and her husband who were relocating to the country, this house takes advantage of mountain views to the north and west. Despite a compact plan and limited budget, the house achieves a feeling of spaciousness enhanced through abundant use of natural light in the living and working areas. The simple plan is comprised of a living wing and a sleeping wing connected by a glazed entry pavilion. The design incorporates significant passive solar techniques coupled with rainwater tanks, solar panels and a heat pump system to minimise the house's environmental impact.



Photographer Barbara Yerondais

Tower Apartments ***BY Projects***

This substantial residential development sits on an island site surrounded by large residential properties in a treed environment in Melbourne's northern suburbs. It comprises 100 apartments as well as retail and commercial facilities, including a restaurant, gymnasium, day spa and office spaces. The master plan features four individual buildings, each with their own address and identity. A series of well positioned courtyards promote community interaction. The buildings are characterised by strong black grids containing deceptively simple repetitive timber clad boxes, which cleverly hide all services between dividing posts. The timber framed structure ensured the construction program allowed for domestic trades, staged to suit the developers marketing program.



Photographer Emma Cross

Kew Recreation Centre ***Suters Architects***

Recent refurbishments, designed by Kristen Neri and Kellie Adler of Suters Architects, have brought new life to the Kew Recreation Centre. A standout feature of the project is the new spacious, light filled entry pavilion, which addresses High Street and improves patron flow to the pool hall and health club. The distinctive architecture of the original building, constructed in the late 1980s, consists of a series of curvilinear pavilions to which three new sister pavilions have been added. The three new pavilions house the entry, a two storey gym and program room and a crèche. The new angular pavilions compliment the existing architecture – they are similar in form and materiality but distinctive in appearance.

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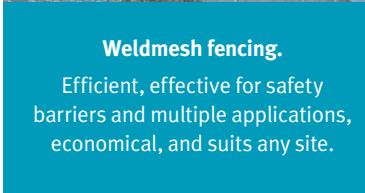
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Education Committee

The end of 2012 saw a flurry of meetings for the Education Committee with some important developments instigated. These developments will give new life to the operations and endeavours of the Committee in 2013 and onwards.

Firstly, we have agreed on a new structure for the Graduate Prize. This structure provides greater clarity around the relationship and roles of the various participating groups, including the sponsoring practices (McGlashan Everist, BVN, Hayball, and BatesSmart), the Institute and the individual Schools of Architecture. The prize winners from each school will initially be announced as part of that School's own end of year awards processes. Following the success of the 2011 Graduate Prize exhibition being held as part of the 2012 Presentation to Juries event at Monash, we have decided to continue this again in 2013 and in the future. This means that the 2012 Graduate Prize exhibition (the combined exhibition of shortlisted projects from each School) will collocate with the 2013 Presentation to Juries, again being held at Monash in late March.

Secondly, we have developed a 'Terms of Reference' for the Education Committee, which gives definition to our role as a Chapter Committee and our relation to the National Education Committee. We hope this will be adopted and operating for this year. As part of this discussion, the Institute membership status of members in the committee, especially for members who have full-time academic positions, has become a matter that requires some resolution.

Each of the Schools has held their respective end of year exhibitions, with RMIT's being held in the newly opened Design Hub and Monash having their inaugural show of graduating work from their architecture program. All shows were very well attended and it is very encouraging to see such cross-support from the profession and the schools at all the exhibitions.

We have also elected a new Chair, and look forward to Diego Ramirez-Lovering's leadership.

Professor Des Smith – Chair

Sustainable Architecture Forum

2012 was a busy year for the Sustainable Architecture Forum. We consolidated a number of initiatives and focused on some new directions.

One of our key activities has been to assist the Victorian Chapter in providing educational content to our members on sustainability. This year the SAF contributed to four CPD events with Tim Angus, Belinda Strickland, Nevil Cowland and Nic Granleese playing roles in Chairing, presenting and organising these events.

Last year also saw the establishment of the SAF policy working group, which has been exploring areas of topical media interest to develop position papers with seven themes being identified. The group is currently focusing on two of these with the remaining five being rolled out through the course of the year.

With regards to our involvement with the Institute's National Sustainability Committee the SAF have had direct involvement in a number of areas. These have included the development of a new Institute policy on Social Sustainability and a review of the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency's consultation paper on the National Building Energy Standard Setting.

It is also worth mentioning that the committee is regularly called upon to review or attend as a representative of the Victorian Chapter on issues relating to sustainability. Both Jane Toner and Michael Shaw have been regular contributors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in the SAF over the course of 2012 and look forward to working with you all in 2013.

Alex Nock – Chair

Awards Task Force

At the beginning of a fresh new year I'm very pleased to welcome both Ingrid Bakker and Amy Muir to the Awards Taskforce following on from the appointment of Hamish Lyon in late 2012. This completes the renewal process of the taskforce following the departure of Alfred de Bruyne and Nigel Bertram in 2012 and most recently Shelley Penn due to her commitments as National President of the Institute. We wish Shelley well in this ongoing role and thank her for her great contribution over the last three years.

This 'changing of the guard' maintains and reinforces our aim to represent both large and small practice, a diversity of architectural viewpoint and gender equality.

The 2013 awards program was effectively launched in early December with a well-attended and well catered information session for first time award entrants, hosted by Libby Richardson, Peter Malatt, Amy Muir and myself. The expressions of interest for 2013 jury members was also launched around the same time and will no doubt receive a healthy response as it does every year.

As the awards juggernaut gathers momentum we look forward to guiding the process through another successful year. Please visit the website vicawards.architecture.com.au

James Staughton – Chair

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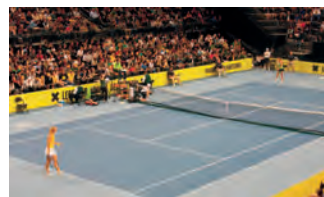
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Message from the Office of the Victorian Government Architect

Jill Garner

For as long as I have been involved with the study and business of architecture, there have been questions about gender equality in the profession and a diverse collection of propositions defining the possible 'difference' between male and female architects – differences that might range from working method and leadership style, through to design aesthetic. Such propositions could be missing the point, as questions of parity are usually trying to establish why more women are not fully participating in architecture. Data gathered through formal feedback processes seems to have established that the majority of reasons given by women who have left the profession can be classified as gender-based.

Like many women architects interviewed on the subject, I distrust many of the assumptions made about gender. I continue to propose that an architect's sensibility is the result of individual traits that manifest themselves in the numerous qualities that are helpful to the architectural process – sensibilities that include: receptivity; awareness; an ability to listen and to co-operate; perseverance and determination; flexibility and agility; the capacity to analyse, unravel

and creatively respond; an aptitude to map a logical path towards a designed outcome and the strength to accept and respond to critique. These qualities are extraordinarily diverse and suggest that architecture is impossible without collaboration. It is tempting and intuitive to suggest that collaboration is more effective where architects of both genders comprise the team. It is compelling that when SANAA was awarded the Pritzker prize in 2010, the architects were praised for 'a singular architectural language that springs from a collaborative process that is both unique and inspirational' and for work that 'stands in direct contrast with the bombastic and rhetorical.' The highly considered projects that emerge from the partnership of Sejima and Nishizawa could be seen as a persuasive argument for the strengths in gender collaboration – their non-hierarchical designs seem to reflect the nature of their collaboration.

In my role with the OVGA over the last couple of years, I have been privileged to be a representative stakeholder on many notable projects in which I would like to have seen and heard more women architectural collaborators. I understand the

many reasons cited as to why women choose to leave the commitment of practice. I would like to propose and encourage consideration of the various options available that allows them to use their architectural background – which gives them a strong qualification – to advocate, inform, influence or commission the legacy of good design throughout the private and public sector. I applaud the ongoing valuable input of those who have diverted into the role of educator, editor, journalist or curator. I believe too that both local and state governments – with workplaces more flexible than the typical architectural studio – would benefit greatly from the intelligent and informed input that could be provided in departments where design is procured and managed. A growing network of design champions throughout Government in Victoria, with architectural training and sensibility, would significantly contribute to elevating the quality of our built environment.

Jill Garner
Associate Victorian Government Architect

1. Jury Citation - The Pritzker Architecture Prize

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President's Message

Jon Clements

This edition of *Architect Victoria* pays tribute to female members of the profession. It aims to draw attention to some of the issues that women working in architecture and the broader industry face. Last year was the centenary of the first female architect, Ruth Alsop, graduating in Victoria. This important milestone, coupled with recent debates about gender equality in the industry, highlights the need for all industry members to pause and consider the achievements and challenges faced by women working in this traditionally male dominated profession. Times are changing, but clearly not fast enough. This edition's contribution to the debate is timely and I encourage you all to reflect on ways you can ensure gender equality in practice.

On other matters, since my last message was published we were advised by the Office of the Minister for Planning that the Victorian Building Commission will be abolished and a new Victorian Building Authority will take over regulation of the building industry. As part of that announcement we were advised that the Architects Registration Board of Victoria (ARBV) is proposed to be abolished and the ongoing regulation of architects is likely to fall within the framework of the proposed Victorian Building Authority. Both these announcements were made in a press release with limited detail and many of our members have shared serious concerns particularly in relation to the lack of consultation that preceded this decision.

In response, the Institute met with the Office of the Premier and the Office of the Minister of Planning to voice our concerns surrounding the implications of abolishing the ARBV and to reinforce the importance of independent

regulation of architects. As a result of these meetings we will be involved in a consultation process with the Office of the Minister of Planning and their advisors in early 2013. We will be firmly protecting the primary regulatory functions that have been historically managed by the ARBV.

As I write this message it is too early to predict the likely outcomes of the consultation process. However, we will take this opportunity to discuss and review a broad range of regulatory issues surrounding the architectural profession. In the meantime the ARBV continues to operate as normal and we are working closely with the ACA (Association of Consulting Architects) to monitor the situation with the primary focus being protection of the Architects Act and effective regulation of our profession.

On another note, we are in the process of developing a response to the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy and the recently released discussion paper 'Melbourne – Let's talk about the Future'. I would like to thank members and Institute staff who have contributed to this important piece of work. The Institute depends on the voluntary support and extensive experience of our members to deliver comprehensive submissions when lobbying with government and industry, therefore, I would encourage you to offer assistance in areas where you think you can make positive and effective contribution.

In 2013, Chapter Council will be looking at our annual program of events and services with a view to adapting and expanding these when we move into our new home at 41 Exhibition Street at the end of this year. Our focus will be to establish an additional string of events, which will

attract public participation with a view to more effectively promoting the value of architecture. We welcome members to take the opportunity to submit suggestions to Chapter Council to assist in identifying a range of appropriate events for both member and public participation. We can be contacted by email through the links at the top of Vmail.

Looking forward, Melbourne is hosting this year's National Architecture Conference in the last weekend of May and the conference will explore contemporary applications and ideas surrounding material in architecture. Last year's conference was held in Queensland for the first time in many years and it was very strongly supported by local members with a record attendance level. It would be great to back this up with similar support from Victorian members, so I encourage you all to attend what is lining up to be a great program with some excellent speakers and fringe events. I look forward to seeing you there.



Jon Clements
Victorian Chapter President

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