



Architects Accreditation Council of Australia

**Reviewing the Skilled Migration and 400 Series
Visa Programmes**

Submission by:

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The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA), a limited company owned by the Registration Boards around Australia maintains the National Standard of Competency for Architects. The Standard is the basis for the accreditation of architectural education for the purposes of registration, and underpin the requirements of the Architectural Practice Examination applied in all states and territories for the purpose of registration. The AACA is a recognised skills assessment centre responsible for skills assessment for the occupation architect.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Submission is made by the AACA in response to the invitation extended to stakeholders by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to provide input to the Discussion Paper *Reviewing the Skilled Migration and 400 Series Visa Programmes*.

The AACA welcomes the intent to develop a clearer, deregulated skilled migration visa framework.

This submission recommends that careful consideration be given to the development of a flexible skilled migration visa system that supports Australian business, accounts for the increasing mobility of the international professional workforce at both graduate and experienced practitioner level and maintains Australian standards.



Are there any specific aspects of the programmes or processes that could be simplified?

Architects are professionals regulated by statute in each State and Territory in Australia. This places an additional layer of complexity upon skills recognition, given that there is a specific nationally agreed registration process that must be met once an accredited Australian qualification or equivalent is achieved prior to registration as an architect in a state or territory in Australia.

AACA accepts that skills recognition bodies and relevant professional bodies have a role in ensuring that their processes are transparent, fair and consistent. To this end AACA is just completing an internal review of migration skills assessments to ensure that we update our processes to meet this standard.

AACA supports establishment of a quality management process in consultation with industry bodies and skills assessment agencies to ensure a balance between flexible methods of meeting Australian skilled migration (both temporary and permanent) balanced against the imperative to maintain Australian standards and unwarranted burden on the applicant.

AACA undertakes a skills assessment of overseas persons wishing to apply under skilled migration. However, this is only stage one of the assessment process to determine equivalence to an Australian qualification for the purpose of meeting the registration requirements under the respective Architects Acts in each state and territory. It would be helpful if we were provided with depersonalized data to allow us to track the numbers of people coming in to Australia as a result of a successful skills assessment and then proceeding to registration as an architect in a state or territory.

Do you have any skilled migration needs that are not currently met within the existing skilled migration visa programme?

AACA supports a re-consideration of the age limit of 50 years for skilled entry temporary visa. The project nature of the profession, and the longevity of an architect's working life common in Australian and globally may limit the potential to attract the most appropriate architects to Australia for limited periods of time.

Information from the State and Territory Architect Registration Boards indicates 50% of architects are aged 50 and above, with 30% of these between the age of 50-59. It will be important to ensure sufficient numbers to satisfy demand and offset the reduction in supply caused by the aging workforce.

AACA recommends that mutual recognition of qualifications and registration arrangements in place be considered in the application process for skilled migration visas. This may be an effective method of streamlining the skills recognition process for applicants from economies with whom Australia has such agreements.

To what extent should the current key visa components be incorporated into a new skilled migration visa programme?

Temporary migration visas provide an economic and cultural benefit to the nation. However, an integrated and streamlined approach should be taken so that new entrants understand the standards required to practice as an architect in Australia and the legislative requirements encapsulated in legislation in the states and territories. This may mean that applicants applying for entry via skilled temporary visas may be required to undertake a skills assessment. In terms of graduate entrants and or/ applicants under internship categories this may in fact facilitate mobility of their skills during and after their period in Australia.

Australia's proximity to Asian economies provides significant opportunities for Australian architectural educational institutions and architectural businesses, and this should be considered in future migration programmes. In this context it is important to communicate Australia's high education and industry standards and registration processes to manage the expectations of prospective migrants as the long lead times for this qualification and registration process are a key consideration in long term migration trends for this profession.