

Welcome to the NZRAB's first Newsletter for 2021! Topics covered in this Newsletter:

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CPD developments for architects

As announced in our December 2020 Newsletter, the NZRAB took over the administration of the NZRAB CPD records management system on 1 January 2021. We hope the profession has experienced this as a relatively seamless transition. We are building up our knowledge around the complexities of the system, and are working to continuously improve our interactions with the profession.

A good idea, to avoid the last minute rush at competence review time and the difficulties of remembering details of past events, is to log-as-you-go with CPD events. For any questions about completing a CPD activity record or regarding CPD points allocation, contact Jeremy via cpd@nzrab.org.nz.

Reminder about Annual Certificate of Registration fee: Kia āta pānui (take note)!!

Invoices for the Annual Certificate of Registration (ACR) have been sent. Thank You!, to those who have already sent us their payment. It is a statutory requirement that architects hold a current ACR to be able to practise as an architect, so please help us to help you stay registered!

When paying the ACR invoice, every architect needs to ensure that their payment is accompanied with their **registration number** and correctly spelled **surname**. Payment must be received by the NZRAB no later than **20 June**. Doing this promptly will ensure architects stay on the Register, and don't automatically show as "expired" from 1 July 2021.



One difficult impact of becoming expired is that building consent applications can be stymied. Around 40% of architects were 'expired' from the Register on 1 July 2020, mostly due to paying late. The other main reason was some Finance Departments in large practices didn't identify the registration number and surname of all architects for whom their lump-sum payment was made. This meant that our Finance Department couldn't allocate the payment against the relevant architects, and the architects suffered the inconvenience of becoming expired.

We indicated last year a development that will benefit the profession and the environment: a move to digital ACRs, and to terminate the annual plastic wallet cards. The digital ACR is still being developed, but the plastic card is consigned to history, and no longer to landfill.

Initial registrations and Continuing registration competence reviews in a Covid-19 environment

As the pandemic continues to ravage much of the rest of the world, and with ongoing uncertainty regarding potential further lockdowns, NZRAB will maintain use of videoconferencing for all interactive assessments, except in exceptional circumstances and for applications in te Reo and Sign.

The Board will review the use of video assessments mid-this year. Depending on how the review goes, the Board anticipates discontinuing the mandatory use of Zoom for professional conversations and continuing registration interviews, by mid-August 2021.

The majority of applicants who have experienced Zoom assessments have rated them positively; the aspects that have been identified as positive include being able to stay in familiar surroundings, and not having the expense and anxiety of travel. The Board is open to feedback on whether applicants should have the choice of an assessment via video platform or face-to-face. Comments can be sent to info@nzb.org.nz.

Changes to the Executive

We farewelled our very experienced Executive Officer Registration, Trish Tchernevski, in February 2021. Congratulations to Trudy Rook, who was appointed to the Executive position upon Trish's departure. We warmly welcome Bronwyn Chin, our new part-time Registration Officer, who joined us in March 2021.

Consultation on Fees is coming

The NZRAB is preparing to consult on the fees payable by architects and applicants for registration (fees are listed in [Schedule 2](#) of the Registered Architects Rules 2006). This is not a proposal to increase the ACR fee. Most of the changes to be consulted on will relate to applications for registration.

Public Protection—complaints and discipline

Disciplinary matters and decisions of the NZRAB that fall under the Rule changes that came into force on 10 January 2020 are starting to come to completion. We will be able to report on individual cases in our next Newsletter. We will likely be issuing some new Cautionary Notes, to pass on to the profession things that can be learned from others' mistakes.

Neighbours can also complain!

At times, the neighbour of an architect's client lays a complaint with the Board about the architect. The Rules require the Board to investigate these complaints. It is prudent to make timely and effective communications with clients, and with neighbours who are impacted by a project, and to maintain good records of the communications.

Costs from disciplinary processes where grounds to discipline architect: up to 100%

Under [section 26](#) of the Registered Architects Act 2005, where grounds exist to discipline an architect, the Board may order the architect to pay the costs of the proceedings. As a rough guide, the cost related to a Disciplinary Hearing is often around \$60,000.

In the past, the Board imposed cost recovery orders within a range of 25% to 50% of the total costs. The Board has been concerned for some time about the unfair burden this places on the profession, primarily through the ACR fee.

The Board decided on 10 February 2021, to change the policy concerning costs, so that 100% of costs may be recovered. This will apply not only to disciplinary matters that go to a Disciplinary Hearing, but also to matters that conclude after the Investigating Panel's inquiry (i.e., where the architect accepts the Board's decision to make disciplinary orders). As a rough guide, the cost of an Investigating Panel's inquiry can be around \$5,000.

New and updated Policies

The new costs policy

The new policy on recovery of up to 100% of the costs from disciplinary proceedings can be found in paragraph 9 of the [NZRAB Complaints and Discipline Policy](#).

Paying costs; having insurance coverage

Employing a generous interpretation of [section 27](#) of the Act, the Board allows disciplined architects to submit a 12-month payment plan for the payment of fines and costs. A strict approach to interpreting the provision would mean that disciplined architects' registration may be suspended or cancelled for non-payment.

The NZRAB must investigate every properly laid complaint, so each member of the profession should consider whether they have adequate PI insurance. It can be costly to defend a case, regardless of whether it results in disciplinary action and cost recovery orders.



NZRAB Guidance on Disciplinary Procedures published

The Board has recently published, in the [Concerns/complaints](#) section of the NZRAB website, its [Guidance on Disciplinary Procedures](#). This will be helpful to architects, their legal representatives, and the public wanting to know how the Board deals with complaints.

New Continuing Registration Policy

The NZRAB has adopted a [New Continuing Registration Policy](#). The New Continuing Registration Policy mirrors the procedures in the Rules. It streamlines the process for the Board to suspend an architect who does not meet the minimum standard in rule 21 of the Rules.

The New Continuing Registration Policy applies to architects' continuing registration competence reviews that commence on or after 14 April 2021. The [original Continuing Registration Policy](#) (updated on 9 December 2020) applies to all competence reviews that were underway on or before 13 April 2021.

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