



The Royal Australian Institute of Architects

Briefing Submission

**Briefing Submission to
AIA International
Presidents Forum**

**By RAIA CEO
David Parken
LFRAIA, Hon AIA
May 2007**

The RAI General Briefing for AIA International Presidents Forum 2007

Introduction

Since incorporation in 1930, the RAI has evolved into a dynamic & progressive organization offering a range of targeted programs to best meet our member's needs, while also fostering strong relationships with associated bodies, government and providing informed and balanced policy positions for the industry and community.

1. Government and Construction Industry

1.1 Year of the Built Environment 2004

In 2004 the RAI partnered with the Australian Government, all state & Territory Governments together with over 30 industry associates to celebrate 'The year of the Built Environment'. Over 800 events were held nationally and these culminated in a National Awards Event together with a National forum for young professionals to consider what Australia might look like in 2050. As a result a group of young professionals meet each year at a conference under the umbrella of "2050" to consider and exchange views on relevant issues affecting the industry and to plan how to influence decision makers.

1.2 Government Architects

The RAI has advocated for the appointment of Government Architects to advise state government ministers on matters affecting the Built Environment and quality of design. We have been successful in having new appointments made in WA, NT and VIC to join existing positions in QLD & NSW. Both SA and TAS are currently considering the idea of appointing a Government Architect. The role of these architects is to help the government understand the value of design and assist in developing policies for promoting good design and procuring architects based on design competition rather than fee competition.

1.3 Commonwealth Government Architect

The RAI has also been promoting the idea of a Commonwealth Government Architect for the last 3 years. Recently the Australian Construction Industry Forum which is the peak body represents the construction industry to the Federal Government endorsed a policy to promote the idea of a Commonwealth Government Architect to both the Government and Opposition parties as this is an election year.

Again this position would be an advisory role to the office of Prime Minister & Cabinet.

1.4 National Peak Industry Bodies ACIF & BEDP & ASBEC

The RAI is also involved in other peak national industry bodies such as:

- a) Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF) which is made up of 12 industry associations including property owners, builders, sub-contractors, consultants & planners.
- b) The Australian Council of Built Environment Design Professions (BEDP) which includes all design professions such as Architects, Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Landscape Architects & Planners through their national professional associations.
- c) Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) which has 30 organisations as members from Government, Owners, Builders, Consultants, Material Manufacturers & Universities.

1.5 Sustainable Cities Enquiry

The RAI A has successfully collaborated with the Property Council of Australia (PCA) and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) to propose a national vision for sustainable cities to a joint parliamentary enquiry on the topic.

The concept includes a national charter for sustainability, an independent sustainability commission to develop a set of national targets together with an incentive fund to encourage state and local governments to plan and build better cities.

We are currently waiting for the response to this enquiry from the Australian Government.

1.6 Architecture Policy

The RAI A advocates that the Australian Government develops a policy on architecture. While there has been little progress at a National level we are pleased that such a policy is being developed in Western Australia which will help others to consider such a policy.

2. Promotion of Architecture and the Profession

2.1 Architecture Awards

The RAI A has developed an outstanding program of Regional, Chapter and National Awards for Architecture which now has 13 categories nationally and receives over 600 entries per year. Award dinners/cocktail functions are held in all 8 chapters and there is a National function where the National winners are announced.

2.2 National Awards Gallery On-line

Every entry into the RAI A awards program is featured on the RAI A website for 5 years resulting in over 3000 Architect designed projects being available to the public for viewing at www.architecture.com.au.

2.3 TV Coverage

In addition to the award dinners which get up to 800 guests attending the RAI A are promoting the residential category finalists over a six week period on a popular TV program titled "Better Homes and Gardens". This popular TV program has a viewing audience in excess of 1.3 million viewers weekly together with a monthly magazine publication.

2.4 Media Coverage

In addition to approx \$1.7m in advertising equivalent dollars through the TV coverage the RAI A engages Media Monitors to track our print and radio media coverage which adds an additional \$1.3m in advertising equivalent coverage across the country for articles on Architects and Architecture.

2.5 Venice Biennale

The RAI A last year committed to preparing an Australian Architecture exhibition for the Venice Biennale for six years to include 2006, 2008 and 2010.

Last year was the first year of our formal presence at the Australian Venice Pavilion and there have been only two other privately funded Australian exhibitions. We

received significant support from a network of architecture practices together with sponsorship and in-kind support from the Australian Arts Council for us to use the Australian Venice Pavilion.

2.6 Architecture Australia

The RAIA has a National Journal titled "Architecture Australia" which is published bi-monthly through our associated company Architecture Media. The RAIA also publish a number of Chapter magazines and local newsletters.

2.7 E-News

The RAIA now fully utilizes electronic newsletters with Chapter, National and International E-News prepared at regular times eg monthly, fortnightly and weekly depending on the demand.

2.8 Memo

The RAIA publishes a broadsheet of news items six times per year which is required by those members who do not have access to electronic E-News.

2.9 Annual Review/Report

The RAIA publishes a printed annual review Part 1 with concise financials and then publishes, on the web, an electronic Part 1, together with Part 2 – Chapter and Committee Reports and Part 3 – Full Financials.

3. Membership Benefits

3.1 National Events

a) National Awards dinner held annually

- 2005 – Opera House
- 2006 – Queensland State Library
- 2007 – Alice Springs

b) Gold Medal Tour

The highest award the RAIA presents to a member is the RAIA Gold Medal. Starting in 2005 the recipient of the Gold Medal undertakes a National speaking tour to all Chapters.

c) National Conference

The RAIA now holds a National Conference annually in conjunction with the Form and Function and DesignEx trade shows. This year we have experienced a sell-out of our conference with over 1200 attendees. The RAIA utilise a Creative Director model to develop a conference theme and work with our skilled in-house events staff.

d) Architecture Week

We now hold an annual Architecture Week across the country when all states and territories hold events focusing on architecture. Our national Awards dinner is held during this week and the winners are published in a design magazine lift out to the Australian Financial Review.

e) National CPD Seminar Series

2007 is the second year where the RAIA is providing a rolling series of six National Seminars in each state and territory which represents 48 individual seminars.

These have been prepared in response to the increasing need for formal CPD which is now mandatory in NSW and Tasmania and being considered as mandatory in Queensland and WA for registration purposes.

f) Continuum

To make CPD even more accessible the RAIA have developed an online CPD portal called Continuum where anyone can purchase web based interactive CPD modules. We have over 20 to choose from and in 2007 will prepare another 30 more topics.

3.2 Chapter Events

- a) The Chapter holds local award functions with the winners progressing to the National Awards Program.
- b) Chapter talks are very popular and CPD seminars on a range of topics which are general classed as informal CPD.
- c) The RAIA holds seminars for graduates seeking to become registered as Architects. These are titled the Practice of Architecture Lecture Series (PALS) and are usually a sell out in the larger Chapters.
- d) The Chapters also provide a mentor scheme for Architecture students to link with practicing architects as mentors.
- e) The RAIA has a range of building contracts which are sold to members through the Chapters.
- f) A series of discounts and promotions are made available to RAIA members for financial services, rental cars and other services.

3.3 Knowledge Services

- a) The RAIA publish a series of over 500 practice notes for members as a guide to practice and these are updated regularly through a subscription based service to practices.
- b) The Environment Design Guide consists of over 140 peer reviewed papers focused solely on sustainable design and is published for all the design professions by the RAIA. The service is subscriber based and available in both hard copy and electronic forms
- c) The RAIA jointly develops a range of building contracts with the Master Builders of Australia (MBA) and makes them available for sale through both the MBA and RAIA networks.
- d) Knowledge Services are responsible for developing both the CPD Seminar Series and content for the online "Continuum" web portal as part of a new initiative approved in 2005.
- e) The RAIA has had a jobs online web based jobs board and is about to launch a more advanced web based job search service in conjunction with a partner.

4. Administration and Finance

4.1 Strategic Plan

In 2005 the RAIA National Council and Senior Staff held a one day strategic planning day which resulted in the current strategic goals as follows:

That the RAIA become

The Voice of Architecture

- In the media every day – leading debate on current issues
- Influence government decisions relating to the Build Environment
- Be active and respected in the International Architecture community
- Develop leading public policies on architecture

A “Must Join” Organisation

- 80% of Australian Architects are members
- Excellent brand awareness
- Develop and strongly market our value proposition

Dynamic, Creative and Responsive

- Foster a design culture
- Engage with the community
- Promote scholarship and research.

Leader in Continuing Education

- Excellent participation rate by architects
- Financially sound business unit
- Minimal complaints about architectural service

Premium Source of Support and Advice

- Excellent attendance at all RAIA events
- First point of contact for enquiries
- Responsive to feedback

Exemplary Employer

- We attract and retain top people
- We provide a flexible and dynamic work environment
- Staff and members working collaboratively
- Leader in corporate responsibility

Financial Strength to Lead

- Strong balance sheet measured against appropriate commercial benchmarks
- Grow profitability for reinvestment in new programs/ventures to benefit members
- Sustainable revenue increased annually

The RAIA is also undertaking a brand review project with commissioned research and a survey of both members and non members together with stakeholders from Industry, government and the general public.

This work has already shown that advocacy is our main area where improvement is needed.

4.2 Structure

The RAIA is a national not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and has Chapter offices in every state and territory together with National staff in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

The RAIA is governed by a National Council which is made up of 8 Chapter elected Councillors, 4 nationally elected Councillors, the Student President, the National President, President Elect and the Immediate Past President. The National Council meets three times a year and has an Executive of five members which meets another 6-7 times per year.

The RAIA Executive is made up of the President, President Elect, Immediate past President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.

The National Council is assisted by a number of National Committees and Taskforces as follows:

National Committees

National Environment Committee
National Continuing Professional Development Committee
National Education Committee
National Practice Committee
International Area Committee
Venice Biennale Committee

Taskforces

Awards Review Taskforce
Indigenous Housing Taskforce
Public Policy Taskforce
PALS Taskforce
Integrated Practice Taskforce
Budget Review Taskforce

The National Committees are Standing Committees and usually have similar Chapter based committees which feed into the National Committees.

The Taskforces meet for a limited period and then disband once their defined work is completed.

Each Chapter also has a Chapter Council which has delegated powers from the National Council to undertake chapter based activities and develop local policies consistent with National policies.

Some Chapters also have committees for special interest groups such as Sole Practitioners, Young Architects, Large Practices, Heritage, Access and Small Practices.

Recently we counted over 100 active RAIA committees and approximately 600 dedicated members participating.

4.3 **Subsidiary and Associate Companies**

The RAIA structure includes a number of for-profit entities. RAIA wholly owns two subsidiary companies:

IBL Limited which provides insurance services to both architects and consulting firms and **Archicentre Limited** which provides Residential Advisory Services to the public in the form of home inspections and renovator reports.

Our associated company, **Architecture Media**, publishes magazines such as Architecture Australia, Houses, Artichoke, Landscape Australia and Architectural Product News.

4.4 **Financials**

The RAIA has grown in the last three years to approximately \$14m turnover and over \$27m on a consolidated basis. The RAIA is supported by a very strong balance sheet which includes property in every State and Territory except the Northern Territory. The RAIA has invested significantly into improving its premises across the nation and will continue this strategy in 2007 and 2008.

We have also upgraded communication and IT infrastructure and implemented a new accounting system. We are currently developing an intranet and rolling out HR policies and project management guidelines.

The RAIA has expanded its sponsorship program through a National Corporate partners program and receives dividends and tax consolidation payment from its subsidiary companies.

4.5 **The Future**

The RAIA, while having grown in recent years, remains challenged by an ever increasing number of activities and a limited amount of resources available. The National Council has embarked on a process to develop its strategic planning approach and review all programs against a new and revised purpose/mission statement.

This combined with developing a three year rolling budget and being prepared to ramp some programs down, while ramping others up, should significantly improve the focus, performance and sustainability of the organisation in challenging and dynamic times.

4.6 **RAIA 2007 National Council Member**

President	Carey Lyon FRAIA
President Elect	Alec Tzannes FRAIA
Immediate Past President	Bob Nation FRAIA
Nationally Elected Councillor	Professor Ian McDougall LFRAIA
Nationally Elected Councillor	Howard Tanner FRAIA
Nationally Elected Councillor	Kerstin Thompson RAIA
ACT Chapter President	Melinda Dodson RAIA
NSW Chapter President	Deborah Dearing FRAIA
NT Chapter President	Ross Connolly FRAIA
Qld Chapter President	Ian Mitchell FRAIA
SA Chapter President	Andrew Vorrasi FRAIA
Tas Chapter President	James Jones RAIA
Vic Chapter President	Professor Philip Goad RAIA
WA Chapter President	Rod Mollett LFRAIA
SONA President	Joshua Morrin