equity and diversity in the Australian architecture profession:
Women, Work and Leadership

Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant 2011-2014
project partners

industry partners
+ australian institute of architects
+ architecture media
+ bligh voller nield
+ bates smart
+ ptw architects

institutional partners
the university + of queensland
the university + of melbourne
the university + of sydney
queensland university + of technology
monash university +

australian research council
Project funding

Industry partners

+ Architecture Media
  in-kind contributions: publicity and publications

+ Bates Smart
  cash and in-kind contributions

+ Bligh Voller Nield
  cash and in-kind contributions

+ PTW Architects
  cash and in-kind contributions

+ Australian Institute of Architects
  cash: $16,000 over 3 years allocated to PhD stipend / in-kind: $25,320 over 3 years - staff time, administration, access to national conference

Australian Research Council funding

$192,500 over 3 years

Australian Research Council
research team

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- Dr Karen Burns
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- Dr Amanda Roan
  - School of Business, The University of Queensland
- Ms Gill Mathewson
  - PhD candidate, School of Architecture, The University of Queensland
the issues

- Women are under-represented in the architecture profession in Australia as a group
- This is particularly apparent at senior levels
- Proportion of female graduates is close to parity, but women are not advancing in sufficient numbers
- Women architects tend to follow ‘atypical’ career paths
- Trained women tend to leave, step sideways, or not return from a break
- Evidence from other countries identifies gender-based pay inequity
- Evidence from other countries identifies the sidelining of architects working part time
- Difficulty in reconciling professional and family life is also a problem for men, but impacts in different, specific, and compounded ways for women
research aims

- map women’s participation in the architectural profession in Australia
- understand why women are under-represented at senior levels
- identify actual and perceived barriers to women architects’ promotion and progression
- understand the role of gender in structuring professional identity in architecture
- explain how gendered behaviours are enacted within specific workplaces
- examine the impact of women on practice and innovation in architecture
- better understand the social, economic, and architectural advantages of a gender-diverse workforce in architecture
- identify examples of good employment practice in architecture
progress so far


+++ Sep 2009, Initial meetings with Melinda Dodson
+++ Oct 2009, Institute signs off formal 'Letter of Agreement'
+++ Nov 2009, Application submitted to ARC

+++ June 2010, Announcement of ARC success
+++ July 2010, Began negotiations on Research contract Legal agreement
+++ Nov 2010, Institute funding contribution approved by National Council

+++ Jan 2011, Advertisement for PhD position
+++ Feb 2011, Ethics clearance approved by UQ
+++ Feb 2011, First meeting of full research team
+++ March 2011, Research contract Legal agreement signed off
+++ 1 April 2011, Official project commencement date

+++ July 2011, Appointment of PhD candidate Gill Matthewson
+++ July 2011, Appointment of Research Assistant Kirsty Volz
+++ August 2011, Karen Burns essay in Architecture Australia
+++ Nov 2011, PTW, BVN, Bates Smart case study startup meetings
+++ Nov 2011, Karen Burns discusses project on Radio National
+++ Dec 2011, Institute National Council meeting
scholarly outcomes

- case studies of 3 partners +
  Bates Smart, BVN, PTW
- PhD dissertation +
- edited book +
- scholarly articles +
- international conference +

special issue of +
Architectural Theory Review

genagement

policy
engagement
+ survey of women involved in architecture
+ public discussion and awareness-raising on the role and value of women architects
+ Industry forums, events, and presentations
+ specific outcomes for Industry partners
+ new national network for women in architecture
+ website associated with that group - resources, events, advocacy, consultation
+ website proposed to be launched at Institute conference May 2012
engagement

+ a draft policy on equity and diversity for the Institute

+ an Action Plan to implement this policy

+ Tools to encourage best practice in employment in architecture, including guides to practice, fact sheets etc

But how best to fully integrate and embrace equity policy?

policy
background on equity policy: terms and principles

Gender Equality: ‘The absence of discrimination on the basis of a person’s sex... the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between men and women, and the varying roles that they play. (MWIA 2001).

- Basis of Anti-Discrimination Legislation
- ‘Gender blindness’

Gender Equity: ‘The process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, this may necessitate measures to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a ‘level playing field’. (MWIA 2001).

- Basis of Equal Opportunity Legislation
- Basis of affirmative action initiatives
- The specific valuation of difference and diversity

Moving on From one Size Fits All: Towards gender mainstreaming in medicine, Australian Federation of Medical Women, 2004
background on equity policy: terms and principles

From equality to equity:
'It was assumed in early ideals of equality that if we treated people in the same way then similar individuals would have the same opportunities. This premise relies on a comparative assumption that two individuals are the same, that group characteristics such as sex, culture and religion can be considered separately from the individual and promotes conformity to a pre-defined 'normal' criteria that may be inherently biased towards one sex or culture.

It is now acknowledged that the premise of treating individuals similarly does not facilitate equal opportunity. It is apparent that to offer individuals the same opportunity to proceed through systems, their individual and group differences need to be embraced and incorporated into mainstream policy development. It is not enough for individuals to be judged the same at an entry point, each individual must have the same capacity to proceed past the same point with similar ease.'
comparisons

terms and principles

other professions

architecture institutes internationally

royal architectural institute of canada

american institute of architects

royal institute for british architects

CABE
policy in other professions in Australia

× **Medicine:**

× AMA, ‘Equal Opportunity in the Medical Work Force,’ 1995
× Australian Federation for Medical Women, ‘Bridging leadership Barriers’ project, 2008-2009

‘Women in medicine continue to experience professional barriers in their medical careers, because of their practice styles and lifecourses, that differ to those faced by their male colleagues.’

× **Law:**

× Australian Women Lawyers – advocacy, research, and representation

‘Equal opportunity in the legal profession is the way forward. It is not only socially, politically and legally correct, but makes sound economic sense. Treating employees with the flexibility and understanding EEO policy dictates will see your organisation reap the benefits.’
Engineering:

- Engineers Australia - Women in Engineering is integral, highly-funded, high level national group.
- Mission to ‘attract, retain, support, and celebrate’ women in the engineering profession
- Aggressive social media and education campaigns
- Networking and advocacy for women engineers

‘Our vision is that engineering becomes an inclusive profession which values, supports and celebrates the contributions of women in the engineering team.’

- Review of Engineers Code of Ethics - new Code specifically refers to diversity under the Demonstrate Integrity and Exercise Leadership clauses.

Policy in other professions in Australia
RIBA policy: ‘Employment Policy’ (not dated)

- ‘Architecture reflects the society that builds it, but it also affects the way that society develops. This means we need to recruit, retain and promote architects who can respond to the different needs and values of all sections of the community.’

- ‘The purpose of this policy is to encourage RIBA members as employers and employees to promote best practice in employment and to support members in fulfilling their professional obligations.’

First recommendation: to ‘Include employment matters in the Code of Conduct’


- Aim ‘to establish reasons for the high drop out rate of women architects’ and ‘to understand more fully the human experience behind the statistics.’

- Formal RIBA response found ‘opportunities for the Institute to take a policy lead’ on gender equity, including ‘a sustained policy of mainstreaming equal opportunities throughout all RIBA activities’ and ‘Supporting RIBA members as employers’ by ‘establish[ing] models of good employment practice, for both demonstration and inspiration’
policy in Architecture internationally


  × Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment – advisor to UK government 1999-2011

  ‘I want CABE’s equality scheme… to set [its] sights well beyond our legal obligations. I want us to lead the field in promoting equality in the design, management and maintenance of the built environment.’ Richard Simmons, CABE Chief Executive

  × Strategies include:

  × talking about equality and inclusion with inspiration and confidence and supporting others to do likewise

  × leading more pro-actively on these issues through our influencing role and through CABE activities

  × making connections between this agenda and sustainability, environmental equity and climate change

  × integrating these issues into all education … activities
policy in Architecture Internationally
Royal Architectural Institute of Canada

ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL
INSTITUTE OF CANADA

Major report commissioned in 2003

Recommendations include:

- Celebrate the achievements of women architects through exhibitions, books, etc.
- Establish a national equity policy
- Create sub-organizations that deal with women's issues
- Publish salary grids to help achieve pay equity
- Provide more flexibility for institutional requirements, including reduced fees, re-entry programs, part-time employment, etc.
- Encourage women to chair and be members of boards and committees
- Examine a broader definition of 'architect' to recognize those who are active in 'non-traditional' roles.

Consultations & Roundtables on
Women in Architecture in Canada

Submitted
December 19, 2003

This report has been assembled by
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Diversity Action Plan

National Associates Committee
Position Statement on Diversity:

'The AIA believes that diversity is a cultural ethos – a way of thinking or acting that fosters inclusion, enhancing our membership, our profession, and the quality of life in our communities. Embracing this culture of diversity, all programs and initiatives of the AIA and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious beliefs.'

Other AIA initiatives:

- Diversity and Inclusion Tools for Firms
- AIA Annual Women’s Leadership Development Summit
- Architect Barbie...
policy in Architecture Internationally
American Institute of Architects

2009–2013 AIA Diversity Action Plan

**Strategies**

- **Create the infrastructure for diversity management** that will allow the organization to not only increase representation but to maintain and manage diverse staff, leaders, students, and clients.
- **Promote a cultural change** by providing the tools and models that will enable the AIA's components, firms, and others to incorporate diversity and inclusion into all aspects of their operations.
- **Collaborate with others to improve the recruitment, education, training, promotion, and success of architects from diverse backgrounds and perspectives**. This will support the development of the pipeline of individuals entering and succeeding in the profession.

**Actions**

**2009**

1. Conduct an assessment of diversity management capability throughout the organization (including national and local components) to identify areas of opportunity for improvement.
2. Establish a Diversity Council drawing from the AIA Board and outside experts whose role is to advise and monitor the AIA’s efforts to increase diversity, inclusiveness, and representation.
3. Provide resources and training to make diversity management a core competency.
4. Explore and implement mutually beneficial collaborations with professional affinity groups (e.g., NIAA, Architects, American Indian Council Architects and Engineers, etc.).

**Metrics/Milestones**

Baseline scores for diversity management are established for National component.
All new board members receive at least one hour of diversity management training.
All leadership staff receive at least three hours of diversity management training.
Collaborative agreements with at least two affinity groups are established.

**2010**

1. Develop an agreed-upon performance standard for human resources and supplier policies at National, regional, and local components.
2. Work with collateral organizations and other partners to collect and report credible data on students and interns, and to describe the profession.
3. Create opportunities to educate the public and celebrate the work of underrepresented architects.
4. Collaborate with academic partners to advocate for changes that promote greater diversity, inclusiveness, and representation among students and the study of architecture.

**Metrics/Milestones**

75 percent of staffed components agree to and implement performance standards.
Data set and standards are developed to report 2009 data.
Research, development, and technical plan is completed for virtual archive.
The 2007–08 amount of scholarship grants to minority/disadvantaged students doubles.

**2011**

1. Collect and disseminate data on firms and academic programs that demonstrate performance consistent with AIA policies and objectives of diversity, inclusiveness, and representation.
2. Continue to build alliances with other disciplines in the design and construction industry to increase workforce development by collaborating on K–12, scholarship, mentoring, and internship programs.
3. Support effective mentoring at all stages of education, training, and career development.

**Metrics/Milestones**

Performance ratings improve on at least 80 percent of indicators compared to 2009 baseline on assessment of diversity management.
At least five articulation agreements are executed between community college(s) and degree program(s).

**2012–2013**

1. Update resources and training in response to current assessment of diversity management capability and identified opportunities for improvement.
2. Encourage partnerships between AIA National and local components and organizations with which the AIA does not have existing relationships to create programs for youth that encourage pursuit of careers in the architecture, design, and construction industry.
3. Promote development of high school-based programs offering design and construction curricula (e.g., replicate programs such as Charter High School for Architecture + Design (CHSAD) in Philadelphia, Design and Architecture High School in Miami, and others).

**Metrics/Milestones**

2013 performance ratings show improvement on at least 80 percent of indicators compared to 2011 assessment of diversity management.
At least 25 percent of architectural degree programs accept credits from community colleges.
from denial to inclusion?

Amanda Sinclair’s four ‘progressive phases of executive culture in dealing with women:’

Stage 1. Denial. The absence of women from the culture is not regarded as a problem or a core business issue.

Stage 2. Women’s difference is seen as the problem. Solution is framed as women adapting to the predefined (usually male) norms.

Stage 3. Incremental adjustments made to existing structures to incorporate women.

Stage 4. Organisation commits to a new culture. The exclusion of women is seen as a symptom of deeper problems requiring solutions that change the existing culture.

source: Moving on From one Size Fits All: Towards gender mainstreaming in medicine, Australian Federation of Medical Women, (2004)
Equity is not a ‘women’s issue.’ It is everyone’s concern.

Gender Mainstreaming: ‘The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is gender equality. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) agreed conclusions (1997:2).’
existing national Institute policies

Public Art Policy
Research Policy
Planning Reform Policy
Urban Design Policy
Heritage Policy

Safe Design Policy
Affordable Housing Policy
Sustainability Policy
Tertiary Education of Architects

Universal Access Policy
Indigenous Housing Policy
Environment Policy
Government Architect Policy

Equitable Client / Architect Agreements Policy
Registration and Regulation of Architects Policy

Policies addressing social justice issues

Policies addressing internal architecture culture
existing national Institute policies

- Public Art Policy
- Research Policy
- Planning Reform Policy
- Urban Design Policy

- Safe Design Policy
- Affordable Housing Policy
- Sustainability Policy
- Tertiary Education of Architects

- Universal Access Policy
- Indigenous Housing Policy
- Environment Policy

- Equitable Client / Architect Agreements Policy
- Registration and Regulation of Architects Policy

Policy for the promotion of equity and diversity in the architectural profession

Other initiatives towards social justice

- Heritage Policy
- Government Architect Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan (VIC Chapter)
- State Chapter initiatives towards gender equity
models for integrating equity policy

Basic model:

× a policy, action plan, and toolkit for the Institute and Australian architectural profession to improve equity, diversity and the retention, advancement and recognition of women architects

Comprehensive model:

× policy, action plan and toolkit as above, plus review and reform of all Institute activities where equity principles could be enshrined.

‘action plans must consist of an equal opportunity policy statement, an analysis of the current work force, identification of problem areas, the establishment of goals and timetables for increasing employment opportunities, specific action-oriented programs to address problem areas, support for community action programs, and the establishment of an internal audit and reporting system.’


×× a preliminary review identifies clear areas for reform...
Equity principles could be embraced in existing Institute programs:
- Practice Notes / Acumen
- PALS syllabus
- CPD events and seminars
- Education programs
- Statement of Professional Standards (prior to Code of Conduct)

Equity principles could be embraced in Institute public activities:
- Institute conference
- Institute website
- Venice Biennale
- Institute speakers’ series
- Institute awards
- Institute newsletters

Equity principles could be ‘mainstreamed’ at the Institute:
- Opportunity to become a leader in advocating equity principles
- Integrated into Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan
- High level representation
- Advocacy to stakeholders and other professional groups eg BEMP
- Measurable outcomes, targets, and quotas throughout
- Regular audit to ensure targets are being met
models for integrating equity policy

Comprehensive model:

× policy, action plan and toolkit as above, plus review and reform of all Institute activities where equity principles could be enshrined.

** no additional cost to Institute
** all recommendations research-based, following best practice
** offers the profession ‘carrots’ more than ‘sticks’
** bring architecture into line with other professions
** bring Australian Institute into line with international norms
** Institute will be seen as progressive, ethical and exemplary
** ‘Setting our house in order’ (moral/ethical case)
** high return on Institute investment in this project
** hiring an external consultant for the same task very costly
** much greater impact, effect and integration of policy
** ultimately saves money for practice (business case)
** improved gender equality in architecture (human rights case)