

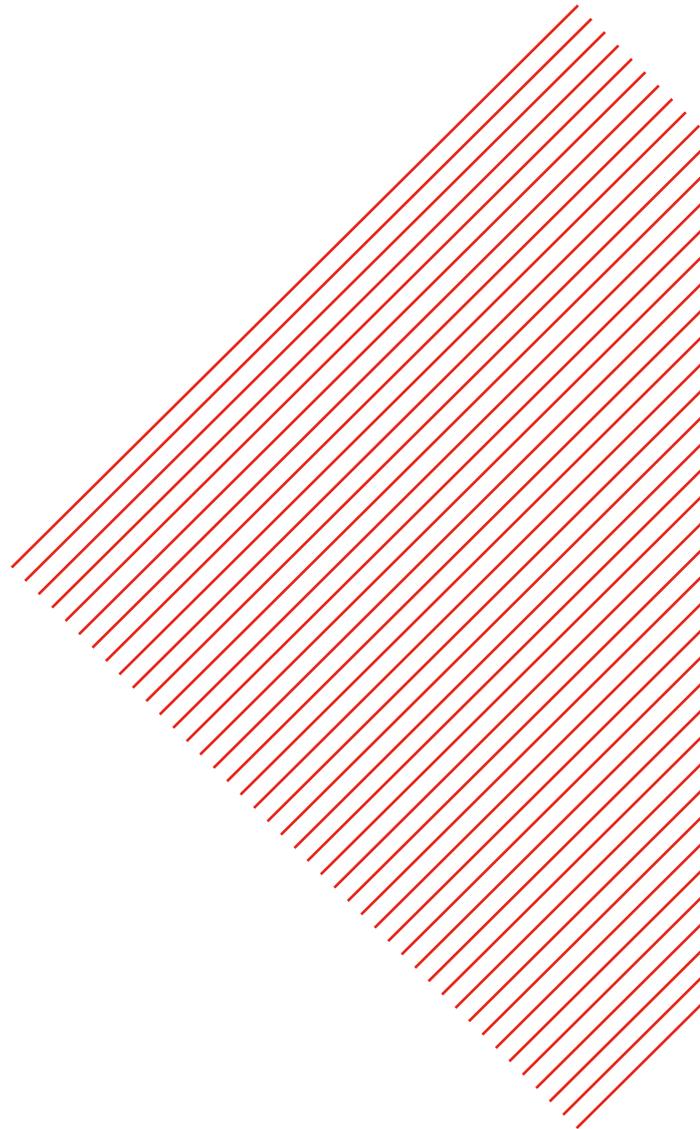


**Association of Consulting Architects**  
The Business of Architecture

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# Strategic Plan

**2018–2023**



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## About the ACA

The Association of Consulting Architects (ACA) leads the discussion on business matters in architecture in Australia and is the key body representing architectural employers in the country.

The ACA was founded in 1987 as the national peak body representing the interests of employers in industrial matters. It now addresses the 'business of architecture' more broadly, with industrial relations as a vital core of ACA activity.

The ACA helps architectural firms navigate the changing world of practice by providing regular advice and information on business and employment matters, by promoting awareness of and discussion about business issues, and by advocating for better business practices and legislative frameworks.

Through this leadership, support and advocacy, the ACA helps to ensure the long-term health and viability of the profession, and thereby supports the important contribution that architecture makes to our cities, environments, communities and cultures.

The ACA has branches in all states. Activities, initiatives and advocacy are framed by the Strategic Plan and national co-operation is facilitated by the National Executive Committee.

ACA members cover the spectrum of practice sizes – from sole practitioners to large practices – and include a range of business types, from individuals to partnerships and companies.



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## Introduction

The ACA Strategic Plan 2018–2023 sets out an updated and refreshed vision, mission and strategy for the Association of Consulting Architects over the next five years. It builds on the earlier strategic plan, developed in 2012, and will guide the development of the ACA in the years ahead.

It will help ensure that the ACA remains relevant to members and engaged in broad business conversation well into the future.

This document also updates members as to the status and success of the first strategic plan. We welcome feedback from members at any time and look forward to expanding the influence and capability of the ACA further.

Kieran Wong RAIA  
ACA National President

## Background

The Association of Consulting Architects Australia (ACA) was founded in 1987 to act as the national peak body representing the interests of employers in industrial matters impacting on the Business of Architecture.

The ACA has successfully represented the architectural industry in this role for thirty years, during which time it has appeared before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and Fair Work Australia, and delivered a number of significant milestones including the Technical Services – Architects – Award 2000 and the revised modern award, the Architects Award 2010.

In 2011, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ACA undertook a review of the Association and established a Strategic Plan to guide its next phase. The plan was released in 2012 following an extensive process of member surveys and committee inputs.

Since then the ACA has grown in both membership and capability, continuing to represent the profession on matters relating to the Business of Architecture, while providing an expanding suite of resources, tools, training, network opportunities and advocacy.

In 2017, the NEC met to review the Strategic Plan and to discuss the future growth of the organisation. The members of the NEC were pleased to discover that many aspects of the Strategic Plan had been delivered beyond the expectations of the original document. Going forward, any gaps will be pursued by the ACA as a matter of priority.

### Strategic Plan 2012–2017

The ACA has achieved the following since 2012:

- Substantial membership growth across all branches
- Increased income and cash-at-hand at branch and national level
- Increased recognition by government and industry as the leading voice for business matters in the industry
- Increased investment in industrial relations advice, legal and HR consultancies to support member resources
- ACA branches representing each state and territory with Executive Officers at each branch
- Increased collaboration between branches at both committee and Executive Officer level
- Unified membership fees, structure and services
- Expanded training and CPD offering through an ongoing webinar series
- Business-focused on-line tools and resources, such as the Time Cost Calculator, Salary Calculator and pro-forma contracts/guides
- Created and expanded the ACA website platform as the key member resource and advocacy tool
- Increased advocacy and influence as a voice for the Business of Architecture.

## What Next?

The ACA National Executive Committee is committed to building upon the success of the past five years by developing innovative ways to engage with our members and support their business interests.

Our focus for the next five years is to:

- Develop a clear understanding of the market segmentation of our membership, enabling us to design and produce resources and tools that are targeted to the specific phases of practice and professional life
- Identify and address the gaps in our current resources, knowledge base and tools through a series of cohesive notes on the Business of Architecture, which will be available as updated and dynamic content from our digital platforms
- Continue to build support systems for the operational and development requirements of the ACA through clear leadership and appropriate resources at both a national and state level
- Continue to develop strategic and meaningful relationships with State and Federal Government, enabling us to advocate for the profession on behalf of our members
- Build on the effectiveness of our communications to include an improved website layout, updated social media presence and targeted emails
- Continue to build and diversify our membership base, ensuring that practices of all scales seek the benefits offered by our organisation
- Strengthen our alliances with complementary organisations, such as Consult Australia.

# ACA Strategic Plan 2018–2023

## Our Organisation

The vision of the ACA is to enable a sustainable business environment for those practicing architecture in Australia, facilitating their contribution to excellent design of the built environment.

### Mission

Our mission is to ensure that the business environment in which we practice architecture is fair and equitable, and supports good design.

The five pillars of our mission are to:

1. Be recognised as the key industrial body representing architectural practices to government and other organisations
2. Raise the awareness of architectural practice and the positive role that it plays in improving our built, natural and social environment
3. Respond to the challenges of a changing and dynamic environment by remaining agile and relevant
4. Research, review and communicate the metrics of architectural business using best practice industry benchmarking
5. Be the first point of reference for operational issues affecting architectural practices, such as employment agreements, redundancy, industrial relations, work health and safety, standards, contracts and agreements.

### Core Values

The ACA is a member-based not-for-profit organisation that:

- Reflects the business interest of its members
- Engages with its members to identify and solve issues
- Maintains its volunteer ethos and spirit of sharing
- Responds with flexibility and is efficient in its execution
- Ensures all funds raised through both sponsorship or subscriptions benefit our members.

### Structure

The federated model under which the ACA operates allows each branch both financial and operational autonomy, enabling each to operate effectively and generate income through sponsorship, events and sound financial management.

The ACA is committed to maintaining and expanding its volunteer grass-roots culture. As such, the ACA does not intend to evolve into a bureaucratic structure typified by many member organisations. Critical to this model is the need to put the ACA members at the Association's core and build a framework that delivers what members want, need and value.

The structure of the ACA has developed to suit its member-based model, representative of the national- and state-based functions, and reflective of the responsibilities allocated to various committees.

### Approach

This Strategic Plan, in concert with the organisations values and mission, provides a framework through which the ACA is able to make consistent decisions about its activities and how best to direct resources.

Any strategy or action that is deemed to be inconsistent with our strategy, values or mission must be resolved at the NEC level.

### Market + Audience

The target market for membership is architectural businesses of all scales in each state and territory across Australia.

Our audience is business owners and executive staff, including practice managers, human resources personnel and future leaders.

The target market for sponsorship is businesses that provide products and services relevant to the practice of architecture and/ or the construction industry, and whose values align with those of the ACA.

The critical mantra of the ACA is to be 'relevant, responsive and reliable'.

## Our Offer

### Economic Engine

The ACA's key economic drivers are to:

- Align interests to those of architectural businesses
- Place resources where they add genuine value
- Take a strategic view on funding, including sponsorship
- Operate within its financial means
- Provide an annual consolidated audit that accounts for the national federation of State ACA Branches, using cloud-based IT software. The purpose of the audit is to provide transparency to members and ensure cost/time efficiencies.

### Principles in Practice

The ACA operates according to the following principles:

- Membership fees are to be shared between Branches and National at an agreed level
- Income from national sponsorship and online tools to be held at a national level, with an agreed percentage to be allocated to all Branches (depending on achievement against membership retention and growth goals)
- State Branch event income and related sponsorship income of events to remain with the relevant State Branch.

### Membership Engagement

The ACA will engage with members in the following ways:

- ACA shall address day-to-day issues and be seen as the 'source' or 'channel' of up-to-date advice on industrial relations, and matters affecting the business of our members
- ACA shall be the industry thought leader on strategic issues affecting the Business of Architecture
- ACA shall have a structured process for submitting issues / ideas
- ACA shall have a structured process for assessing issues / ideas and responding to the member(s) who submitted the issue / idea
- ACA shall continue in its role as the only Employer Respondent for the Architects Award to Fair Work Australia.

### Communication + Marketing

To deliver on its vision and key metrics, the ACA must have in place an effective and efficient communication program.

This program sits at the heart of a vital campaign to grow the membership of the ACA and ensure that existing members are engaged, active and positive. The key strategies for communications and marketing include the following:

- Establish a unified national membership database
- Standardise key demographic information
- Develop a segmented communication program for relevant audiences of the ACA with a focus on value and relevance rather than frequency
- Undertake regular forums / events / CPD training
- Update the current Social Media Strategy
- Maintain the relevance and capability of the website, online tools, documents and information services.

### Member Offer

The ACA will provide access to resources, tools and membership services through a contemporary, relevant and easy-to-access digital platform.

Nationally, the ACA is responsible for the following:

- The provision of feedback on industrial awards and employment agreements
- The development of online business tools and information including benchmarking and documentation
- The development of business notes and advice
- Thought leadership on business matters in architecture
- National advocacy and strategic partnerships
- The maintenance of an up-to-date and easily navigated website
- Communication initiatives, such as a social media platform.

Branches are responsible for the following:

- The development of branch-based annual program of events, workshops and roundtables
- Communication of state-based events and activities to our members through targeted emails
- The development of opportunities for networking and connections between members
- Member recruitment
- Timely responses to member enquiries
- State advocacy and the development of strategic partnerships, including state-specific sponsorship.

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