Association of Consulting Architects
The Business of Architecture

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ACA Architects Time Cost Calculator

The ACA Time/Cost Calculator will be released to members later this month. We provide an overview of what you can expect and how the calculator can be used.

The ACA Time/Cost Calculator provides a vital tool to assist practices in assessing the time and associated costs involved in providing an appropriate level of service for a broad range of building types. This provides a fundamental knowledge base for practices when developing fee proposals and budgets.

The calculator can be used by practices of all sizes for a wide range of building types, and accommodates a range of project phases. It enables practices to tailor this information and knowledge to the particulars of their office.

The calculator will mean that architects are better informed about the real time and costs associated with projects, and will, therefore be in a better position to negotiate fees that represent adequate time and resources to complete commissions to an appropriate standard. This is to the benefit of all.

The Process

The Time/Cost Calculator provides a four-step process:

- **Steps 1 and 2** allow practices to calculate their office overheads and office variables – this means that the cost calculations for each project are specific to the particulars of the individual practice. The data entered for Step 1 and 2 remain in place over time, and can be readily edited as practice circumstances change.

- **Step 3** identifies the estimated range of hours required for the project, based on multiple sets of historic data for different project types.

- **Step 4** identifies a charge-out rate for the project based on the information supplied about the practice and the project. Individual practices must then make their own adjustments in relation to project hours – based on specific knowledge of the expertise and experience within the practice. A proposed fee is calculated from all this information.

Access

The Time/Cost Calculator has two levels of access:

- **Practice Directors**
- Directors have access to all steps. This enables them to enter information about office overheads and variables into Step 1 and 2, as well as completing the project specific information for Steps 3 and 4.

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- **Project Architects**
- Project architects have access to Steps 2, 3 and 4 only. This allows them to calculate time and costs for particular projects, without being privy to the office's financial data.

The Architects Time/Cost Calculator is an ACA member resource, and will be available to all members at no cost.

The ACA will also give non-members access to the calculator for a three-month period. We hope that all Australian architects will take this opportunity to explore the calculator. We encourage non-members to join us as ACA members, so that we can continue developing outstanding resources for the business of architecture.

Releasing the Calculator

The ACA Time/Cost Calculator will be released through a staged process, branch-by-branch, early October. The trial version will be available to non-members from later in the year.

We hope you will find it useful!

Credits

Paul Viney led the development of the ACA Architects Time/Cost Calculator on behalf of ACA – Vic/Tas, and Jeff Beach of Big Dog Software built it. The ACA thanks Paul and Jeff for the enormous commitment they have made to this project, which will become a highly effective tool for architects across Australia.