



Association of Consulting Architects
The Business of Architecture

Architects in the NT – a view from the census

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an ACA resource

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ARCHITECTS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY A VIEW FROM CENSUS DATA

Prepared by Gill Matthewson

This report is an extension of the ACA State of the Profession research project, led by John Held and Sue Phillips of ACA – SA and funded through a grant from the Architectural Practice Board of South Australia. Because of the small number of architects in the territory, some of the analysis completed for the large states is not possible for the Northern Territory.

Census data

This report is based on the analysis of customised data about those who identified themselves as architects (occupation code Architect, ANZSCO 232111) in the Northern Territory in the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics Censuses of Population and Housing.

Census data includes all those who describe their occupation as 'architect', whether or not they are registered or members of professional associations.¹ Because of this, Census figures are more inclusive than other counts of professional participation and, internationally, researchers in architecture consider them to be 'reasonably accurate' data for the architecture workforce.²

Overall findings

The report finds the following:

- Overall, the population of architects in the Northern Territory has grown between 2001 and 2011 Censuses, but constitutes a very small proportion of the country's architects.
- The age profile of architects has changed over the ten years for the country and territory; but the territory shows a decrease in younger architects, while the country shows an increase.
- The Northern Territory has a higher proportion of women architects than the rest of the country, but with fewer than 100 architects in the territory this does not constitute a major trend.
- In 2011, fewer architects seemed to be working long hours than in the past, but in the Northern Territory architects work longer hours than those in the rest of the country.
- Architects are increasingly employees rather than employers.

Detailed findings

Number of architects

As expected, the population of architects fluctuates across the three Censuses, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Number of architects

Year	Northern Territory	All Australia	NT % of Aus
2001	64	11,442	0.6%
2006	58	13,285	0.4%
2011	81	14,973	0.5%
2001 to 2011 growth	27%	33%	

Both the territory and the country show increases in the number of architects for the ten-year period; however, in the Northern Territory that growth was lower and also fluctuated considerably. In part, this volatility is a result of the very small number of architects in the territory (fewer than 100), which constitutes less than 1% of the nation’s architects.

Perhaps a more important figure is how those straight numbers of architects relate to the overall population, which has, of course, also increased between Censuses. Dividing the number of architects into the total population gives the number of architects per 100,000 people, shown in Figure 1:

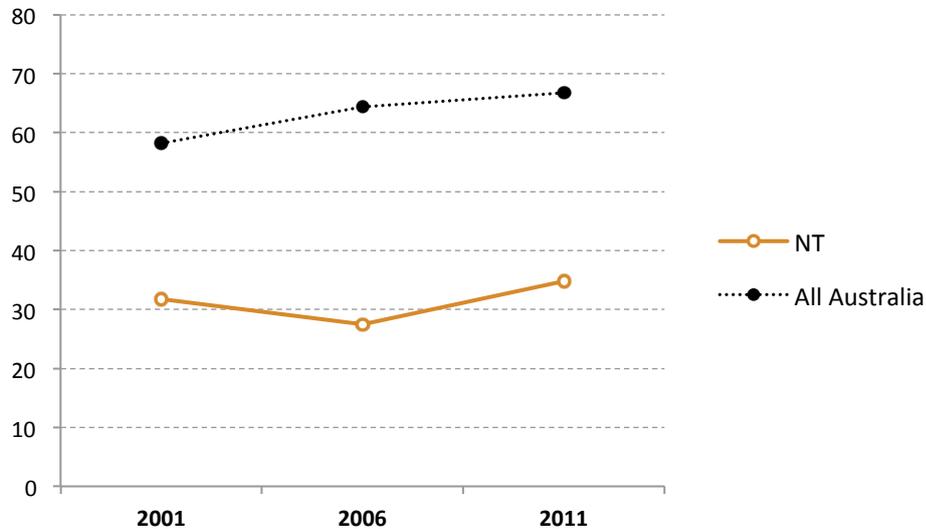


Figure 1: Number of architects for every 100,000 people³

By this measure, there was more subdued growth for the country than that shown in Table 1, but with Australia still supporting 15% more architects per capita in 2011 than it did in 2001. The Northern Territory’s growth was less over the same period. Figure 1 also shows that, taken overall, the territory has significantly fewer architects per head of population compared to all of Australia, barely half the national rate.

The age profile of architects

Figure 2 shows the distribution of architects by age across the three Censuses, comparing the Northern Territory with all of Australia. Because of the very small numbers in the territory there is considerable variation between NT and the country and within the territory from Census to Census, and for some age groups there are none in the territory.

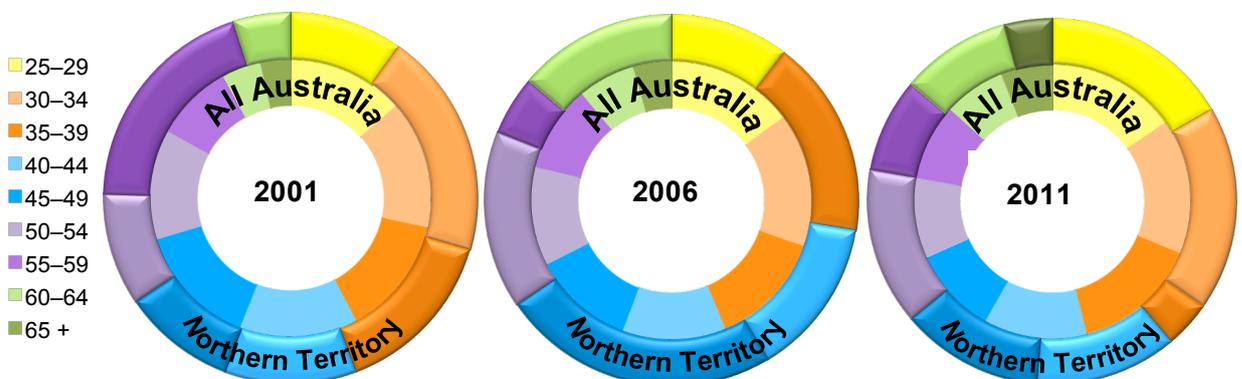


Figure 2: Architects by age group

The first point to note is that the proportion of architects under the age of 40 increased over the ten-year period for all Australia, but declined overall for the Northern Territory (depicted in yellow and oranges in Figure 2). The growth of this age group nationwide is not surprising given that the number of architecture graduates in the country increased by 40% from 2000 to 2010.⁴ However, the Northern Territory does not have a full architecture school – the Charles Darwin University in Darwin offers only an undergraduate degree and graduates must move to another university to complete their studies.

The second point to note is that the proportion of architects over the age of 60 (in greens) increased for the territory and the country. In 2001 architects of this age were 8% of the Australian architect population; by 2011 they comprised 13%.

Gender is a factor in the number of architects by age group. Table 2 details the increasing numbers of women in the architecture workforce over the ten-year period. The Northern Territory in 2011 exceeds the national figures for the percentage of women, but with small numbers, that figure is likely to be volatile.

Table 2: Number of architects by gender

Year	Northern Territory				All Australia			
	Male	Female	Total	% Female	Male	Female	Total	% Female
2001	55	9	64	14%	8,987	2,296	11,442	20%
2006	42	16	48	28%	10,199	3,086	13,285	23%
2011	54	27	81	33%	10,828	4,144	14,973	28%

Hours of work

Long hours are generally considered endemic in architecture, but this is a pattern that appears to have changed over time. Figure 3 shows the proportion of architects working particular hours. The red bands indicate a work week in excess of 40 hours and the blue and green bands are for those working part-time (less than 35 hours a week); the orange/yellow bands are for standard working hours of 35–40 hours a week.

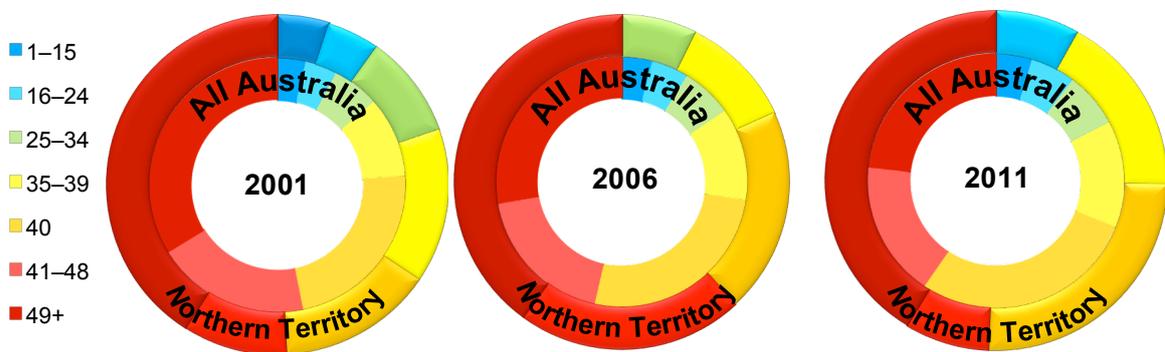


Figure 3: Hours per week worked

There is a strong trend visible across the Censuses for the nation. In 2001, more than half of all architects worked in excess of 40 hours a week, with more than a third of all architects working in excess of 48 hours a week (such hours are defined as 'long' in employment literature). However, by 2011, this proportion had dropped: around 40% reported working more than 40 hours a week, and the group that worked more than 48 hours a week had dropped to under a quarter. The Northern Territory has a higher proportion of architects working longer hours; however, the small number of architects in the territory are likely to be distorting these proportions.

The changing demographic of architects is likely to be contributing to this shift nationwide. Figure 4 shows the difference between men and women for hours worked for all Australia.⁵

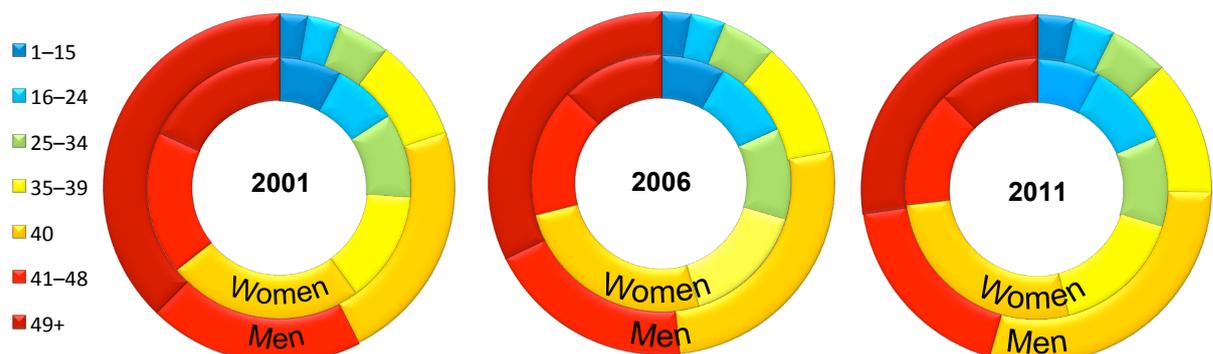


Figure 4: Hours per week worked, by gender, all Australia

The dramatic difference between men and women in terms of hours worked is a result of the wider societal pattern whereby mothers are much more likely to reduce their hours to accommodate children. Nonetheless, the drop-off in the proportion of those working in excess of 40 hours a week noted in Figure 5 is still visible in Figure 6 for both men and women. This is a significant shift for men to working standard rather than long hours, given that the proportion of men working part-time increased only slightly over the ten-year period (11% of men worked part-time in 2001 and 13% in 2011).

Employment situation

The Census asks for information on whether someone is an employee, employer or an independent operator (such as a sole practitioner or contractor). In the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, the latter were termed ‘own account worker’. In the 2011 Census, two new terms were used: ‘Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises’ and ‘Owner managers of incorporated enterprises’. This distinction has affected some of the information presented in Table 3 and graphically in Figure 5.

Table 3: Architects by employment situation

	Northern Territory			All Australia		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
Employee	38	30	53	6,451	7,781	9,323
Own account worker	11	11	7	2,768	1,638	2,102
Employer	12	17	18	2,070	3,701	3,394

Over the ten-year period, the proportion of those who are employees has steadily increased from 57% to 63% of the architect population in Australia. To an extent this would be expected given the increasing proportion of younger people in the workforce, as seen in Figure 2. Northern Territory fluctuates dramatically across the period with a marked increase in employed architects in 2011.

Income

Income information was sought for all full-time architecture workers; the Census gathers this in terms of income per week. Figure 5 gives the information for 2006 and 2011 (2001 is omitted because the income ranges differ from the later two Censuses).

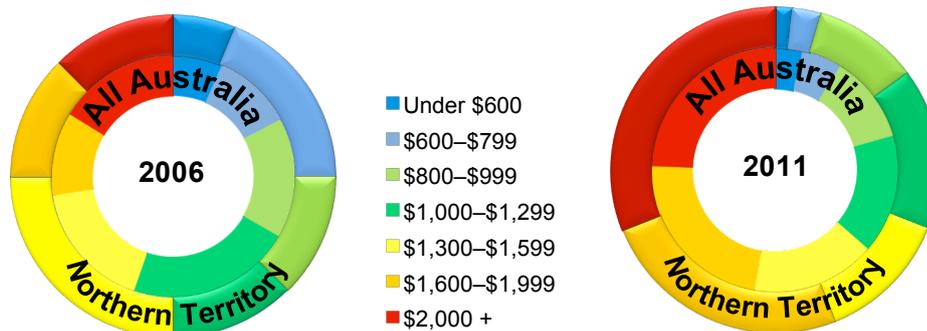


Figure 5: Architects by income

Figure 5 demonstrates how small numbers lead to great variability in percentage figures. In the Northern Territory in 2006, architects appeared to earn much less on average than the national averages. But by 2011, the reverse was the case, with more earning more than \$1,600 a week (orange plus red segments). Income, of course, varies with age. Figure 6 shows the breakdown by age for 2011.⁶

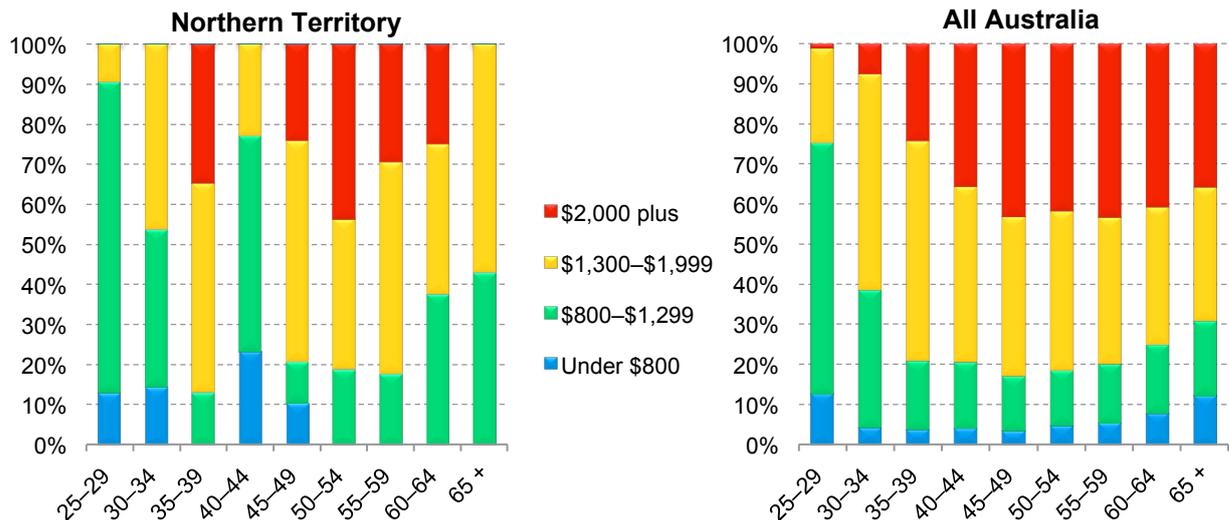


Figure 6: Proportion of age group in earnings brackets by age, 2011

Australia-wide, income increases with age, peaking in the 45–59 age bands. In the Northern Territory, the same pattern holds, but because of the smaller numbers of architects the figures jump around and there are some architects in the 35–39 bracket earning in the higher bracket.

Summary

This report has explored what might be read from data about architects from three Censuses for the Northern Territory compared to the rest of Australia. Data such as this helps articulate and indicate broad patterns.

The first of these patterns is that architects are increasing their presence in the community in relative numbers, including in the Northern Territory, although the territory has less than 1% of the nation’s architects.

Architects are increasingly employees and employers rather than independent workers. This may reflect the increasing complexity of buildings and the need for teams to work on them.

Overall, Northern Territory’s architects constitute a small profession that appears to be growing, but demonstrates patterns different to Australia as a whole primarily due to small numbers. With fewer than 100 architects in the territory, the categories divided by age or income become very small and percentages in particular can present quite distorted pictures.

¹ Indeed, each Census includes a very small number of 15–19 year olds who identify themselves as architects – at that age they are unlikely to meet any acceptable notion of an architect. However, this number of people is very small.

² Robert Gutman, *Architectural Practice: A Critical View* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 23; Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred, *Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 3.

³ Population data from ABS, ‘Estimated Residents Population, State and Territories’, *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 2013, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3101.0Jun%202014?OpenDocument>

⁴ There were 704 graduates in 2000 and 975 in 2010. Numbers from *Architecture Schools of Australasia* (Barton, ACT: Australian Institute of Architects National Office), 2001 and 2012 editions.

⁵ State and territory data not shown because there are relatively small numbers of women in each state or territory, which would tend to distort the proportions.

⁶ Income brackets have been amalgamated because small numbers in a category can cause distortions.