



Association of Consulting Architects Australia

Strategic Plan

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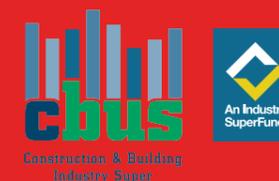


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Acknowledgement

The Association of Consulting Architects would like to acknowledge and thank the generous support of Cbus Construction & Building Industry Superannuation.



1. Introduction

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 over 25 years, including appearing before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and Fair Work Australia and has delivered a number of significant milestones including the Technical Services – Architects – Award 2000 and the revised modern award, Architects Award 2010.

In 2011 the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ACA decided to undertake a review of the Association and establish a Strategic Plan for the next phase of the Association's future.

To prepare the Strategic Plan the ACA engaged MYP Corporation to conduct a review of the ACA's structure, offer, operational framework and financial arrangements. The process included:

- Surveying members and non-members nationally
- Conducting workshops with all State Branches
- Facilitating a planning session with the NEC
- Preparation of a Strategic Review presentation
- Presentation by State Presidents of the Strategic Review to State Branch committees
- Preparation of this Strategic Plan document

The plan was adopted by the NEC in 2012 and the ACA is now working to implement it at both National and State level.

This document sets out the Strategic Plan and the work to be undertaken in Phase 1 of its implementation, being 2012–2014.



2. Survey

The key finding from the ACA's survey of its members, and the industry at large, was that there is a nation wide desire for an organisation solely focused on addressing the business interests of the architectural industry and that, given the ACA's track record on industrial matters, it was the appropriate body to provide that service.

After discussion with all State Branches the National Executive Committee, at its meeting in April 2012, agreed to accept this responsibility and to proceed towards developing the ACA into a broader based business focused organisation, whilst still maintaining its existing industrial role.

The following document is a summary of the issues addressed and decisions made to implement that decision.



3. Vision & Mission

Vision

The **vision** of the ACA is to represent the business interests of those practising architecture in Australia.

Mission

Our **mission** is to ensure the business of architecture is best positioned to make profits, without undue risk. The four pillars of our mission are to:

1. Research, review and communicate the metrics of architectural business, utilising best practice industry benchmarking;
2. Be recognised as the key industrial spokesperson representing the architectural profession at National and State levels of Government;
3. Advocate proactively on behalf of the profession to empower the business of architecture as a key role in the formation of our built environment;
4. Be the first point of reference for key business issues. For example: Employment Contracts, Redundancy, Industrial Relations, OHS, Standards and Contracts (namely, AS 4122; Sub-Contractor Agreements).

Mantra

To be relevant, responsive and reliable.

Intention

The thought leader on strategic issues affecting the business of architecture.

4. Core Values

The ACA is a member based Not-For-Profit organisation that:

- Reflects the business interests of its members
- Engages its members in identifying and solving issues
- Maintains its volunteer ethos and spirit of sharing
- Is flexible to respond and efficient in its execution
- Ensures all funds raised through either sponsorship or subscriptions flows back 100% to benefit its members

5. Strategic Objectives & Key Performance Indicators

In Phase 1 of the implementation of the Strategic Plan the ACA has limited its key performance criteria to 4 deliverables:

- Ensure that Architectural business owners and managers in Australia are aware of the ACA, for both its role and what it offers to members
- Grow our membership by 100% over 2 years
- Be recognised by Government and aligned industries as the representative voice of architectural businesses
- Secure adequate funding to enable the ACA to deliver on its vision and services

6. Structure

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 is to be developed to suit its member based model, representative of the national and state based functions and reflective of the responsibilities allocated to various committees. Existing staff will be integrated into the new structure and new executive positions will be created at both state and national level.

The ACA’s aim is to have an office and salaried officer in each State and to have the ACA staff work collectively on both state and national issues. The longer term goal is to appoint a National CEO.

5.1 Organisation Model

The diagram below illustrates the principles of the ACA’s organisational model in the style of a **National Federation**

- Allowing *flexibility* within a structure
- Offering State and National core services
- Having a *methodology* for addressing key strategic or operational issues at State or National level
- Having permanent State and National committees
- Implementing short term specific issue taskforces (a standard process with a brief, terms of reference and deliverables)

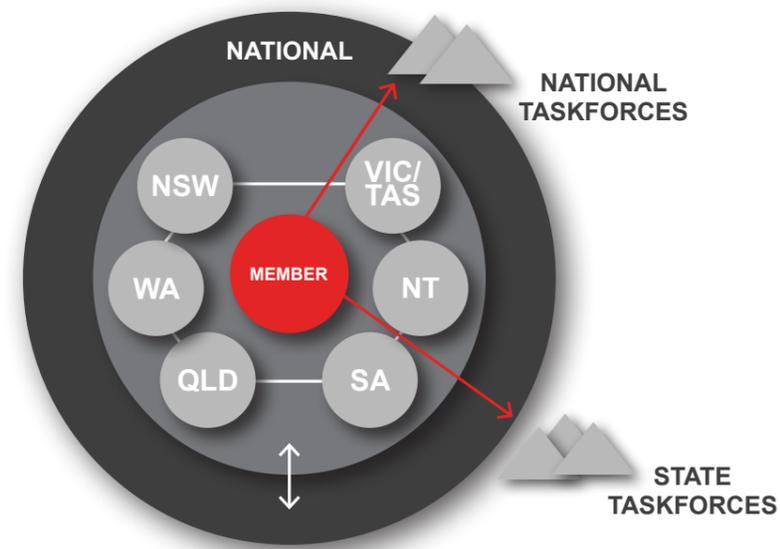


Figure 1. Organisational Model

7. Business Model

Defining the business model for the ACA enables it to consistently make decisions around what it will or will not do and where to best direct resources. It provides a framework for the NEC, State Branch Committees and executive staff.

If undertaking a strategy or action is inconsistent with the model, it should be resolved at the NEC level.

The core elements of the business model include:

7.1 Market

- The target market for membership is Architectural business
- The target market for communication about the ACA and membership is the business owner and manager (including practice manager and future leader) of Architectural business

7.2 Economic Engine

ACA's key principles are:

- Alignment of interests to those of architectural businesses
- Place resources where they add genuine value
- Take a strategic view on funding
- Operate within its means
- To provide one annual consolidated audit and account for the national federation of State ACA Branches, utilising 'cloud' based IT software for transparency to members, and cost / time efficiencies

7.3 Principles in Practice

- Member fees are to be shared between State Branches and National at an agreed level
- Income from national sponsorships and online tools to be held at national level, with an agreed percentage to be allocated to all State 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

7.4 Engagement Model

- ACA's critical mantra is to be "relevant, responsive and reliable"
- ACA shall address day-to-day issues and be seen as the "source" or "channel"
- 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 those who submitted
- ACA shall have a structured process for appointing taskforces and establishing terms of reference, budgets, reporting and communication of outcomes
- ACA shall continue in its role as the only Employer Respondent for the Architects Award to Fair Work Australia

8. Communications & Marketing

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

This program is at the heart of building 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:

1. Establish one national database with each State Branch responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their State Branch information
2. Standardise key demographics (member organisation and contacts, non-member and contacts, supplier contacts, alliance contacts etc).
3. Develop a communication program for relevant audiences of the ACA
 - eg newsletter, alerts, twitters etc
 - Focus on value and relevance rather than frequency
4. Undertake regular forums / events in each State
5. Develop and implement a Social Media Strategy
6. Upgrade the website, offer online tools, documents and information services and commercialise the offering on the website

9. Member Offer

The ACA will focus on its existing core services and other valuable services that could be delivered within realistic financial constraints. The Phase 1 offering is to be provided under the banner of – Inspire and deliver within constraints.

National	State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial awards and advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events, workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercialise online business tools and information including benchmarking and documentation (free or reduced cost to members and full-price to non-members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship builder (connecting face-to-face)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business information and notes of advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member recruitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information channel (direct enquiries to quality information source) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State level advocacy and strategic relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thought leadership through taskforce programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National level advocacy and strategic relationships 	

10. Finance & Administration

To secure the necessary resources for the ACA to execute the Strategic Plan, a number of structural adjustments will need to be made to the funding relationships between the ACA and its members and between the National and State Branches.

10.1 Subscription Structure

The ACA shall:

- Develop a new national subscription model
- Develop a corporate partner model for major practices
- Standardise all membership subscriptions across the country
- Offer monthly payment options (direct debit) as well as annual

10.2 Administration

The National and State Branch offices shall have discrete but complementary roles. The broad areas of responsibility are defined below.

National	State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial administration and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event management and sponsorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership renewals and administrative communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member recruitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National database management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State based communication and social media program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National communication and social media program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Branch committee reporting and compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National committee reporting and compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online services management 	

10.3 Budgets

- Over the term of this plan the financial structure will be significantly amended
- Initial budget to be determined once first 12 months strategies agreed
- National Executive Committee to develop longer term budgets after first 12 months

11. Strategic Industry Priorities

As part of its Member Offer, the ACA is committed to being relevant on the significant issues impacting the “business of architecture”.

Following workshops with all State Branches and the NEC, the following initiatives were short listed for consideration as the initial taskforces.

1. Online services delivery
2. National sponsorships
3. Leadership of IPD and BIM
4. Project procurement by Government
5. Architectural contract conditions
6. Communication
7. Project time and fee analysis
8. Benchmarking
9. Salary calculations
10. Education of Architects

In addition to National taskforces, the ACA shall have a standing committee on industrial relations matters. The ACA shall also maintain representation on key industry bodies, such as the Australian Construction Industry Forum (ACIF) and the Built Environment Design Professions (BEDP), and shall form allegiances and identify methodologies for collaboration with other key industry groups and equivalent organisations in Australia and overseas.

12. Action Plan - Phase 1

Issue / Strategy	Action
Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft plan document
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branch Presidents to present strategic review to members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback of final amendments to MYP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of plan
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release / launch of plan to members, non-members, industry and Government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback and report on the progress of Strategic Plan over the first 12 month period (within 15 months)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the Constitution so that it reflects the intentions and structure of the strategic plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the value of incorporating the ACA as part of the constitutional and structural reforms and how it will impact our legal obligations with Fair Work Australia
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the framework and supporting systems and processes for the national federated operating structure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the infrastructure (including processes, document templates and funding mechanisms) to establish National and State based taskforces to address key issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop position descriptions for the ACA key staff and appoint the CEO
Communications & Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that each State Branch has access to key staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish one national database/Customer Relationship Management system (including members and targets, future leaders and practice managers, alliances etc)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national communication program (with flexibility for tailored information to States or target sectors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide national event management infrastructure to allow for State and national events/programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a social media strategy (target most relevant option first – possibly LinkedIn)
Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the website and offer online tools and information services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sponsorship program for National and State levels
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and deliver tools that can be commercialised in the online space
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the business support “hot line” service and service providers. Identify other services that can be offered through this information channel

13. Background Information

Finance & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national subscription model and manage the transition (including payment options, large practice arrangements and revenue sharing between National and State Branches)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document the specific management and administration functions of the National Office and the State Branches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one centralised National set of accounts and audit, consolidating all ACA accounts for the Annual General Meeting and reporting to all members

13.1 Customer & Staff Survey Outcomes

Member and non-member surveys were undertaken and the key issues arising from each survey are listed below:

Member Survey Findings

- A strong interest in ongoing engagement
- There are issues around value proposition
- There is little knowledge around broader offering (seen as one issue organisation)
- Members see value in additional services that support them in the business of architecture
- There are communication challenges (web site not used or relevant)
- They are happy to be more engaged

Non-member Survey Findings

- There is little or no knowledge of ACA or what it does
- There are issues around value proposition (because of lack of knowledge regarding what place ACA has in meeting their needs)
- There is little knowledge around broader offering (seen as one issue organisation)
- They see value in additional services that support them in the business of architecture
- They see communication challenges (web site not used or relevant)
- They are non-committal about involvement

13.2 Customer & Staff Survey Outcomes

Below are the key findings of these surveys:

Key Issues and Challenges

Member	Non-member
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion around role with respect to the AIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting the needs of the different demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another fee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of business acumen amongst members (business models, education around selling services, business) 	

Key Opportunities

Member	Non-member
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong goodwill from members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Links with other relevant organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business support / practice management services / information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business support / practice management services / information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benchmarking and other online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benchmarking and other online services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lobbying and advocacy with Government and other strategic relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest in the ACA's message
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved communication (including social media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Channel to relevant information and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thought leadership with practice outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happy to be involved in taskforce groups (engagement)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happy to be involved in taskforce groups (engagement)	





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