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# Architects in SA – a view from the APBSA data

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an ACA resource

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## **ARCHITECTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA A VIEW FROM APBSA DATA**

**Prepared by Gill Matthewson**

This report is part 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.

### **A note about registration**

Although registration is compulsory in Australia for those claiming the title ‘architect,’ it is not required for every individual working in architecture. Consequently, there is historic low uptake of registration among architecture graduates, both in Australia and internationally. Excellent research has been conducted by Susan Shannon and her colleagues on this matter for South Australia.<sup>1</sup> They found a 26% registration rate for all graduates from 1999 to 2011. For New South Wales, Rob Cowdroy concluded that “the proportion of graduates eventually registering is unlikely to reach thirty percent.”<sup>2</sup> A study in 2010 in New Zealand tracking graduates recorded a higher average of 38% registration for those who had graduated from 1987 to 1999; no individual graduation year exceeded 50%.<sup>3</sup> It is possible the longer period of the data collection is a cause of this higher figure.

Counts of registered architects in Australia are complicated by the fact that those registered in the state may not be resident –legislation requires state registration if an architectural company has a project there. An analysis of data of registered architects in 2012 conducted as part of the research project Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession found that Australia-wide multiple-state registrations accounted for 17% of the registers.<sup>4</sup> For South Australia, that figure was a higher 24%, meaning that nearly a quarter of the South Australian registered architects do not live in the state.<sup>5</sup> Some may be working in other states but retain their registration, and others would be working for practices with work within the state.

### **Overall findings**

The report finds the following:

- Overall, the numbers of individuals on the register has increased over the years in the state but there appears to be a recent dropping off in both numbers and the number of registered architects per head of population.
- The number of registered companies, however, is a more stable figure.
- Women are an increasing proportion of the register but the state as a whole lags behind the rest of Australia in terms of numbers of registered women.

### **Detailed findings**

#### **Number of registered architects**

Registration began South Australia in 1941. Figure 1 shows the growth of the register since that time in approximately five-year intervals:

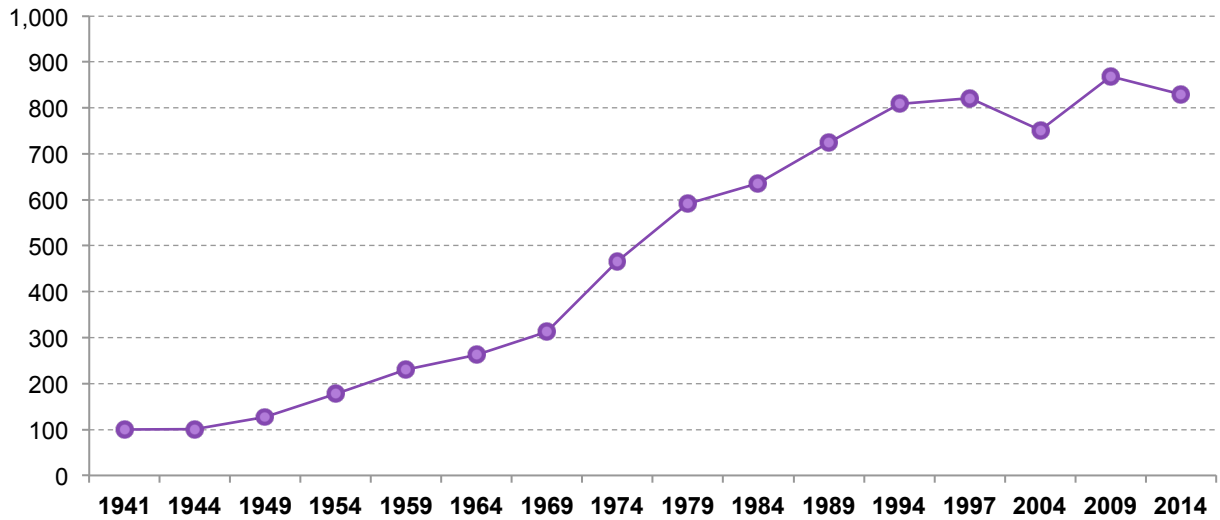


Figure 1: Number of registered architects in South Australia, 1941–2014.<sup>6</sup>

In general, there is consistent growth on the register except for two dips. The one in 2004 may be explained by the data source varying from that for the other years. The second is more recent and indicates a degree of volatility in registration since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Perhaps more relevant is the number of registered architects per head of population in the state. Figure 2 shows those figures and reveals a possible plateauing of the ratio over the last twenty-five years, and again a dip since the financial crisis:

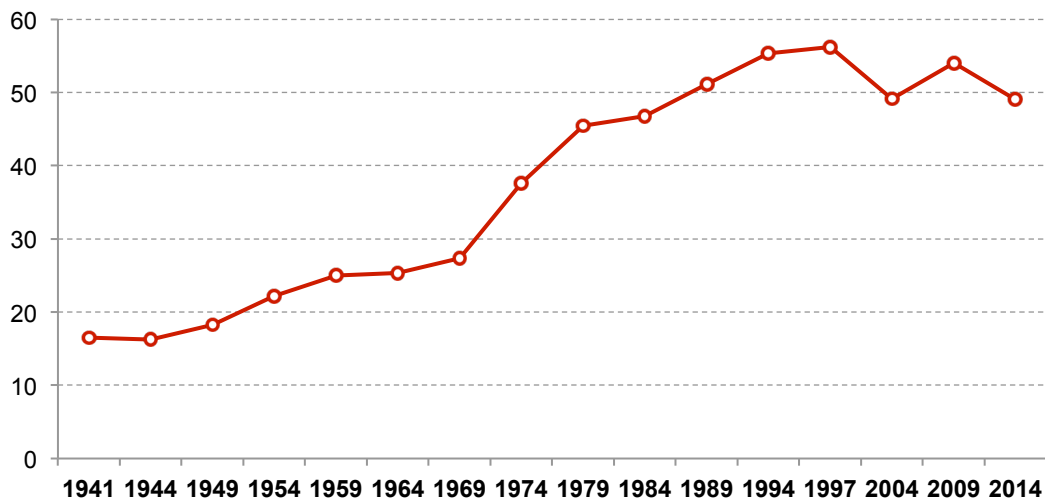


Figure 2: Number of registered architects per 100,000 people, 1941–2014.<sup>7</sup>

Both Figures 1 and 2 show a level of volatility in recent years, a pattern that varies from the general increase in registered architects in the state since 1941. Figure 3 shows this volatility over the last ten years:

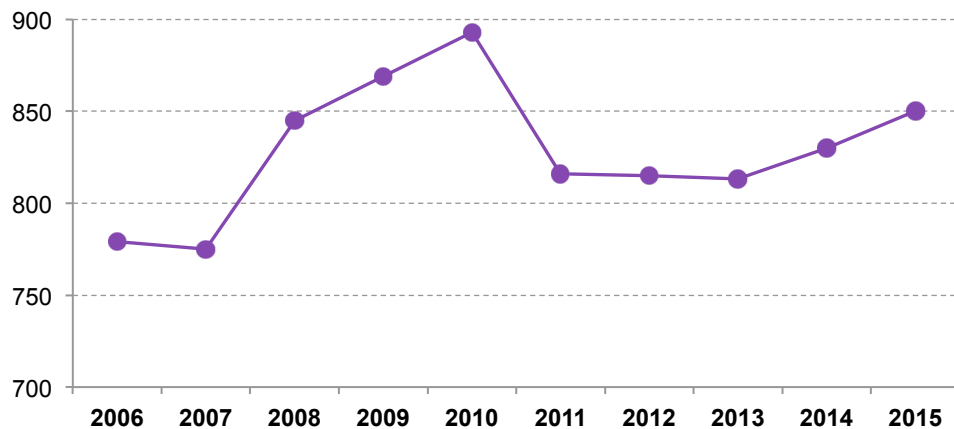


Figure 3: Number of registered architects in South Australia, 2006–2015.<sup>8</sup>

The register fluctuates with people moving both on and off the register. Additions include architectural graduates become newly registered and architects registered in other states apply for local registration. Architects may also move off the register, some are removed by the Board and others resign. The movement of these additions and losses is shown below in Figure 4:

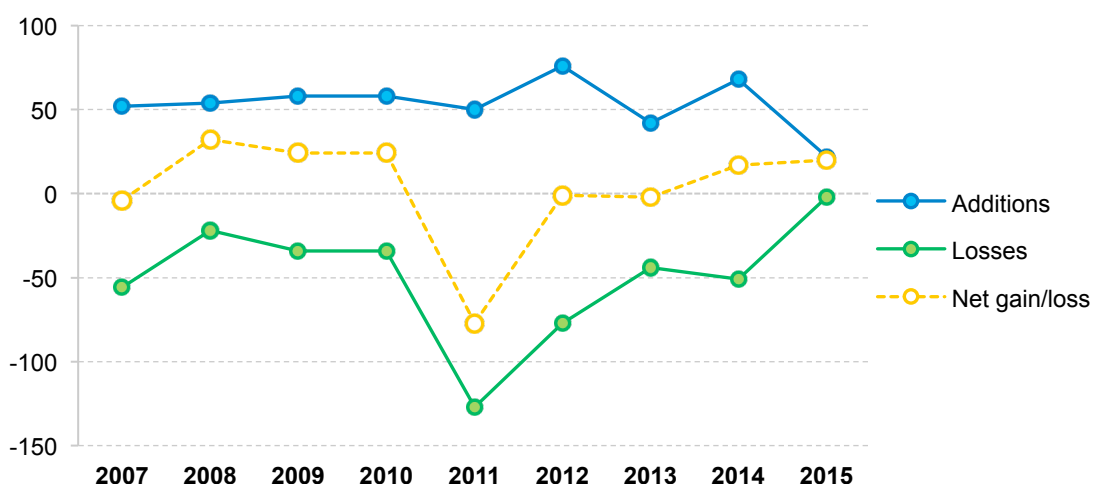


Figure 4: Additions and losses to South Australia register, 2006–2015.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 4 shows that some years there was little and even negative growth year to year for the register. Table 1 shows that while new registrations added to the register each year by an average of 6.5% over the last ten years, this figure was reduced markedly by the losses through resignation and removal, so that the average yearly growth was just 0.5%.

Table 1: Additions and losses to South Australia register, 2006–2015.<sup>10</sup>

	% loss	% gain	Overall growth
2007	7.2%	6.7%	-0.5%
2008	2.8%	7.0%	4.1%
2009	4.0%	6.9%	2.8%
2010	3.9%	6.7%	2.8%
2011	14.2%	5.6%	-8.6%
2012	9.4%	9.3%	-0.1%
2013	5.4%	5.2%	-0.2%
2014	6.3%	8.4%	2.1%
2015	0.2%	2.7%	2.4%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

This overall pattern of constrained growth of the South Australia register is very similar to that identified in the UK.<sup>11</sup>

### Gender breakdown of registered architects

Women are an increasingly important proportion of registered architects. Figure 5 demonstrates how the number of women on the register has steadily increased and how in recent years the number of men has plateaued. This means that women are the main engine of growth for registered architects.

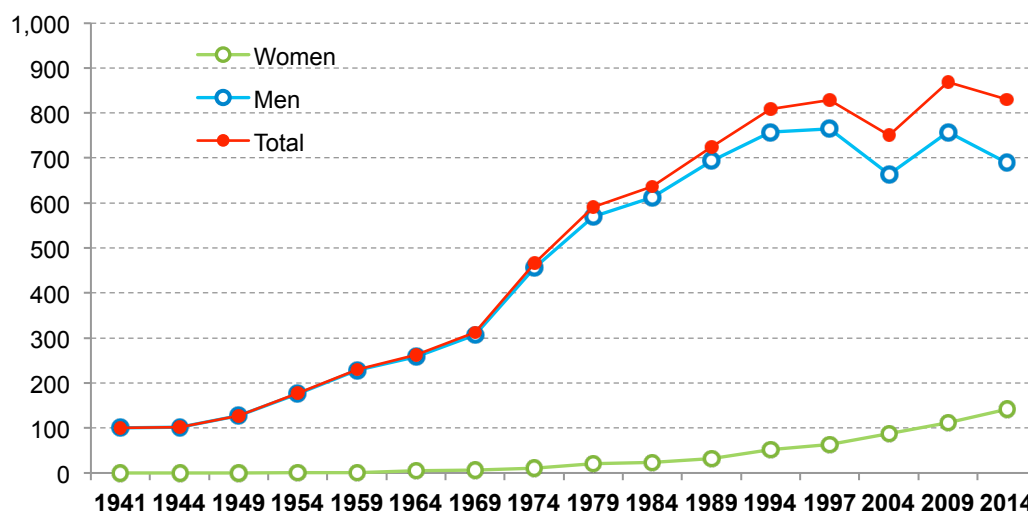


Figure 5: Percentage of women on registers (average for preceding five years) 1941–2014.<sup>12</sup>

The more recent rise in numbers of women means that the age profile of between men and women on the registers differs. The median number of years women have been on the register is just under eight whereas for men the median is over twelve years (Table 2):

Table 2: Numbers of years on the register.<sup>13</sup>

	Male	Female	Total
1–5 Years	139	52	191
6–10 Years	112	31	143
11–15 Years	94	21	115
16–20 Years	62	13	75
21–25 Years	67	12	79
26–30 Years	53	7	60
31–35 Years	43	4	47
36–40 Years	35	4	39
41–45 Years	50	0	50
46–50 Years	11	0	11
51–55 Years	5	0	5
56–60 Years	0	1	1

The registration of women in South Australia follows the pattern in other states of a small number pre-1980 and increasingly faster growth after that date (see Figure 6). However, the proportion of women on the South Australian register lags significantly behind the average for the whole country. Shannon et al discuss some of the issues around registration for women in South Australia and identify gender bias as a major factor in why women do not register.<sup>14</sup>

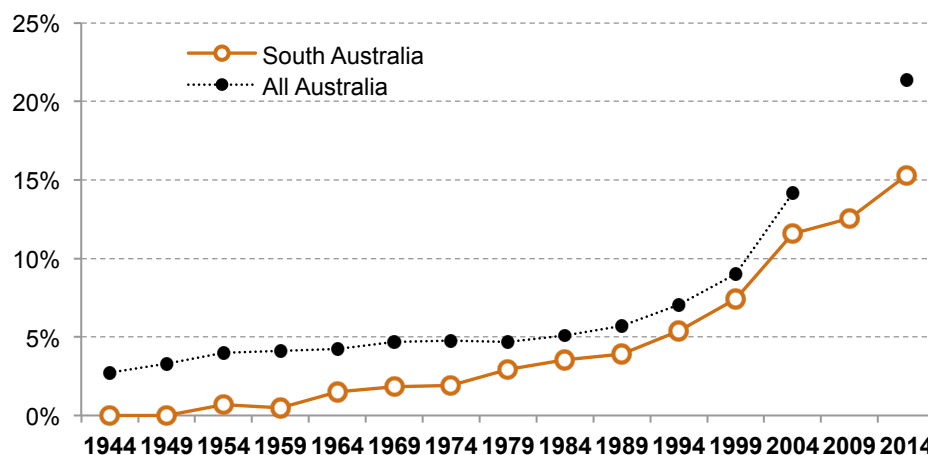


Figure 6: Percentage of women on registers (average for preceding five years) 1941–2014.<sup>15</sup>

## Registered companies

South Australia registers architectural companies as well as individuals. While the number of registered individuals shows some volatility, the number of registered companies has stayed steady and slowly increased over the last ten years (Table 3).

Table 3: Numbers of registered companies.<sup>16</sup>

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
94	101	101	103	108	109	116	124	127	127

## Summary

Overall, the numbers of individuals on the South Australian register has increased over the years more or less in keeping with population growth for the state. However, there appears to be a recent dropping off in both numbers and the number of registered architects per head of population. This may be due to recent economic events. The number of registered companies, however, is a more stable figure.

Women are an increasing proportion of the register, but the state as a whole lags behind the rest of Australia in terms of numbers of registered women.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Susan Shannon, Naomi Webb, Yishu Zeng, and Jenna Holder, "Why Architecture Graduates Do Not Register as Architects: A Quantitative and Qualitative South Australian Study 1999–2011," *Creative Education* 5 (2014), <http://www.scirp.org/journal/ce>.
- <sup>2</sup> Rob Cowdroy, ed. *Architects' Transition from Graduation to Registration* (Sydney: The Board of Architects of NSW, 1995), 12.
- <sup>3</sup> Errol Haarhoff, *Practice and Gender in Architecture: A Survey of New Zealand Architecture Graduates 1987–2008* (Auckland: The University of Auckland, 2010), 18.
- <sup>4</sup> Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession: Women, Work and Leadership (2011–2014), Australian Research Council–funded Linkage Project LP100200107. The results are documented in detail in Gill Matthewson, "Dimensions of Gender: Women's Careers in the Australian Architecture Profession," (PhD Dissertation, University of Queensland, 2015), 57, <https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:373190>.
- <sup>5</sup> Total register, 786; resident only, 595. *Ibid.*, 51 and 57.
- <sup>6</sup> 1941 to 1997 data from Julie Willis, *A Statistical Survey of Registered Women Architects in Australia* (Adelaide: University of South Australia, 1997); 2004 from Paula Whitman, *Going Places: The Career Progression of Women in the Architectural Profession* (Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 2005); 2009 and 2014 from APBSA. Note these figures are for the total register.
- <sup>7</sup> Population data from ABS, "Australian Historical Population Statistics," *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012014?OpenDocument>.
- <sup>8</sup> Data from APBSA.
- <sup>9</sup> Data extrapolated from that supplied by APBSA.
- <sup>10</sup> Data extrapolated from that supplied by APBSA.
- <sup>11</sup> Matthewson, "Dimensions of Gender," 54.
- <sup>12</sup> Data sources as for footnote 5. No data available for 2005–2009 for all Australia.
- <sup>13</sup> Data extrapolated from that supplied by APBSA.
- <sup>14</sup> Shannon et al. "Why Architecture Graduates Do Not Register as Architects," 1546.
- <sup>15</sup> Data sources as for note 5. No data available for 2005–2009 for all Australia.
- <sup>16</sup> Data extrapolated from that supplied by APBSA.