

Media Release

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100th Anniversary of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria

This year marks the 100th year in Victoria where people have had the opportunity to engage registered practitioners to provide architectural services. In 1923, the first statutory registrations of architects occurred. The Architects Registration Board of Victoria, which oversees the professional registration of architects, is keen to celebrate this century-long achievement.

Professor Julie Willis, from the University of Melbourne, said *"it was back in 1887 that the then Victorian Institute of Architects were keen to formalise the standards expected of architects. This included a push to adopt a competency standard to protect the use of the term 'architect'."* Legislation was eventually passed in Victoria in 1922, leading to the first official registrations of architects in June 1923.

Not all was smooth sailing. The Architects Registration Bill (1922) was often criticised for the protections it gave the profession. However, and perhaps paradoxically, because registration was independent from the profession's direct control, it opened up architecture to those who may have otherwise been excluded.

"The first tranche of applications in 1923 numbered 33 registrations and included a significant number of regional architects – from Mildura to Bendigo." Professor Willis said. *"It also included a female – Vera Lane, the second female to graduate from the then University of Melbourne's Diploma of Architecture."*

Within a year, nearly 500 architects were registered in Victoria. After the Great Depression and World War 2, the numbers of registered architects rose steadily, softening at times of economic stress but recovering soon after. Currently, there are more than 6500 registered architects, partnerships and companies that the ARBV oversee.

"It is interesting to note that back in the 1880s, the belief was that maintaining the standard of architecture would lead to better public outcomes. In particular, this was about health standards, including the eradication of disease, through enhanced design." Professor Willis said.

The ARBV's CEO, Dr Glenice Fox, said *"the ARBV continues to this day to ensure public outcomes are being met, with our vision being for a well-designed, liveable and safe built environment for Victorians."*

"As we celebrate this momentous achievement, we encourage eligible individuals to apply for registration as an architect under the Architects Act 1991, and the public to engage only the services of registered and approved architects, partnerships, and companies."

The use of the term 'architect' is protected by law in Victoria, and can only be used by individuals, companies and partnerships who are registered with the ARBV. This is to ensure that the public is protected from unqualified and unregulated individuals who may lack the qualifications or competencies to deliver safe and compliant architectural services.

Consumers are also able to engage architects with the knowledge that registration requires them to be covered by professional indemnity insurance.

From its inception, architectural registration has set the standards for qualification and competence of an architect and is considered a valuable distinction by practitioners and the profession as a whole to inspire public trust in professional architects and the services that they provide.

You can search for a registered architect at <https://www.vic.gov.au/find-architect>.

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