

The future direction of the Australian Building Surveying profession

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Introduction

- Australia has a history of links to the UK regulatory system
- The Australian Building Surveying profession is experiencing a period of change
- These changes may have profound implications

UK Regulatory structure

- National standards embodied in the Building Regulations
- Standards are minimum required though they become de facto maximums
- Reason for having Building Regulations is to protect people health and life safety in buildings
- Changed during 1990s from prescriptive set of rules to performance based building code

Education & UK Building control surveyors

- Must hold a 3 year full time bachelor degree
- Part time study is an option
- Members of RICS – Building Control Forum
- Joined in 2001 when Institute of Building Control agreed to take up RICS membership
- Not allowed to practice as Chartered Building Surveyors in UK

The Australian structure

- A federal structure
- 6 states and 2 territories
- Each have different responsibilities
- States and territories are responsible for enacting the building regulations
- Can be private BS or public BS
- States and territories vary their requirements thus some BS's cannot operate in other States
- States vary in requirements of qualifications and experience

The Building Code of Australia (BCA)

- A performance based code since 1994
- Option of deemed to satisfy solution or a alternate solution
- Each state and territory has amendments section at back of BCA with their specific requirements for certain sections e.g. cyclone areas in Queensland.

Recruitment issues

- Limited number of degrees available
- Often part of other degrees like construction management
- Severe shortages of building surveyors in Australia
- Lack of interest from students could be due to poor pay rates and lack of marketing
- In Australia BS not seen as a real profession

Professional role and change

- Australian Institute of Building Surveyors is trying to implement a National Accreditation Framework (NAF)
- Alternate solution option in BCA requires BSs to have knowledge of complex calculations
- 90% of the profession are technical college (TAFE) educated currently.
- AIBS has not always followed NAF which has undermined the profession

An ageing profession

- Average age is 49.4 years
- Migration does not help – most likely sources are UK Building Surveyors however AIBS required them to undergo more education in respect of Geomechanics and fire engineering for example
- 94% males – gender imbalance may put off females from joining

The future

- Sustainability, access and fire engineering are all opportunities
- 2006 energy efficiency becomes part of the BCA for all buildings
- Accessibility – currently BS opting out of providing services in this area
- Fire engineering AIBS needs to provide an expert BS in this field or lose out
- Performance based regulations make it difficult for existing members to ratify alternate solutions for structural elements
- An educational review is required to equip the profession for all these areas.
- BS is at a crossroads