



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF BUILDING DESIGNERS INCORPORATED

PO Box 30 North Beach WA 6920 T: (08) 9246 3779 F: (08) 9246 3789 E: admin@aibd.asn.au

*Promoting the building design and architectural drafting professions
and advancing the quality of the built environment*

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ARCHITECT AND A BUILDING DESIGNER?

In Australia the term "Architect" is reserved by legislation for those persons who are registered with State based authorities or 'Boards'.

There is no requirement for a building designer to be registered as an architect and there are generally no limitations on the work that can be performed by a building designer (with the exception of some State based restrictions for certain building types).

In many cases, building designers offer a similar range of services to architects, so the terminology can be difficult for the layperson to understand. Architects also regard themselves to be building designers and consider the generic term of building designer to be appropriate (as can be evidenced by the many architects who advertise in the Yellow Pages under the "Building Designer" category). Current legislation also encompasses the term "building designer" as a generic definition of the vocation.

While it is typically argued within the architectural profession that building designers do not have the same qualifications as registered architects, building designers may in fact have exactly the same qualifications. The only distinction in many cases is between those who may have taken the examinations conducted by the Architects Boards and those who have not.

Of course, a degree in architecture is not necessary for a person to use the term building designer. In fact anyone can use that term. Many professions do not share the same legislative exclusivity of a reservation of title as architects do (for example accountants, engineers, economists, etc). A reserved title is certainly not considered a prerequisite to the ability to design and document buildings and it could be argued that those who choose to call themselves building designers remain in business by continually demonstrating their ability to perform the task satisfactorily.

When arguing good design versus bad design the definition of good design must be examined and as good design is subjective (in the eye of the beholder), what may be "good" design to one person may be absolutely awful to another. Just because a person may use a particular industry name doesn't necessary make them "good" at that vocation.

Building designers and architects will always contribute successfully to the built environment. Only the level of competency of the individual should be considered.