

**Submission
No 43**

INQUIRY INTO FURTHER INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BUILDING STANDARDS

Organisation: More Than Space

Date Received: 7 September 2021



7th of September 2021

I have an interior design business based in Sydney.

I want to advise the adverse impact of the *Design & Building Practitioners Act 2020* (which came into effect on 1 July 2021) on my business.

My business provides **interior design solutions** to commercial spaces, residential units, and homes. The work we do involves the following:

Are responsible for preparing plans and specifications for building interiors that affect the structure of the building. This class does not include works related to the external elements of the building envelope.

May be engaged by a building owner or a builder to prepare plans and supporting documentation (specifications and schedules) to help establish a building contract between the builder and the property owner and to ensure the design intention is met.

May be engaged by the building owner to liaise with the builder on behalf of the property owner to ensure construction decisions are consistent with design intentions.

We recognise that the role of Interior Designers in building design and construction is not always well understood, even among building practitioners.

Interior Designer is included as an occupation under the Australian & New Zealand Statistical Classification of Occupations (ANZCO) 23 Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals |232 Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors |2325 Interior Designers |232511 Interior Designer.

We do not undertake **building work** itself or make any structural/specialist changes, even if they may be part of our interior design - such as location of downlights, sinks, power points etc. **Qualified builders, trades, architects and the like are engaged** by the client for those matters and other “*building elements*” and those qualified/specialist persons would **certify those works** that are within their area/s of expertise as required under the Building Code etc.

Under the Act, **classes of persons that can become registered** include architects, civil engineers, electrical engineers, drainage specialists, fire safety engineers, geotechnical engineers, mechanical engineers, structural engineers, and the like, but **not interior designers**.

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INTENTIONAL / EMOTIONAL / INTELLECTUAL / PHYSICAL

ABN 72 611 919 012

The effect of the Act, which at present only applies to class 2 buildings (multi-unit residential or mixed use complexes) appears to prevent me from operating my business because:

1. the Act is so broad as to cover interior design as opposed to building or building design work;
2. there is no scope or path under the Act or the Regulations for interior designers to even become registered as "*Design Practitioners*"; and
3. as a consequence, I am unable to undertake work on class 2 buildings (which is my main area) without a third party architect or draftsman to make the requisite design compliance declarations (even where there is no structural/architectural component to the interior design).

It seems an **absurd and unintended application** of the Act that interior designers can no longer determine the best location of fittings, fixtures and joinery in a Class 2 building which also affects Class 5 & 6 buildings without the certification of an architect!

I look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Regards,

Gil Bennett
Creative Director