

CPD Webinar series

STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE CULTURE IN THE ARCHITECTURE SECTOR

**Webinar 3: Strengthening compliance
culture across the profession: small,
medium and large practice perspectives**

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Architects
Registration Board
of Victoria



Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

This presentation is being delivered on the lands of the Wurundjeri People and I wish to acknowledge them as Traditional Owners.

I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and Aboriginal Elders of other communities who may be here today.



CPD Questionnaire

- Attending this webinar live and submitting this form will qualify you for 1 hour formal CPD.
- Certificates will be sent to the email address used to complete this form, please ensure your name and contact details are correct.
- This form will close 24 hours after the webinar has commenced.
- Certificates will be issued within 1 week of the closure of the quiz.

<https://forms.office.com/r/gHUL3pGhwn>

ARBV Webinar Quiz 18 March 2026



ABOUT THE REPORT

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A row of seven light-colored wooden blocks is arranged horizontally in the foreground, spelling out the word 'CULTURE'. Each block has a single letter printed on its top face. The blocks are slightly rounded and have a natural wood grain. In the background, a larger, out-of-focus pile of similar wooden blocks is scattered, suggesting a collection of letters or a word-building activity. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Background

- › Catalyst for report:
 - › Reports by ARBV and NSW ARB on Systemic Risks in the Architecture Sector (2022 and 2024)
 - › CSV Reports on Compliance in Building Design and Non-cladding Defects on Class 2 Buildings (2024)
 - › Shergold-Weir Building Confidence Report (2018)
- › Importance of regulatory oversight of sectoral culture:
 - › Financial Services Royal Commission
 - › Identifying and addressing root cause(s) of non-compliance
 - › Avoiding harm to clients, users and the profession

Objectives

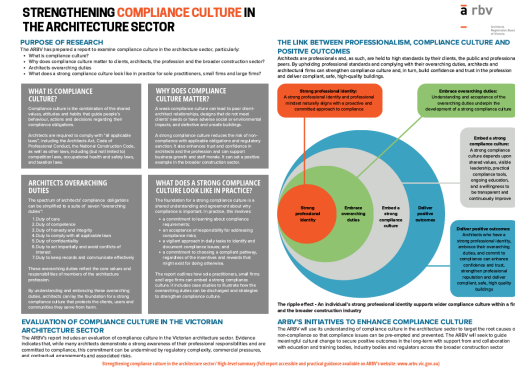
- To clarify what compliance culture is and why a strong compliance culture is important
- To identify overarching duties owed by architects that underpin a strong compliance culture
- To improve understanding of the current compliance culture within the Victorian architecture sector
- To provide practical guidance for architects to strengthen compliance culture
- To identify regulatory tools that can be used to enhance compliance culture
- To highlight the tangible actions that can be taken by architects, the ARBV and other relevant sectoral participants and regulatory bodies to strengthen compliance culture in the architecture sector and the broader construction sector

Outputs

REPORT ON STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE CULTURE IN THE ARCHITECTURE SECTOR

1 - PAGE HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY

BOOKLET CONTAINING PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR ARCHITECTS AND ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS



STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE CULTURE IN THE ARCHITECTURE SECTOR

Practical guidance for architects and architectural firms*

*This document supplements the ARBV's report on "Strengthening Compliance Culture in the Architecture Sector". It is for guidance only and should not be relied upon as legal advice.

KEY CONCEPTS

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- Compliance culture is the combination of shared values, attitudes and habits that guide behaviour, actions and decisions

What is compliance culture?

- A strong compliance culture can reduce compliance risk, but also enhances trust and confidence in the profession. It can set a positive example for the broader construction sector

Why does compliance culture matter?

How can compliance culture be strengthened?

- By understanding and embracing their “overarching duties”, architects can lay the foundation for a strong compliance culture

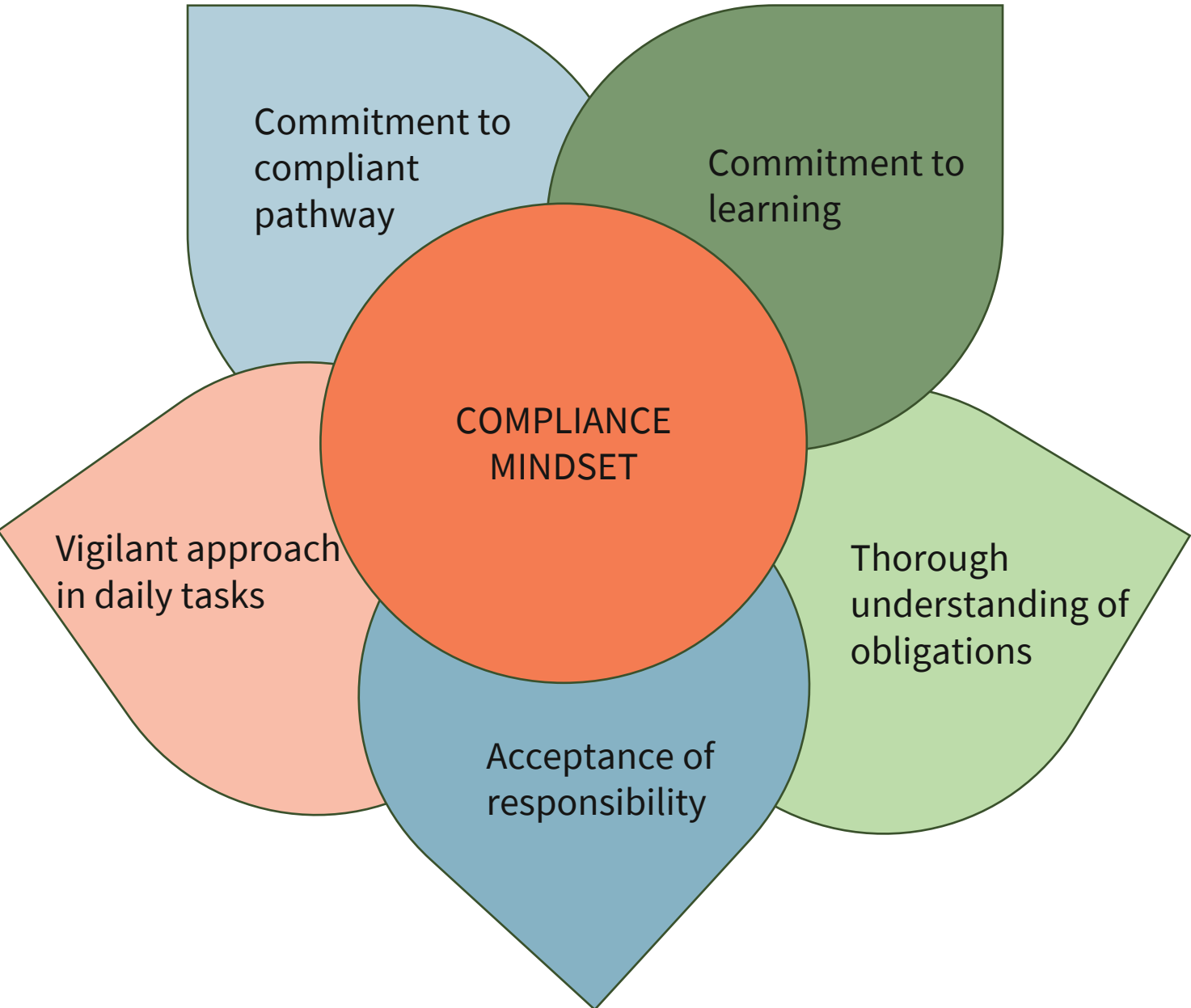
What does a strong compliance culture look like in practice?

- The foundation for a strong compliance culture is a shared understanding and agreement about why compliance is important

Compliance mindset vs compliance culture



Elements of a compliance mindset



OVERARCHING DUTIES

SOCIAL
CONTRACT

ACT,
REGULATIONS &
CODE OF
PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT

COMMON LAW

1

Duty of care

2

Duty of competence

3

Duty of honesty and integrity

4

Duty to comply with all applicable laws

5

Duty of confidentiality

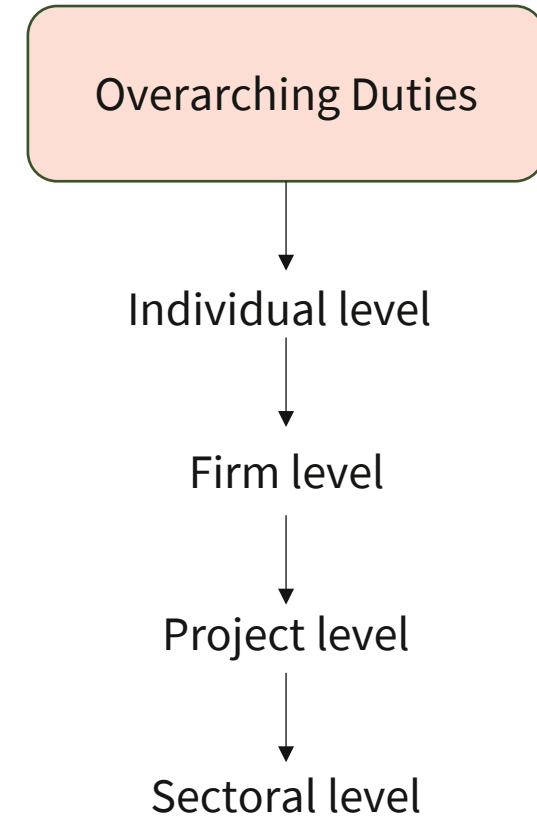
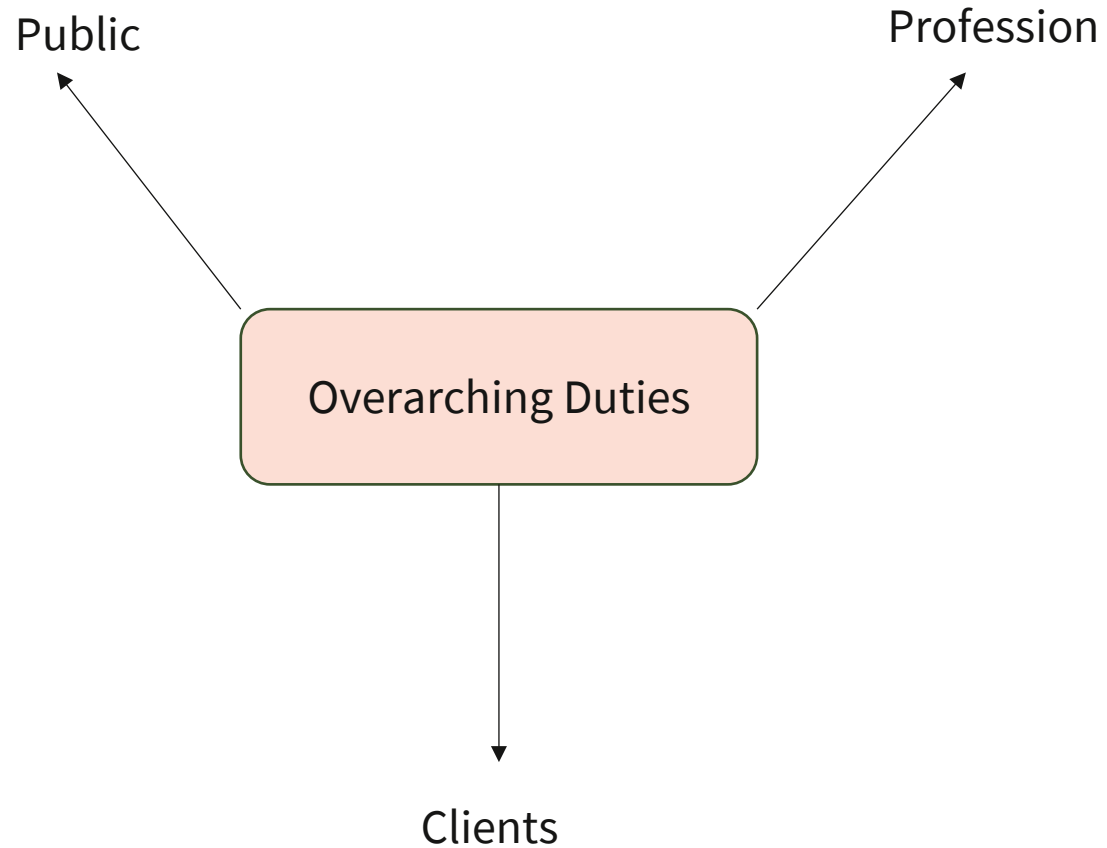
6

Duty to act impartially and avoid conflicts of interest

7

Duty to keep records and communicate effectively

Practical application of overarching duties



SOLE PRACTITIONERS AND SMALL FIRMS

1	Understand your unique culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on how your personal values, knowledge, and circumstances shape your approach to compliance
2	Lead by example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a strong personal commitment to compliance through everyday actions and decisions
3	Practise self-discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply self-discipline and good judgment to maintain compliance in all contexts, even when under commercial or time pressures
4	Stay informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly participate in CPD and industry events, and access regulatory updates to stay informed about compliance obligations and risks
5	Use simple compliance tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt practical tools like checklists and templates to manage key compliance obligations efficiently and effectively
6	Embed compliance in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate compliance risks, actions and decisions into routine workflows, project planning, and client discussions
7	Proactively address compliance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and resolve compliance risks early
8	Seek external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When necessary, seek external support for guidance and assistance to ensure compliance obligations are met
9	Learn from mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse compliance incidents to understand root causes and prevent recurrence
10	Document work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain clear records of compliance decisions and actions to demonstrate accountability

LARGE FIRMS

1	Set the tone at the top	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Practice owners and senior managers should champion the importance of compliance and ethical behaviour through visible actions and communications
2	Actively foster a compliant culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote pride in the profession and reinforce the message that compliance protects clients, reputation and ensures safety and quality
3	Implement tailored Compliance Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop tailored policies, procedures, and systems to manage compliance risks consistently across the firm and projects
4	Engage with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regularly engage with staff to ensure that they understand that compliance is a shared, collective responsibility
5	Clarify responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that individual staff are aware of their particular responsibilities to ensure compliance, including in different project contexts
6	Provide ongoing training and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that staff receive ongoing training so that they understand compliance expectations and how to manage compliance and ethical risks in practice
7	Promote openness and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a supportive environment where staff feel comfortable and safe to raise compliance concerns
8	Establish reporting mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish formal mechanisms and, where appropriate, confidential channels, to report compliance issues
9	Incentivise compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Link staff performance reviews and recognition programs to compliant behaviour
10	Continuously improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regularly review policies, conduct risk assessments, and adapt systems based on compliance incidents and lessons learned

ARCHITECTS' DUTY TO THE PROFESSION

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Duties to the profession in the Code

17 Duty to engender confidence and respect for the profession

An architect, by the architect's conduct, must endeavour to engender confidence in and respect for the profession of architecture.

18 Duty to maintain standards and integrity of the profession

An architect, by the architect's conduct, must endeavour to maintain the standards and integrity of the profession of architecture.

Rationale

- These duties to the profession help to:
 - Ensure that professional standards are maintained
 - Encourage support across the profession for standards to be maintained
 - Ensure public trust and confidence of clients and the public in architects and the broader profession

COMPLIANCE
CULTURE WITHIN THE
THE PROFESSION

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Insight 1 from ARBV research:



Commitment to compliance



Architects generally demonstrate a strong commitment to compliance, but this could be undermined by practical realities

Question for discussion:

- What are the main barriers to firms consistently achieving compliance? Do these barriers differ for small, medium and large practices?

Insight 2 from ARBV research:



Awareness of compliance obligations



Some architects may believe that the primary responsibility for compliance rests elsewhere or that compliance obligations are more confined than is actually the case

Question for discussion:

- In which types of situations can confusion arise about responsibility for compliance and how can this confusion be avoided?

Insight 3 from ARBV research:



Understanding of compliance obligations



CPD is broadly valued by the profession but compliance with CPD requirements is inconsistent, which signals a gap between intent and practice

Question for discussion:

- How is CPD generally viewed within the profession? How can CPD compliance be improved?

Insight 4 from ARBV research:



Capacity to comply



Tight timelines, unclear roles and responsibilities and builder control of project decisions may undermine architects' capacity to comply

Question for discussion:

- What steps can architects take in a project context to enhance their capacity to comply? What are the key differences in these steps for small, medium and large-scale projects?

Insight 5 from ARBV research:



Maintaining compliance



Regulatory complexity and change may make it difficult for architects to maintain compliance and competence

Question for discussion:

- How can architects in small, medium and large practices practically keep up-to-date with their obligations?

Insight 6 from ARBV research:



Professional reputation



Notwithstanding the challenges to comply, architects are widely seen as ethical and trustworthy, reflecting a strong professional identity

Question for discussion:

- Which factors could threaten the profession's strong professional reputation? What is needed to maintain the profession's strong reputation over time?

Insight 7 from ARBV research:



Project-level compliance



Fear of conflict and lack of contractual power may prevent architects from reporting or resisting non-compliance in certain project contexts

Question for discussion:

- What steps should architects take to ensure they meet their duties to the profession in a project context, even in the face of conflict and lack of contractual power?

Insight 8 from ARBV research:



Sector-level compliance



Ongoing systemic issues within the broader construction sector may expose architects to disproportionate blame for non-compliance and could erode public confidence

Question for discussion:

- How can architects use their duties to the profession to protect themselves from undue blame when disputes and defects arise?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Key messages

- Architects don't just owe duties to their clients; they also owe duties to the profession and to the public
- The overarching duties embody the core values and responsibilities that define architects as professionals
- Consistent application of these duties helps ensure that architectural services are delivered lawfully, ethically, and to a high standard, strengthening confidence in both individual practitioners and the profession as a whole
- Compliance with the overarching duties help to protect clients from harm but also preserve trust and confidence in the profession

Q&A

ARBV Webinar Quiz 18 March 2026



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Registration Board
of Victoria

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