

24<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
The Right Honourable Lord Mayor  
Councillor Graham Quirk  
Office of the Lord Mayor  
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## Australian Institute of Architects

Dear Lord Mayor

### **Australian Institute of Architects Submission: Brisbane Metro Project**

The Australian Institute of Architects commends the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Graham Quirk and the Brisbane City Council in committing to delivering world-class public transport for Brisbane residents and visitors. This is a significant responsibility for the city of Brisbane and a welcomed commitment. The Brisbane Metro, if delivered to the highest design standards will positively contribute to the physical amenity of the city.

We also commend the re-use and repurposing of existing infrastructure to increase its efficiency and capacity. This option has the advantage of faster completion time and least disruption to communities located along the route.

However, the Brisbane Metro draft needs to be supported by transparent and rigorous assessment of the reference design that is included in the draft design report. The Australian Institute of Architects is in an advantageous position to provide this assessment as the peak body for the Architectural profession in Australia.

The high frequency, high capacity Brisbane Metro is a key part of raising the standard of Brisbane's public transport system. Brisbane Metro will deliver turn-up-and-go services across a 21 kilometre network with the two metro routes operating every three minutes during peak periods, linking the suburbs to the inner city.

It is where the two new metro routes run in parallel from Roma Street Station through the Brisbane CBD and South Brisbane and on to Buranda will have its most intense use and have the most impact on the built environment. This part of the system will incorporate five stations of which four will be a key transport interchange nodes.

These stations will generate significant pedestrian traffic and therefore will be important urban rooms and will be required to be designed to the highest design standards.

We believe that a traffic and pedestrian movement study needs to be undertaken for this entire area to provide the comfort that the spaces and routes will have adequate design tolerances to allow for safe movement of thousands of people that will inhabit these public spaces daily, and future proof this once in a life time project.

This portion of the route also incorporates tunnels and two transition structures that transfer the Metro route on grade to the Victoria Bridge.

We hold concerns that the amenity and safety of all of prominent pedestrian focused places will be reduced not enhance by the proposed interventions.

The following areas are where high volumes of constant pedestrian and cyclist activity occurs;

- Melbourne and Grey Streets intersection,
- QPAC and the Cultural Centre, the Cultural Forecourt,
- the Victoria Bridge,
- William and Queens Wharf Road
- Queens Street intersection and Brisbane Square.

We feel there has been inadequate attention to the public realm provided in the draft report and would request further detail be provided on how public amenity in these high traffic areas will be protected and enhanced.

Furthermore the Institute has significant concerns which we have addressed under the following headings;

### **Public realm**

The institute is concerned that aspects of the draft Brisbane Metro report do not protect and enhance the public realm. The draft fails to specifically include a reference point to urban design and its relevant inclusions such as landscape, hardscape built form and other relevant urban design elements. We would ask that the draft be updated to include Urban design drawings inclusive of hardscape/soft scape for all areas that impact upon the public realm in the reference drawing set.

Specific examples of our concern can be seen in chapter 17, whereby the Victoria Bridge and North quay intersections are compromised by the Metro proposal. We would expect that the Metro should aim to redesign these intersections to deliver an integrated quality outcome with Reddacliff Square. In addition, we believe the Cultural precinct should be subject to an overarching Urban design strategy in order to ensure this pinnacle Brisbane precinct is protected and enhanced.

### **Pedestrian Amenity and connectivity**

The institute is highly concerned that as Victoria Bridge is the primary pedestrian and cycle access point between South Brisbane and the CBD. It is widely acknowledged that in its current use its already inadequate for the current traffic levels. The current Metro draft proposal will further impact negatively on the Victoria Bridge in relation to both pedestrians and cyclists. This includes a lack of shelter and a further reduction of cyclist access to a single shared pace on the upside stream of the bridge.

The Institute strongly believes that the pedestrian and cyclist access and amenity must be a priority for the Metro project. This includes the retention and further enhancement of a two way cycle lane on either side of the bridge and the provision of shade and weather protection for pedestrians.

We believe that this opportunity is readily available if the Metro and local bus routes could share only two lanes of the Victoria Bridge there by opening up opportunities for positive transport alternatives

### **Heritage**

Brisbane's heritage is key to its unique identity. The Institute is concerned that the extent of demolition works to the heritage listed Cultural Centre, including the landscape and retaining walls around the art gallery and QPAC green. The institute would like to see early engagement on the project with an independent expert panel to determine the extent of potential heritage issues with the project and propose appropriate resolutions for the design. We also note that the report references the significance of the Tipuana Trees adjacent to the QPAC green, and yet the design proposes their permanent removal. The Institute strongly feels that the removal of these trees has a significant impact in relation to the heritage of the cultural centre. We would argue that the current proposal for the Metro be redesigned to reduce the impact on all of the Cultural Centre's heritage elements included the existing Tipuana trees.

## Flora Impacts

The Metro reference design states that the wonderful established leopard trees along Adelaide street will be removed. Public amenity will be dramatically reduced if these trees are removed. The Brisbane metro must recognise the importance of the significance of the cities mature trees. As such the project must be able to consider alternative design options that will be able to reduce the impact on Brisbane's green spaces including the retention of the mature trees along Adelaide St, and the Tipuana's in the QPAC Green.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Brisbane Metro Draft Design report and for taking the time to read through our commentary. We trust that you accept these comments as constructive and understand that the Institute of Architects is committed to improving our built environment by promoting quality, responsible and sustainable design.



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