



# Design Excellence Strategy

## Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Precinct



# Acknowledgement of Country

Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore respects the history and stories of the Gumbaynggirr people, and of other Aboriginal people who have new and enduring connections to this place.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, and pay respect to Elders past and present.



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# 1 Introduction

Property and Development NSW (PDNSW) is continuing to lead the revitalisation of the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Precinct (the Precinct) on behalf of the NSW Government.

This Design Excellence Strategy supports a Planning Justification Report that outlines proposed amendments to the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (CHLEP) 2013 and will be submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) as part of a State Assessed Planning Proposal (planning proposal).

As Coffs Harbour continues to grow as a Regional City, the NSW Government and Coffs Harbour City Council have, through various strategic planning exercises, identified four key strategic priorities to reimagine its direction and respond to current and future challenges and opportunities:

- Deliver a regional economy (CHCC LSPS, 2020; CH Economic Development Strategy, 2017) that is diverse, sophisticated and able to retain businesses and skills
- Evolve the tourism offering (CHCC LSPS, 2020) with improved attractions, activities and accommodation
- Provide more housing (CHCC LSPS, 2020) in accessible locations, including affordable housing
- Provide better connections between places with more sustainable movement choices (CHRCAP, 2021; CHCC, 2020)

As a large, strategically located and wholly government owned site, the Precinct represents a significant opportunity to deliver on each of these key regional priorities. In this planning proposal, PDNSW seeks to celebrate the unique location, history and culture of the Jetty Foreshore to deliver outcomes for the benefit of the Coffs Harbour community. The revitalisation will be staged and funded, over time, to deliver the shared community vision.

The purpose of this Design Excellence Strategy is to establish the approach to achieving design excellence within the Precinct.

This Design Excellence Strategy outlines the series of processes under consideration by PDNSW to support design quality in the design, delivery, and development of the Precinct. This Strategy also supports the design excellence requirements described in the Design Guidelines.

Achieving design diversity is also a key objective of this Strategy and a diversity of designers and design outcomes will be required across the Precinct. This will be achieved through a design-led tendering process and managed through the ongoing role of PDNSW in the delivery of the Precinct.

This Design Excellence Strategy outlines the principles and procedures that will be followed as part of the development of the Precinct over the next 30 years, to ensure the architectural and urban design of future development and the design of the parklands and public domain achieves design excellence.

## 1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Design Excellence Strategy are to:

- Establish a coordinated approach to the implementation of design excellence and design review processes across the Precinct to ensure that the precinct achieves:

- a high standard of design excellence that celebrates the Precinct's foreshore location and parkside setting;
- a high standard of architectural, urban and landscape design excellence that enhances local character;
- architectural, public domain and landscape outcomes in accordance with the Connecting with Country Framework;
- design diversity across the Precinct.
- Outline the key considerations and requirements in demonstrating design excellence.
- Ensure development in the Precinct is consistent with Better Placed policy document, published by the Government Architect NSW in May 2017.

## 1.2 Statutory context

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), has a design objective that elevates the role of design quality in NSW promoting good design and amenity of the built environment.

The Precinct is wholly government owned land, is of regional significance and future development in the Precinct is anticipated be State Significant Development (SSD). PDNSW as master developer for the Precinct will have important role throughout the design and development process to ensure the shared vision developed with the community, and design outcomes for the Precinct are achieved.

As such, an amendment to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* (Planning Systems SEPP) is proposed to include the Precinct and identify the following types of SSD on land within the Precinct including:

- Development for the purpose of a principal subdivision establishing major lots or public domain areas, or the creation of new roadways (including the proposed pedestrian bridge) and associated works.
- Development with an Estimated Development Cost (EDC) of more than \$30 Million.

The provisions of the Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013 have also been taken into account in preparation of this Design Excellence Strategy and the proposed process for delivery of design excellence across the Precinct. PDNSW will continue to work in partnership with Coffs Harbour City Council throughout the design and delivery process for the Precinct.

PDNSW supports Council and provisions of the *Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan 2013* (LEP) which set out the key matters for consideration in demonstrating design excellence across the Precinct.

Design excellence provisions outlined under Clause 7.12 of *the Coffs Harbour LEP* seek to ensure that development exhibits design excellence that contributes to the natural, cultural, visual and built character values of Coffs Harbour.

Development on land zoned R1 General Residential, R3 Medium Density Residential, R4 High Density Residential, E1 Local Centre, E2 Commercial Centre, E3 Productivity Support, E4 General Industrial, E5 Heavy Industrial, MU1 Mixed Use, SP3 Tourist, W4 Working Waterfront must exhibit design excellence and the consent authority must have regard to the following matters –

- (a) *whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved,*
- (b) *whether the form and external appearance of the development will improve the quality and amenity of the public domain,*



- (c) whether the development detrimentally impacts on view corridors,*
- (d) the requirements of the Coffs Harbour DCP,*
- (e) how the development addresses the following matters—*
  - (i) the suitability of the land for development,*
  - (ii) existing and proposed uses and use mix,*
  - (iii) heritage issues and streetscape constraints,*
  - (iv) the relationship of the development with other development (existing or proposed) on the same site or on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form,*
  - (v) bulk, massing and modulation of buildings,*
  - (vi) street frontage heights,*
  - (vii) environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, solar access, wind and reflectivity,*
  - (viii) the achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development,*
  - (ix) pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, circulation and requirements,*
  - (x) the impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain.*

There is no requirement for a competitive design process to be undertaken in accordance with Clause 7.12 of Coffs Harbour LEP. Instead, design excellence will be achieved by satisfying the above design excellence criteria.

### 1.3 Shared vision and place principles

Coffs' family playground, a precinct of parks and places, that connects community with Country. The community is and always has been at the heart of creating a thriving regional economy and destination for Coffs Harbour.

The revitalisation of the Precinct is an opportunity to create a vibrant and thriving foreshore precinct that is enhanced and activated for the benefit of the community, while maintaining the qualities and features that the community value.

Since 2018, PDNSW has been working with Coffs Harbour City Council and the community through an ongoing consultation process to develop a shared vision and place principles for the Precinct. This independent process of consultation established a shared vision and place principles that have guided key decisions about future uses and Urban Design Framework for the Precinct.

The vision and principles establish the high-level aspirations for the future of the Precinct and development should promote achievement of the vision in a way that is consistent with the principles.

Shaped with the community, our shared vision is to ensure the Precinct will become a world-class oceanfront precinct by:

#### **Respecting**

Gumbaynggirr, environmental and maritime roots now and into the future;



#### **Promoting**

community character, coastal activity and local economic sustainability; and



#### **Connecting**

people to the water, the water to the city, and the city to the highlands.





The vision is supported by the following place principles:



### **Gathering place**

Become the premier place on the North Coast where all are welcome and feel at home, now and in the future



### **Seamlessly connected**

Tie the city structure and regional networks into the precinct and provide accessibility for all abilities throughout



### **Sustainable economy**

Foster a wider mix of uses that leverage existing industry to create a balance of local employment opportunities and waterfront activation



### **Resilient environment**

Be the exemplar for the North Coast on adapting to climate change by safeguarding existing assets and mitigating future risk



### **Choice destination**

Enhance the precinct as a family friendly collection of local and regional destinations offering an accessible, engaging, safe, comfortable and inclusive environment day and night



### **Celebrate Country**

Ensure opportunities for Gumbaynggirr people to Care for Country and heal Country, with long-term community involvement, cultural activation and education, and protection of significant heritage sites



## 2 Design Excellence Strategy

This Design Excellence Strategy establishes the framework and processes for how design excellence will be achieved throughout the Precinct, whilst also ensuring that PDNSW achieves its commitment to, and delivers design excellence consistent with the vision for the Precinct.

Design excellence is to be considered and delivered through the design excellence strategies outlined below:

### Design excellence processes undertaken to date:

- Engage a **high-quality Design Team** for the State Led-Rezoning to prepare an **Urban Design Framework** to inform the proposed rezoning and amendment to planning controls, which is based on a Country-led and landscape design approach
- Prepare **Design Guidelines** which guide the future development of the Precinct and ensure high quality architectural, landscape and public domain outcomes are achieved

### Design excellence processes to guide future development:

- Implement a **Connecting with Country Framework** for the Precinct, including ongoing engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders throughout the project
- Undertake a process of **Design Review** by the State Design Review Panel (SDRP) in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders including Coffs Harbour City Council (Council)
- Ensure Design Integrity is maintained throughout the design process through the establishment of a **Design Advisory Panel**
- Ensure development is considered in accordance with the outcomes in the **Public Domain and Landscape Manual** to ensure a high quality and cohesive public domain.

### Design-led tender process:

- Establish a design-led tendering process to ensure design excellence is considered and assessed through the development and divestment strategy for the Precinct.

## 2.1 Design excellence processes undertaken to date

### 2.1.1 Design Team and Urban Design Framework

To ensure appropriate experience in delivering an Urban Design Framework that will deliver design excellence and encourage design diversity and visual interest across the Precinct, PDNSW sought competitive tenders from the leading design firms and undertook a robust procurement process to select a suitably qualified and experienced design team to prepare the master plan and support the state-assessed planning proposal.

The Design Team for the rezoning comprises leaders in the field of architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture, being SJB Architects and King and Campbell.

These high-calibre firms bring together a wealth of skills and experience in both local and international contexts to ensure that design diversity, innovation, and the high quality design outcome is achieved for the Precinct.

An Urban Design Framework has been prepared by SJB and King and Campbell that shows how the Precinct may be developed in the future. The Urban Design Framework is underpinned by the



vision and supporting design principles and has been used to inform the detailed provisions in the Design Guidelines.

The Urban Design Framework is the culmination of a detailed and immersive design and community-led process including analysis, consultation, extrapolation, design, and evaluation. The Urban Design Framework is community-led with a shared vision at the core of decision making and process.

### **2.1.2 Design Guidelines**

PDNSW have prepared Design Guidelines to ensure high quality architectural, place, public domain, open space, landscape, and amenity outcomes are achieved across the Precinct. The Design Guidelines set out objectives and design requirements to inform future development throughout the Precinct, over time.

The Design Guidelines will be used as part of the evaluation and assessment process to determine whether future development of the Precinct achieves design excellence.

The objectives of the draft Design Guidelines are:

- The Precinct will create a vibrant and unique identity for Coffs Harbour that is deeply rooted in its natural, regional and cultural history.
- The Precinct will embody the character of Gumbaynggirr Country while offering new and exciting destinations for both residents and visitors. With a thriving mix of parks, shops, cafes, and community infrastructure, the Precinct will be a cultural hub, strengthening the connection between Coffs Harbour City Centre and its stunning harbour.
- The Foreshore and parklands are enhanced and will offer a dynamic calendar of seasonal, regional and local events, complemented by thoughtfully curated visitor attractions and facilities. With its passive and active parklands, the Precinct will remain a welcoming and family-friendly space, embracing the essence of coastal living and fostering a sense of natural simplicity and community connection.

Future development will need to demonstrate how it is consistent with the objectives and requirements of the Design Guidelines.

## **2.2 Design excellence processes for development**

### **2.2.1 Connecting with Country**

The Gumbaynggirr people are the Traditional Custodians of the Coffs Harbour region, forming one of the largest coastal First Nations groups in New South Wales.

First and foremost, the Precinct Masterplan has been informed by consultation with traditional owners and has incorporated elements to preserve the significance of the Precinct to the Gumbaynggirr people and important connections to Country.

The Precinct Masterplan evolved through continued engagement with traditional owners and Aboriginal stakeholders, and an ongoing commitment to ensure the Gumbaynggirr people's connection with Country is embedded into the design of the Precinct.

The design team incorporated a Country-centred approach, informed through consultation with the local aboriginal community, and the preparation of Country Centred Design Guidelines.

The Design Guidelines require a Connecting with Country Framework to be implemented for the Precinct, to inform future design processes as part of any future development applications. This framework will be an important reference document that will have an ongoing role in shaping the

design, development, and delivery of the Precinct, and in achieving tangible outcomes for the Aboriginal community.

Future design processes will be undertaken in accordance with the Connecting with Country Framework.

### **2.2.2 Design Review**

#### **State Design Review Panel**

The State Design Review Panel (SDRP) will perform a design review function for State Significant Development (SSD) on land within the Precinct. The SDRP program provides a best-practice state-wide approach to the review of State significant projects, precincts, and infrastructure.

It is anticipated that most development in the Precinct will be State significant development (SSD) and subject to the SDRP process. As outlined in Section 1.2, the following types of development are proposed to be identified as State significant development on land within the Precinct:

- Development for the purpose of a principal subdivision establishing major lots or public domain areas, or the creation of new roadways (including the proposed pedestrian bridge) and associated works.
- Development with an Estimated Development Cost (EDC) of more than \$30 Million.

The advice of the State Design Review Panel is to be taken into consideration by the consent authority in forming the opinion that the development exhibits design excellence in accordance with this Strategy.

#### **Design Advisory Panel Review**

PDNSW will establish a Design Advisory Panel (DAP) with design experts in consultation with Government Architects NSW (GANSW) to provide a precinct-based approach to design excellence. The role of the DAP is to provide independent design guidance to PDNSW, DPHI and GANSW.

The key characteristics of this panel are:

- Independent group of 3-5 advisors.
- Sitting for a minimum term of two years.
- Advisors come from Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture fields.
- Can be selected from the State Design Review Panel, international and interstate design professionals.
- Additional specialist input to be obtained in sustainability, heritage, and Design with Country as required.

The DAP will comprise members selected by PDNSW, GANSW and Coffs Harbour City Council.

The DAP will have a key role in ensuring design excellence outcomes for development in the Precinct and will undertake a design review for all development not subject to a State Design Review Panel process.

The following development is to be subject of a design review by the Design Advisory Panel:

- Development having an estimated development cost of \$30 million or less.
- Development over \$30m that may not otherwise be subject to a design excellence process in accordance with the SDRP Wait Time Reduction scheme.
- Public domain and open space not otherwise subject to a design excellence process.



- Any substantial changes to a development proposal that may not otherwise be subject to a design excellence process.

The role of the Design Advisory Panel may vary depending on the procurement and divestment strategy and the Panel be required to provide advice and undertake design reviews on request by PDNSW.

The advice of the Design Advisory Panel is to be taken into consideration by the consent authority in forming the opinion that the development exhibits design excellence in accordance with this strategy.

### **2.2.3 Design Integrity and Governance**

#### **Design integrity**

PDNSW will have a lead role as master developer for the Precinct and will have an ongoing role throughout the design and development process.

To ensure that design integrity is maintained throughout the design and delivery process, PDNSW will ensure that an appropriately qualified design team will be retained throughout the design process for each respective stage.

#### **Design advisory panel**

The DAP will establish an ongoing and consistent design review process for the Precinct.

The DAP will monitor and review the design excellence processes and advise PDNSW and DPHI if any amendments are required to this Design Excellence Strategy.

#### **Monitoring**

Performance of the Design Excellence Strategy will be monitored, and any proposed amendments are to be developed in consultation with and endorsed by GANSW or Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Housing.

### **2.2.4 Public Domain and landscaping**

The Design Guidelines require the preparation of a precinct-wide Public Domain and Landscape Manual to guide the public domain and landscape outcomes for the Precinct.

The design of the public domain will be undertaken in accordance with the Public Domain and Landscape Manual to ensure a high quality and cohesive public domain. In achieving design excellence, the Public Domain and Landscape Manual should set out considerations for the design of the Public Domain and consider:

- Design quality, function, integration with surrounding areas, access, materiality, and ongoing maintenance of public spaces.
- Design processes, vision and design outcomes for the public domain to ensure a connected, accessible and high-quality public realm.
- Continuity of connections throughout the Precinct e.g. coordinating the alignment of pedestrian links with street connections, through site links and pedestrian crossings.
- Integration of water sensitive urban design and stormwater management with the public domain

## **2.3 Design-led tendering process**

PDNSW will have a lead role as master developer for the Precinct and will have an ongoing role throughout the design and development process to ensure the shared vision developed with the community, and design outcomes for the Precinct are achieved.

This includes the inclusion of design excellence requirements in design briefs for open space and the public domain, which is to be delivered by PDNSW.

To ensure design excellence and design diversity can be achieved, design considerations will be addressed through a design-led tender process that will include a project brief and intended design outcomes for each of the development lots within the Precinct.

The process will include:

- Develop specific project briefs with input from the DAP.
- Prepare development-specific projects briefs to consider social infrastructure, public domain, cultural considerations, heritage considerations, public art requirements, specific building uses, design diversity, and requirements for each lot.
- Develop an evaluation process and weighting of design excellence and diversity outcomes in the overall consideration of the consortia bid for each development lot.