

13th May 2020



Australian Institute of Architects

Hon Rita Saffioti
9th Floor, Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Re: Appointment of a Western Australian Government Architect

Dear Madam

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation representing over 12,500 members across Australia and overseas. More than 1,100 of these are based in Western Australia and are supported by the WA Chapter.

We are writing to request an update on the appointment of a new Western Australian Government Architect (GA).

The GA and the Office of the government Architect (OGA), play a crucial role in WA's ongoing economic development. The GA and OGA provide critical independent advice to the State Government on major infrastructure and building projects, advise on planning policy, and help create a vision for the built environment of the state. Formed in 2003 by the Gallop Government, the OGA has become an integral part of the planning and built form landscape.

In the last few years, through the guidance of the OGA, WA has seen the construction of a number of transformative projects, including the Perth Arena, The Fiona Stanley Hospital, the Perth Children's Hospital, Optus Stadium, The Heath Ledger Theatre and the soon to be opened Perth Museum. More recently the GA has provided important guidance on the delivery of Metronet, Main Roads WA Swan River Crossing and the East Perth Power Station Redevelopment.

The GA and OGA have played an indispensable role in the development of and re-vitalisation of parts of the CBD and metropolitan area, and projects of significance in the regions. The GA has been an influential champion for good design, while understanding the pragmatic requirements of the Government, and has played a critical role in ensuring successful outcomes.

The GA has provided leadership in the development of important Planning Reform initiatives, especially Design WA, that ensures good design is embedded in every built project undertaken in the state. The SPP7.3 Apartment Guide, and the soon to be released Precinct and Medium Density planning policies will further improve built outcomes, and ensure appropriate amenity and benefit is provided for users and community alike.

The transition to a denser, more sustainable city is still causing friction within some local communities, and it is essential that the GA is able to provide advocacy and leadership through research, engagement and propagation of best practice exemplar projects and approaches.

Your establishment of the State Design Review Panel, which has assembled a wide range of highly qualified industry professionals, should be headed by the GA and used as an effective tool to independently review and risk manage major projects for government.

In the post-Covid rebuild of our State, the GA should provide both strategic direction and detailed technical advice concerning built environment stimulus packages, ensuring alignment with industry and to ensure the best long-term value for money while ensuring quality.

It is for these reasons we strongly consider the re-appointment of this role is a matter of the highest urgency and we would welcome the opportunity to come and discuss this with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Hobbs', written in a cursive style.

Peter Hobbs FRAIA
STATE PRESIDENT WESTERN AUSTRALIA

cc: Office of the Government Architect