Australian Institute of Architects QLD

ABN 72 000 023 012
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

2/270 Montague Road
West End, QLD 4101

P: (07) 3028 4100
qld@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

16 July 2026

The Hon Tim Nicholls MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Queensland Government

Cc: The Hon Sam O'Connor MP, Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth
Cc: Dr David Rosengren, Director-General, Queensland Health

Dear Minister

Regional architectural procurement and Health Infrastructure Queensland

On behalf of the Queensland Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, I am writing to raise several matters identified through recent discussions with our Regional Affairs Committee and members practising throughout regional Queensland regarding procurement undertaken by Health Infrastructure Queensland. The Institute strongly supports the Queensland Government's significant investment in health infrastructure and recognises the importance of delivering contemporary, resilient and fit-for-purpose facilities for communities across the State. We also acknowledge the considerable responsibility placed on Health Infrastructure Queensland to procure these projects in a manner that delivers value for money, probity and quality outcomes.

Regional architectural practices are well placed to contribute to this investment. They bring detailed knowledge of local communities, climate, geography and stakeholder networks, together with established relationships that can assist in delivering infrastructure that responds appropriately to place and community need.

While our members recognise that procurement decisions must be based on capability and value rather than geography alone, they have consistently raised concerns that aspects of current procurement settings may unintentionally reduce opportunities for capable regional architectural practices to participate meaningfully in public health infrastructure projects.

The issues raised include:

- bundling multiple projects into procurement packages that exceed the capacity of many regional practices, despite the individual projects being well within their expertise
- tender requirements that appear disproportionate to the scale or complexity of the architectural services required
- experience thresholds that favour larger metropolitan practices over capable regional firms with demonstrated local expertise
- limited opportunities for regional practices to participate as lead consultants or meaningful members of consultant teams
- insufficient recognition of the value that regional presence, local knowledge and community relationships contribute to successful project delivery.

These concerns are particularly relevant in light of the Queensland Procurement Policy 2026, which seeks to increase opportunities for Queensland businesses, strengthen regional economies, reduce unnecessary barriers to participation and maximise the long-term value created through government investment.

Australian Institute of Architects QLD

ABN 72 000 023 012
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

2/270 Montague Road
West End, QLD 4101

P: (07) 3028 4100
qld@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

For regional Queensland, procurement is not simply about delivering individual projects. It is also an opportunity to strengthen local professional capability, support skilled employment, develop sustainable regional businesses and build the capacity needed to service future government investment. When regional practices are unable to secure meaningful participation in public projects, the consequences extend beyond a single commission. It can weaken the professional services sector in regional communities, reduce opportunities for graduates and emerging professionals, and diminish the long-term capability available to support future infrastructure programs.

Members have also identified a related issue concerning continuity of consultant engagement. Where a capable regional architectural practice has already been engaged and has invested considerable time in developing a project, maintaining continuity through subsequent project stages should be carefully considered wherever appropriate and consistent with procurement policy. Replacing consultants during project delivery can result in the unnecessary loss of valuable project knowledge, established stakeholder relationships, local understanding and design continuity. In many circumstances, retaining an effective consultant team may provide better value for government while continuing to support regional capability and investment.

The Institute is not suggesting that incumbent consultants should automatically retain appointments, nor that opportunities for new regional firms should be restricted. Rather, we encourage procurement settings that appropriately balance competition, value for money, continuity of project knowledge and the long-term development of regional capability.

Equally, the Institute is not seeking any reduction in standards or compromise to probity, competition or project quality. On the contrary, we believe procurement settings can better recognise the contribution regional architectural practices make through local knowledge, established community relationships, continuity of delivery and long-term investment in Queensland communities. Well-designed procurement processes should strengthen competition while also delivering better project outcomes and broader public value.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the Institute would welcome consideration of several practical initiatives, including:

- reviewing procurement requirements to ensure tender criteria remain proportionate to project scale and risk
- creating clearer pathways for capable regional architectural practices to tender as lead consultants on appropriate projects
- requiring meaningful regional participation within consultant teams for regionally based projects
- giving greater recognition within evaluation criteria to demonstrated local knowledge, regional presence and community understanding
- considering smaller procurement packages or staged procurement models that enable capable regional practices to participate
- supporting continuity of consultant engagement across project stages, where appropriate, to retain project knowledge, design integrity, stakeholder relationships and local expertise
- providing greater forward visibility of upcoming regional health infrastructure opportunities to assist regional practices in planning, partnering and investing in capability

Australian Institute of Architects QLD

ABN 72 000 023 012
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

2/270 Montague Road
West End, QLD 4101

P: (07) 3028 4100
qld@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

- establishing a regular industry forum between Health Infrastructure Queensland and regional architectural representatives to identify procurement barriers and share opportunities for continuous improvement.

Queensland's substantial health infrastructure pipeline presents an important opportunity to ensure procurement practices deliver not only efficient and high-quality infrastructure, but also stronger regional capability, sustainable local businesses and enduring value for Queensland communities.

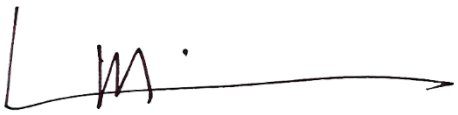
The Institute would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, Health Infrastructure Queensland and relevant departmental representatives to discuss these matters further and explore practical improvements to procurement processes. We would also be pleased to provide de-identified examples from our members to illustrate how current procurement settings are affecting regional participation and project delivery.

Thank you for considering these matters. We look forward to working constructively with the Queensland Government to ensure procurement arrangements continue to support excellent health infrastructure while strengthening regional capability and delivering lasting value for communities across Queensland.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Gardiner FRAIA
President
Queensland Chapter
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects



Roger Mainwood LFRAIA
Chair, Regional Affairs Committee
Queensland Chapter
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects