



Australian
Institute of
Architects

TAS

ABN 72 000 023 012

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

1/19a Hunter Street
Hobart, Tasmania 7000

P: (03) 6214 1500
tas@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

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Department of Treasury and Finance
21 Murray Street,
Hobart, Tasmania, 7000
By email to: purchasing@treasury.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Government procurement framework review - building and construction

On behalf of the Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) we would like to thank the government for the opportunity to be consulted in relation to the Tasmanian Government procurement framework review for building and construction.

The Institute notes that the review does not scope the procurement of building and construction consultancy services, such as architect services delivered by our members. However, we are providing comments here regarding the processes surrounding the procurement of building and construction works valued at \$250,000 or more, with particular reference to the involvement of the lead architect in the procurement process.

The Institute recommends that the lead consultant (architect) should be involved in contractor selection. Reasons for doing so—as listed below—are particularly important if an independent superintendent is not engaged at this stage:

1. The architect can appraise that the contractor's response to the tender will deliver the architect's design that has been approved by the relevant asset procurement agency.
2. There needs to be someone responsible for ensuring contractors' queries are answered in a manner that would not compromise the overall design intent. Similarly, if tender conferences are proposed then the architect has the opportunity to discuss design intent, which can help inform contractors.
3. The architect is the best person to answer queries during contractor selection as they are the most informed on the documentation, sequence and reasons why certain elements are included.
4. The architect can appraise that the contractor's proposed delivery team and processes will ensure the following:
 - a. architects and other consultants are permitted to inspect works (e.g. for quality and information that the government asset procurement agency may require for progress payments if a superintendent has not been appointed to carry out this role).
 - b. architects and other consultants are able to attend project control group meetings and will be appropriately consulted on any value management matters.
 - c. there will be an efficient, effective and timely delivery of the project, especially regarding sufficient time for re-documentation of any variations that may arise.

- d. there are effective and open communication channels between the contractor, architects and other consultants.
 - e. the architects are fully aware of any aspect of the tender proposals that may materially impact their own scopes of services through the delivery and ongoing documentation phase.
5. All of the above are key to ensuring that the Tasmanian Government, taxpayers and community receive high-quality, durable, and operationally efficient buildings that have the lowest long-term running costs.

Furthermore, involvement in this selection process also needs to be made explicit in the brief when tendering for consultancy services.

The threshold dollar amounts for the methods in which the market is approached to select a contractor clearly need to be reviewed against the original parameters that were used to specify these threshold amounts. We assume the underlying parameters are related to the typology, scale and complexity of works, however, the amounts noted in the letter do not appear to reflect the current market. To ensure threshold amounts remain valid, we suggest that they may be annually adjusted according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Construction Outputs Index.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important matter for all Tasmanians and the Tasmanian Government. Please feel free to contact us if you need further clarification or explanation on any of the above points.

Kind regards,



Stuart Tanner

Immediate Past President, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects



Jennifer Nichols

Executive Director, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with over 13,000 members across Australia and overseas. The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design. To learn more about the Institute, log on to www.architecture.com.au.

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/producer-price-indexes-australia/latest-release#construction>