

DRAFT FREMANTLE HARBOURS MASTERPLAN



Department of Transport

fremantleharboursmasterplan@transport.wa.gov.au



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Western Australian Chapter



Australian
Institute of
Architects

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 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 for the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture.

Architects are a key component of Australia's \$100 billion built environment sector and there are around 13,500 architectural businesses in Australia with around 40,000 employees. Approximately 25,000 people in the labour force hold architectural qualifications (Bachelor degree or higher) and architectural services in Australia in 2017-18 had revenue of \$6.1 billion and generated \$1.1 billion of profit.

The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design.

PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) in response to the proposed *Draft Fremantle Harbours Masterplan* published by the Department of Transport (DOT).
- At the time of this submission the Institute National President is Shannon Battisson FRAIA, and the WA Chapter President is Sandy Anghie RAIA. The A/Chief Executive Officer is Barry Whitmore.

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COVER PHOTO

The Australian Institute of Architects' WA Chapter recipient of 2022 George Temple Poole Award, the Julius Elischer Award for Interior Architecture and the Jeffrey Howlett Award for Public Architecture. Walyalup Civic Centre. Kerry Hill Architects.
Photographer: Nicholas Petrusia.

CONDITIONAL SUPPORT

The Institute conditionally supports the Draft Fremantle Harbours Masterplan with some suggested improvements around themes of visionary long-term concept/s, urban design (Including connectivity and transport), heritage, engagement with First Nations people, and planning and responding to climate change.

The Masterplan focusses on short-term local measures and is unlikely to achieve the desired long-term outcomes. The Harbours present a strategic opportunity to contribute to a sustainable urban renewal and broader vision for Fremantle. The key to successful transformative concepts will be collaboration with State agencies, City of Fremantle and other key stakeholders to minimize jurisdictional barriers and create financial and cultural opportunities.

DETAILED RESPONSE

1. Master plan accessibility

- The rail line needs consideration: currently it is a divisive built form element.
- Long-term impacts of sea level rise need to be considered. This could be an opportunity for innovative response (e.g. rail in dike / new park).
- The link between the new urban precinct and the beach needs more consideration. This should be car-free with provision of car bays beachside, with sleeved urban space.
- Consideration of sea breeze impact on Masterplan is required to alleviate unintended consequences of wind tunnels.

2. Waterfront activation

- The Masterplan needs to consider residential and mixed-use development to provide for higher density long-term housing options in line with the *Perth and Peel @3.5 million frameworks*¹. This will ensure more diverse and consistent activation of the precinct and long-term viability for local businesses.
- The Masterplan should include upgrades to Mews Road and recognize current and potential range of uses including boat clubs, public uses (e.g. outdoor stages for temporary events) to encourage further activation.
- There is the opportunity to attract more tourism through the provision of short-term accommodation along the underutilized groins (refer areas 3, 4 and 10).
- There is an opportunity to plan for shark-safe swimming areas within the Masterplan.

¹ <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/perth-and-peel-35-million-frameworks>

3. Improving pedestrian, cyclist and visual connections

- A broader planning and urban design vision is necessary, considering pedestrian prioritization and potentially pedestrian exclusive areas, beyond the currently considered Masterplan, to ensure activated, comfortable and safe streetscapes.²
- Making allowance for new land uses (in lieu of car parking) to accommodate current and future transport trends, such as: bicycle storage racks, electric scooter / bike hire stations, electric car charging bays, etc.

4. Increased activity through mixed use area

- There are very few opportunities to build up to the water in Perth and Peel. The Harbours Masterplan present potential development and activation opportunities which we recommend extending to underutilized areas (such as the groins and other commercial / industrial use areas).
- We identify key aspects that all precincts require to ensure long-term success, that the Masterplan does not consistently address:
 - o Amenity
 - o Accessibility (walkability and penetrability)
 - o Attendance and Activation
 - o Connectivity
 - o Diversity and Inclusion (in terms of diversity of demographic and building typology / land use)

5. Vision

- There is an opportunity to create a broader vision for Fremantle, prioritising the masterplan for the City. The Institute recommends that further identification of what is needed and broader consultation / engagement with other agencies and stakeholders is required to ensure a holistic long-term vision approach. Beyond land use activation within the urban precinct, the broader Masterplan seems to lack innovation, optimisation and implementation definition.
- Heritage:
 - o The Masterplan needs to address the colonial and First Nations people heritage sites through the urban interventions. This includes identifying and addressing the significance of State Heritage sites, City of Fremantle Heritage sites and Aboriginal Heritage sites (and broader significance of place). This does not appear to have been undertaken with the expected level of rigor and engagement for a precinct of such importance to Fremantle, Perth and Peel and the State.
 - o We recommend the engagement of appropriate heritage consultant/s and historians to undertake the necessary background work to better inform the Masterplan.

² Refer cities such as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Zurich, Hamburg and Vancouver have introduced urban design and integrated planning strategies to minimise urban car use and create exclusive pedestrian areas. <https://thecityfix.com/blog/five-cities-show-future-walkability-active-transport-priscila-pacheco/> and <https://www.narcity.com/vancouver/most-walkable-places-in-canada-has-metro-vancouver-cities-in-the-top-5>

- We also recommend more proactive engagement of and co-design with First Nations People in addressing the Aboriginal Heritage sites and the precinct more broadly.
- Climate Change:
 - The AR6 Report of the International Panel on Climate Change (Chapter 12)³ a coastal area loss of 350km² over the period 1984 – 2018 having already occurred in Western Australia, as evidenced from satellite observations.
 - Therefore, it is imperative that the Western Australian government undertake scientific modelling of potential sea level rise under varying temperature increase scenarios and model the cost / economic impacts on urban and infrastructure precincts to assess investment solutions.
 - The Institute identifies inherent unconsidered risk associated with sea level rise that has not been addressed by the Masterplan. The Masterplan requires a robust strategy focussed on resilience and innovation to address this risk.
 - Placing the responsibility of flooding and permanent sea level rise with owners and occupiers will impact the insurability, ability to access finance and economic viability for these consumers.
- Built Environment response:
 - The urban precinct appears to have investigated potential future development. However, the rendered 'building boxes' are inadequately defined and require further articulation of floor space, height and bulk limits. We recommend undertaking a built form study of the area to ensure consistency with broader urban vision of Fremantle and preserved view corridors, as intended.
 - The Institute advocates for a zero-carbon construction industry by 2030, as our built environment accounts for 39% of all carbon emissions globally, with operational emissions accounting for 28%⁴. The Masterplan is silent on carbon / sustainability targets and does not cross-reference to an active State or local policy. There is further opportunity for the precinct to lead by example by:
 - Incentivisation of adaptive reuse of existing underutilised building stock within the precinct;
 - Requirement for life-cycle and flood-risk assessments for all new buildings;
 - Incentivisation of zero carbon (or low carbon) construction methodology (including waste) and materials (which connects to other incentivisation of new material industry e.g. green concrete, cross-laminated timber, and others);
 - Urban design and master planning focussed on higher density urban and suburban development to reduce urban sprawl, manage

³ Steffen, W., Rockström, J., Richardson, K., Lenton, T.M., Folke, C., Liverman, D., Summerhayes, C.P., Barnosky, A.D., Cornell, S.E., Crucifix, M., Donges, J.F., Fetzer, I., Lade, S.J., Scheffer, M., Winkelmann, R., and Schellnhuber, H.J. 2018. Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene. PNAS August 14, 2018 vol. 115 no. 33

⁴ WorldGBC (2019). New report: the building and construction sector can reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Source: <https://www.worldgbc.org/news-media/WorldGBC-embodied-carbon-report-published>

- the heat island effect, respond to stormwater, address transport and improve connectivity.⁵
- Reduction of car parking and requirements for parking for new developments.
- Future technology planning:
- The Masterplan has the potential to plan for, within its intended 40 year trajectory, for:
 - Declining car use and alternate modes of transport
 - Potential for on-site wind, tide or solar power generation options
 - Future of rail line – noting planned relocation of container port (Westport)

⁵ Sourced from the Institute's response to the State's recently commenced process of developing sectoral emissions reduction strategies to transition the economy to net zero (SERS). Available: https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/211217-Aust_Inst_Architects_SERS-response-letter.pdf?_zs=Hh1Jm&_zl=3Je52