



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

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Mr Tim Baker
CEO
City of Gold Coast
PO Box 5042
GOLD COAST MAIL CENTRE QLD 9726
via email: ceo@goldcoast.qld.gov.au

Re: Position of the City Architect

Dear Mr Baker

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) on the Gold Coast, throughout Queensland, and within our nation, as well as the growing importance of architecture to this city on the international stage.

It has come to our attention that the position of City Architect / Executive Coordinator Economy, Planning and Environment Directorate is currently undergoing consideration for some changes and perhaps consolidation. News of this kind is of considerable concern to the Institute. We remain vigilant and proactive about the future status of the role of City Architect within any region or city in Australia, and in my role of Queensland Chapter President, I particularly value the high standing that our regions have earned in this space. We are therefore justifiably apprehensive about the City of Gold Coast reconsidering its corporate structure in relation to this role, and the impact that the sixth largest city has as a role model in setting an example for the value of architecture and design in the city building of Australia.

We reference the change a few years back for the office of the City Architect to move from directly reporting to the CEO to its current portfolio of Economy, Planning and Environment. As seeking the best outcomes for a city sits at the very heart of Council's remit, the Institute spoke out against severing the relationship between the City Architect and the CEO at that time, and, as the peak body for architecture in Australia representing over 14,000 members nationally and nearly 300 members on the Gold Coast, it consistently urges that the role and office of City Architect is progressively championed and not diminished or constrained.

As the only local authority in Queensland to have a dedicated City Architect position, our industry sector looks to the City of Gold Coast for thought and practice leadership in the built environment. The current City Architect, Jemima Rosevear, brings to the team an exceptional experience as a former Associate Director of the renowned Queensland practice, Arkhefield, where she was involved in the business of running a design studio, gaining great appreciation of the balance between profitability and client satisfaction with being responsible for shaping and delivering the strategic direction of a corporation. Her industry skills and registration by the Board of Architects of Queensland (BOAQ) equip her with the ability to engage with all stakeholders fairly while maintaining a contract with the community to seek best practice outcomes.

In fact, as leader of the City Architect team, having a registered architect at the helm is what enables the City of Gold Coast to claim the privilege as one of the few regional cities in Australia to have a City Architect, position, a significant milestone in any aspiring urban centre.

As a key role of the City Architect is to build Council's capacity to recognise, assess, and pursue quality design, these goals are fulfilled through a myriad of actions that involve policy, advocacy, and education. In addition, the City Architect has a role in shaping Council's own projects, of which may be numerous in the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The role contributes also to assisting council with design decisions and guidance throughout the city, wherever that assistance might be needed. In fact, as one of Australia's fastest growing cities in terms of new development, our ideal sub-tropical climate means that urban design – the form, and space of new buildings as well as the meaningful connection of new development to our existing local values – needs to be responded to and guided by the City Architect.


The role of the City Architect is also to educate and guide staff and Councillors and is therefore crucial and diverse, representing an investment towards achieving win-win, well negotiated outcomes for both the development proponents and the community interest. Well qualified, solutions-oriented, skilled staff often negotiate outcomes that keep council out of court, more than paying back on the investment made by taxpayers for the role. In fact, these savings can be significant. Staff that maintain a strictly controlled registration with the BOAQ through required Continuing Professional Development (CPD) make thoroughly considered decisions that avoid costly legal challenges. The math should demonstrate that the investment in an architect not only saves Council's reputation and real dollars, but also builds its brand as design – leading international city.

In fact, the City of Gold Coast City Architect team is one of the most awarded design policy teams in government in Australia, with award winning projects spread over many years with the Australian Institute of Architects, World Architecture Forum, Institute of Landscape Architects, National Urban Design Awards, Gold Coast Urban Design Awards, Planning Institute of Australia, and the winner of several Awards from the State Government (Deputy Premiers Urban Design Awards). The current City Architect role also comprehensively includes the gamut of responsibilities that have set the scene for Gold Coast City Council to be respected as a leader in urban and architectural education initiatives.

In closing, I ask that any redefinition of the role be undertaken carefully and in consultation with the peak industry body for architecture so that the excellent achievements to date are not eroded. The privilege of having a City Architect and Council's ability to pursue excellence in design should never be compromised.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns in more detail or to assist in any review of the position should you consider it helpful.

Yours sincerely



Amy Degenhart LFRAIA
Queensland Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects

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