



17 April 2026

Julie-Anne Burgess
Chief Executive
SA Housing Trust
GPO Box 1669
Adelaide SA 5001

Sent via email: housingcustomers@sa.gov.au

Dear Ms Burgess,

Procurement Approach – SAHT-1612 Design Services RFQ

I write on behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects (SA Chapter) regarding the SA Housing Trust's current procurement for design services at Thomas Street, Unley (SAHT-1612).

Through its review of the procurement documentation, the Institute understands that respondents are expected to include, as part of the RFQ submission requirements:

- a concept design response, including built form, massing and interface resolution;
- an urban design narrative addressing place-making and public realm outcomes; and
- a planning and density justification strategy, including Code Amendment considerations.

The Institute advocates for the value of design and recognises the Trust's commitment to high quality [Design and Building Standards](#) to support the safety and wellbeing of tenants. However, the inclusion of concept design work at RFQ stage raises broader concerns for the profession and for procurement practice more generally.

In particular:

- the requirement represents substantive design work undertaken without remuneration at a pre-appointment stage;
- it introduces intellectual property and professional liability risks prior to engagement; and
- it may limit equitable participation, particularly for smaller practices with fewer resources to absorb upfront costs.

This raises broader considerations regarding procurement proportionality, value for money and equitable market participation.



These considerations are consistent with the intent of the South Australian Government's procurement framework, including principles of value for money, fair competition and fit-for-purpose sourcing.

The Institute has raised similar concerns in recent engagements nationally and locally, identifying this to be an increasing risk across procurement processes .

Best practice procurement for architectural services typically separates:

- Stage 1: capability, experience and methodology; and
- Stage 2 (shortlisted): design response, supported by appropriate honoraria.

This approach supports both fair competition and higher-quality design outcomes.

The Institute is also conscious of the current RFQ submission timeframe, with submissions due in May, and would appreciate a prompt response to assist practices in appropriately scoping and calibrating their responses.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the SA Housing Trust to explore procurement models that maintain the Trust's objectives while reducing government and industry procurement risks.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to further dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Glasson'.

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Craig Glasson
Executive Leader SA (interim)
Australian Institute of Architects