



Australian Institute of Architects

1 August 2016

Hon Colin Barnett MLA
Premier of Western Australia
1 Parliament Place
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

NEW WA MUSEUM

The Australian Institute of Architects advocates on behalf of the architecture profession and the community to enhance the quality and amenity of our built environment. We take this opportunity to congratulate your government on bringing to fruition designs for Western Australia's new museum.

A number of headline projects and announcements have occurred in recent times, but yesterday's release of some preliminary museum images certainly marks the launch of one of the State's most important projects. The arts have to compete with all other forms of government expenditure and the present museum is testament to the past under investment in one of our most important cultural institutions. Beginning with the ill-fated start in St Georges Terrace in 1887, the eventual realisation of the Jubilee Wing in 1897 and adaptation of the Old Perth Gaol, the museum staggered along with piecemeal and often dissonant development in several stages, until the 1970s. Numerous attempts were made to unify the whole, without success. An unintended legacy of this approach has been the construction of four very important heritage places.

It is a great moment to see commitment to a long term insightful solution to such a longstanding problem. After a lengthy procurement process, the Brookfield Multiplex, OMA and Hassell vision for uniting the disparate elements and providing space to bring the WA Museum to national standards, is an exciting moment in Western Australia's history. The museum does not necessarily demand a landmark building, but meeting the required accommodation on the cultural centre site required a large amount of development. This combined with the elegant shed that has been devised by the group has resulted in an important landmark.

We are pleased to see a solution that is not a tortured sculpture, nor something that is more about gesture than providing workable space. Instead, OMA has offered a series of spaces and links that will provide a high level of utility. Traditional museums offer a single point of entry and the attempt here has been to provide increased street level interaction and the prospect of multiple entries, which is more in line with contemporary urban planning and thinking.

Interfacing with the heritage buildings is an enormous challenge and there is much still to do to ensure the success of movement through and connections to those buildings. However, the overarching concept is bold, elegant and not overly complex. It should sit well in the cultural centre and in the northern aspect from the city.

The future for the museum looks very bright and all involved are to be congratulated on the achievements to date. It is now vitally important that the concept is delivered and that the team that produced the solution are the team that carry it forward in close collaboration with the museum. It is going to be an exciting ride and 2020 should see the new museum lead the remainder of the cultural centre into the future, no doubt becoming a significant attraction for visitors to Perth.

As always the Australian Institute of Architects is available to assist the State Government in any way possible throughout this momentous period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Griffiths', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PHILIP GRIFFITHS FRAIA RIBA M.ICOMOS
STATE PRESIDENT WESTERN AUSTRALIA

cc: Hon John Day MLA, Minister for Culture and the Arts