

PROCUREMENT: INVITED DESIGN COMPETITIONS

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS & CASE STUDY

Design competitions offer a unique opportunity to seek high quality design as the major selection criteria for a project. With an appropriate budget in place, competitions can generate excellent outcomes for clients, opening up the field, generating public interest in the project, and stimulating the transport industry. Investing time to fully develop the competition design brief assists in attracting quality submissions.

There are different types of design competitions that vary in their scope and application. Decisions about which competition process is used will depend on the size, objectives, time constraints and design flexibility of the project.

Design competitions can be used in combination with Expression of Interest or Request for Proposals, seeking design ideas from a limited pool of architects. Competitions are viewed as a way to promote innovation, a range of ideas, thinking from different minds, providing solutions not previously imagined and creating opportunities for emerging practices. Competitions can offer the public a raised awareness of the importance of good design and the value they add in creating an enduring legacy

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect assists by advising on the characteristics and virtues of each form of competition.

ACTION TO BENEFIT GOOD DESIGN:

- Appoint a jury that includes a mix of specialists that will generate a broad level of interest and engender the respect of the architectural design profession and the broader community.
- Appoint a competition advisor to assist in the process and offer impartiality and confidentiality.
- Ensure that the competition advisor and brief writer set-out the competition process and define the rules to avoid false assumptions.
- Set a clear, unambiguous brief with relevant background material, the vision and the rules, and one that draws on good examples and follows a well-laid-out format.
- Engage other stakeholders and planners to review the brief.
- Identify and be clear about the proposed method for delivery of the built project.
- Get the tone right: It's important to inspire people to get the vision right.
- Familiarise entrants with the site by ensuring the context is explained.

- Establish and publish the criteria by which the entries will be judged.
- Establish a reasonable budget and programme that accurately reflects the brief.
- Offer sufficient prize money to attract competitors.
- Pay bidders for work in a second stage and pay architects for ideas taken from unsuccessful bids.
- Should the project proceed the winning team will be engaged to deliver the project.

“Competitions take us to places we never expected to be. We don't know where we might end up, but it won't be where we intended, and that really gets us thinking”

Nick Johnson, Urban Splash

AIA Endorsement

The Australian Institute of Architects supports the use of architectural competitions for the design and completion of certain types of buildings as a mechanism to encourage design excellence and innovation.

Guidance notes can be found on their website:

www.architecture.com.au

CASE STUDY: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT BICYCLE STORAGE

The Department of Transport Victoria is responsible for the provision of bicycle storage facilities in train station precincts. The storage facilities provide a sheltered and secure cage for up to 28 bicycles. Typically they are sized to fit within 3 car spaces, providing for increased bicycle travel and reduced reliance upon cars.

In an effort to elevate and celebrate the value of cycling associated with public transport, the Department undertook a design competition inviting a limited pool of architects to provide design proposals for storage facilities. The brief was to provide the same footprint and capacity of the existing storage facilities but with a new design proposal to meet the project objectives.

A shortlist of four design teams was created. Their selection was based on demonstrated high quality design as recognised by peers, capacity to work with government and/or community stakeholders and previous experience in projects of an urban or public realm. In recognition of the design work to be provided, the teams were remunerated a small sum, and required to produce A3 documents which outlined the proposal through drawings, illustrations and written statements.

Following the submissions, two firms were selected for interview to further describe their proposals. The successful proponent was then appointed to further develop the proposal collaboratively with fabricators, and produce construction documentation to facilitate the off site fabrication.

KEY INITIATIVES TO PROTECT THE DESIGN QUALITY:

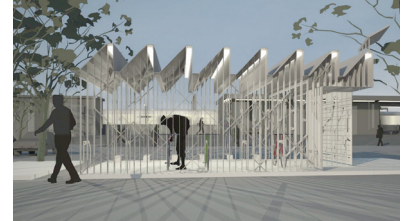
- The selection and assessment panel included two members with design expertise.
- The brief was clear and concise outlining objectives as well as the detailed functional requirements, thereby allowing the teams to focus on the design outcomes.
- The Client was assisted by a Design Champion.

CONSTRAINTS:

- The selection process was limited to those on the Government's Construction Supply Register and a pre-determined shortlist. OVGA suggest next time this could be overcome by inviting expressions of interest with a view to shortlisting.
- A limit on the number of presentation drawings be defined as appropriate to each project.

WHAT WORKED WELL:

- The process of shortlisting recognised the value of the design teams input by remuneration.
- The shortlisting process with oral presentations, focussed the client selection process and identified the design teams' capacity to work with the Department and Stakeholder's.



Architect: Phooey Architects
Client: Department of Transport
Commissioned: 2010