

CASE STUDY

Melbourne Park, Margaret Court Arena

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Western Precinct project will add an extra 1,500 seats to the 23-year old Margaret Court Arena, bringing its capacity to 7,500. The arena, which opened with Rod Laver Arena in 1988, will become the third enclosed stadium at Melbourne Park and will fill the gap between the 3,500-seat State Netball & Hockey Centre and the 10,500-seat Hisense Arena. A retractable roof and new spectator facilities will also be added to the venue. When complete, Margaret Court Arena will be able to host basketball, netball and concerts, in addition to tennis. The Western Precinct project is part of a \$363 million larger project, which will also feature eight new indoor courts, 13 outside courts, a plaza and a pedestrian link between AAMI Park, Melbourne Park and the MCG.

The Western Precinct design team is a joint venture between Melbourne's NH Architecture and international firm Populous and the managing contractor is Lend Lease. The Margaret Court Arena refurbishment is scheduled to be fully operational in 2015. The project is being delivered in three stages:

1. Enabling works, foundations and concrete structures (2012).
2. Erection of the roof (2013).
3. Commissioning of the operable roof and all major services, construction of main building façades and completion of 'back of house' facilities including green room, anti-doping facilities, change rooms (2014).



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KEY INITIATIVES ADOPTED TO PROTECT THE DESIGN QUALITY

- » The design team was appointed early in the process to work directly with the client Major Projects Victoria (MPV) and stakeholders to resolve the final project scope.
- » Adequate time was given during Concept Design to establish the scope and included consideration of constructability challenges.
- » Adequate time provided to allow for design team to consult fully with stakeholders, with clear hold (review) points integrated into the design program.
- » Design team provided informal advice on the building tender to the client.
- » As lead consultant the architect was the primary point of contact for the design.
- » Strong integration of the architectural, engineering and other specialist design consultants throughout the process, with strong involvement of the engineering consultants from the early stages of the project.
- » The client (MPV) required ongoing contact with the design team following novation.
- » Design team developed a positive relationship with all stakeholders.
- » The design was able to evolve with the appointed managing contractor at novation, with time for managing contractor's input into the design prior to agreeing the final Warranted Maximum Price (WMP).
- » The project was regularly re-costed at key hold points, and a WMP was agreed based on the detailed design. This allowed the required flexibility in establishing the best design solution within budget plus allowing adequate time for extensive site assessment and exploration of latent conditions.
- » Provision for independent design advice at all key project milestones.



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CONSTRAINTS

- » Complexity of project, including new roof design, and extensive latent condition challenges due to the brownfield site.
- » Availability of background information within the brief; including existing plans, surveys and detail of any latent conditions.
- » Complexity of building program which was required to allow for the Australian Open to utilise the venue annually thereby restricting construction to between February and November. Responding to moral rights issues of the original design for the adjacent Rod Laver Arena and protecting its original design intent.

WHAT WORKED WELL

- » Providing sufficient time to establish the scope and develop the tender documents.
- » Formal and informal interviews with tenderers, with a focus on people and team in the tender evaluations.
- » Getting the best people for each team: a competent design team and an experienced management contractor.

