

PROCUREMENT: 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 profession. 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. They are often staged and may be structured as either one or two stages.

Equally, 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



Seaford Life Saving Club, Robert Simeoni Architects

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: SEAFORD LIFE SAVING CLUB

The Seaford Life Saving Club was a \$1.24 million re-development of a new life saving club building located in an active sand dune overlooking the beach. Designed as a collection of buildings with residual outdoor spaces, it consolidated several existing buildings, which incorporated life saving club and community facilities, a small café and toilets.

A Masterplan process was undertaken by Frankston City Council to determine the project scope, budget and most suitable siting of the proposed facility. The Council held a national design competition to identify the most suitable architectural team to meet the project objectives for design excellence, demonstrating the successful integration of a built community facility into a sensitive and ecologically significant coastal landscape.

The competition process, endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects, invited architectural teams to submit up to six A3 Boards inclusive of drawings, diagrams and written statements which outlined the vision, principles and an outline of approach. It was a two-stage process, forming a shortlist of four teams who were paid a small remuneration fee for the second stage. The second stage required the shortlisted proponents to present their respective proposals to the jury and stakeholders, with a 3D representation and preliminary indicative costing. The winner of the competition, Robert Simeoni Architects, was then appointed as the design architect for the project to develop the proposal further with the client and stakeholders. The building contract was undertaken as a traditional lump sum contract.

KEY INITIATIVES TO PROTECT THE DESIGN QUALITY:

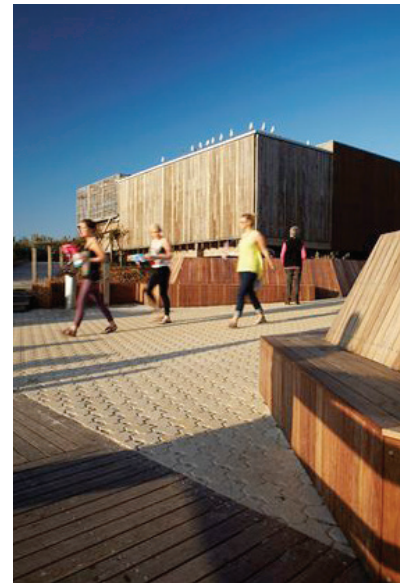
- The preparation of a master plan and feasibility to test the project scope, budget and siting prior to the competition allowed architect to focus on a high quality design outcome, confident the project had been robustly tested.
- The client retained a commitment to the design quality and intent of the project and the process.
- A Design Competition Advisor and Design Champion assisted the client.
- Valuing the role of the architect consistently throughout the design development, documentation and tendering process.

CONSTRAINTS:

- The architect continued some small engagement during the construction process, however it would have benefitted from full engagement to assist in interpretation of the documents and address design queries.

WHAT WORKED WELL:

- The endorsement of the Australian Institute of Architects Competition Guidelines, and appointment of a Design Competition Advisor.
- The process of shortlisting and provision of remuneration recognised the value of the design teams input.
- The use of oral presentations assisted in focussing the client selection process and identifying the design teams' capacity to work with client and stakeholders.
- The client followed recommended and endorsed design competition processes with which all designers were familiar.



Architect: Robert Simeoni Architects
Photography: John Gollings
Commissioned: 2009

In 2008 the building won the National Australian Institute of Architects Award for Public Architecture and the Australian Institute of Architects Marion Mahony Award for Interior Architecture (VIC).