

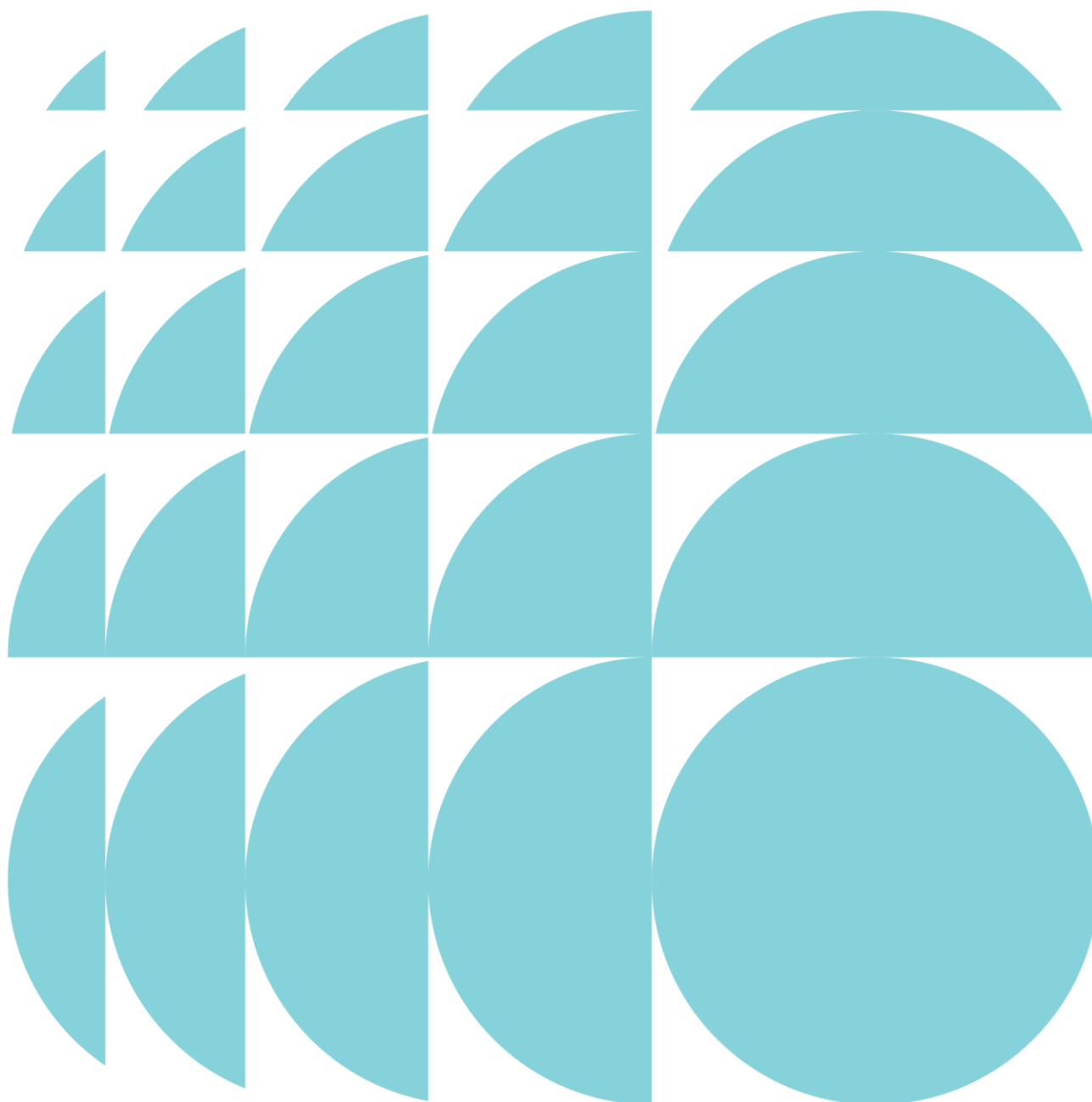
ETHOS URBAN

Design Excellence Strategy

16 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle
UON Honeysuckle City Campus

Submitted to Department of Planning &
Environment on behalf of the University of
Newcastle

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1.0 Introduction

This Design Excellence Strategy has been prepared by Ethos Urban on behalf of the University of Newcastle (UON). It supports a State Significant Development Application (SSD 9262) seeking Concept Plan approval for the development of a new UON Honeysuckle City Campus at 16 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle.

2.0 Background

The UON's NeW Futures Strategic Plan (2016-2025) establishes the University's strategies to support their global and national agenda in education, research and innovation. The Plan includes a long-term vision of delivering new education modes focused on compact campus settings in central locations to promote engagement and collaboration with the community, and to ensure the University continues to attract the best local and international students and academic staff.

The UON Honeysuckle City Campus Concept Plan is the next step in achieving this vision and it follows the recent completion of the University's iconic NeW Space building in Newcastle's Central Business District. The Concept Plan will outline the planning and design framework to guide the future staged development of the site for academic and associated uses over a 15-20 year period.

This Design Excellence Strategy outlines the principles and procedures that will be followed for the delivery of the Concept Plan through subsequent detailed applications. This will ensure that the architectural and urban design of the campus achieves design excellence and positively contributes to the broader Honeysuckle area and the Newcastle City Centre.

The Strategy more specifically articulates the proposed design excellence process and demonstrates how design excellence will be achieved throughout the various stages of the development.

3.0 Purpose

This report accompanies the SSD Concept Plan application prepared in response to the SEARs that include:

'Provide a design excellence strategy in consultation with, and to the satisfaction of, the Government Architect NSW for the future detail design and subsequent delivery of the development that:

- demonstrates how design excellence will be achieved*
- includes a design review process, including opportunities for review by the NSW State Design Review Panel and outline of how feedback will be documented and addressed.'*

In relation to the level of competitive process relevant to the proposal, the Strategy outlines a process that includes an appropriate level of competitiveness without undertaking an "architectural design competition". In this instance, both the SEARs issued by DPE and the provision of Newcastle LEP do not prescribe the need for an 'architectural design competition'. This is an established and standard approach for regional locations tailored to the unique circumstances in these locations including the perception of the local community and stakeholders.

In lieu of a full architectural design competition, the Strategy includes a competitive procurement process that, together with consultation with design panels and assessment against design excellence criteria, inherently encourages design excellence as has been demonstrated with the recently constructed NeW Space building by the University. With the new State Design Review Panel in place, the University is committed to liaising with the Panel and incorporating its recommendations as an additional safeguard to achieving design excellence.

In relation to the Concept Plan application, being 12 months into the design process and on the eve of lodgement it is not possible to undergo lengthy consultation with the newly introduced panel before lodgement, however, initial consultation has already been had and is intended to continue throughout the assessment process. As outlined in the SEARs, the Concept Plan EIS shall "describe the design process leading to the concept plan design".



Figure 1 Indicative UoN Honeysuckle City Campus Massing

Source: Cox Architecture

4.0 Description and Proposed Development

The total campus precinct comprises three parcels of land within Honeysuckle, identified as Sites 1-3 in Figure 2. The campus has an overall area of 20,412m² and comprises an undeveloped parcel of land at Site 1 and an at-grade car park and former heavy rail line across Sites 2 and 3 (refer to Figure 2). The site area does not include Wright Lane which runs between Sites 1, 2 and 3 or Civic Lane which borders the southern boundary of the Site.

The Site is legally described as:

- Lots 1,2 and 3 in DP 1163346 (Site 1);
- Lot 21 in DP 1165985 (part Sites 2 and 3); and
- Part Lot 2 in DP 1226145.

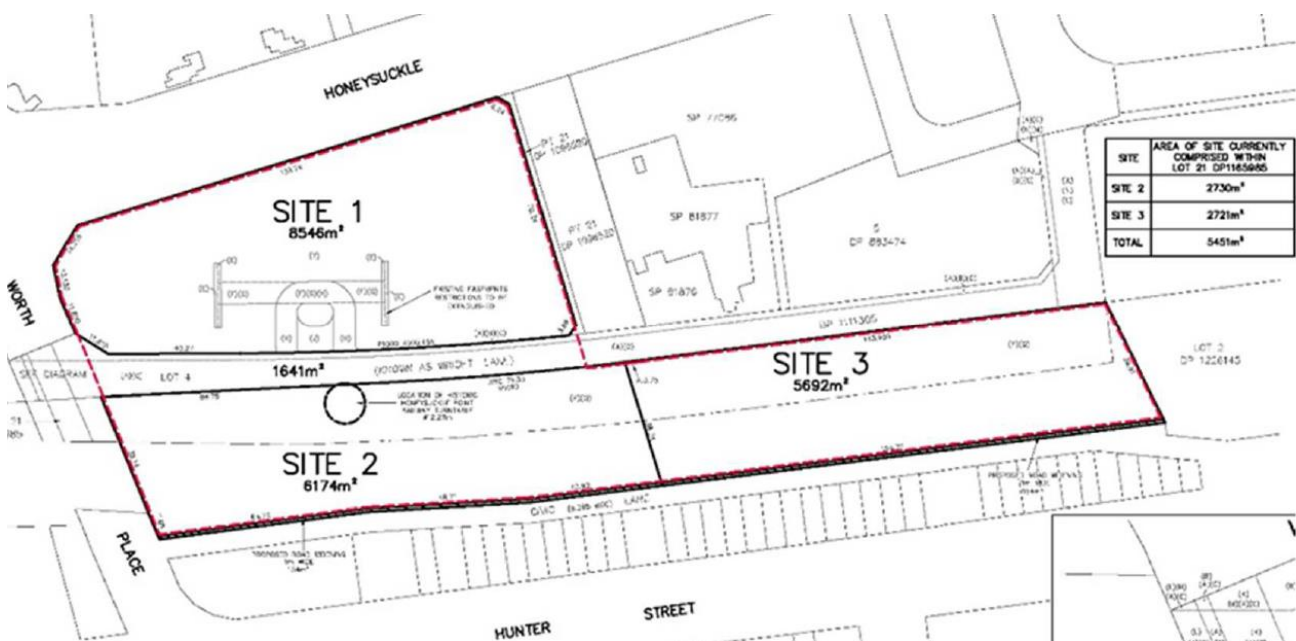


Figure 2 The site

Source: Cox Architecture

The Site is earmarked for the extension of the UON City Campus which will comprise up to seven buildings for a range of academic and associated uses, including student accommodation (refer to Figure 3). The campus will be established over time in stages, with the first stage (Building A1) identified for the University's School of Creative Industries (SOCI) and an 'Innovation Hub'.

Within each of the identified development stages, the Concept Plan defines specific building envelopes, desired uses and the location of through-site links, open space, and public domain elements that together will form the detailed design and delivery of a holistic city campus.



Figure 3 Development blocks within the Concept Plan

Source: Cox

5.0 Design Excellence

The UON is committed to a Design Excellence Strategy and process that ensures design excellence will be achieved throughout the various stages of the development. A combination of proven techniques is proposed to ensure that design excellence can be achieved.

The design excellence provisions at Clause 7.5(3) of Newcastle Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 seek to deliver the highest standard of architecture and urban design. It requires that all new development in the Newcastle City Centre exhibits 'design excellence' and criteria are prescribed in the clause that must be met for this to be achieved. The Site is within the defined Newcastle City Centre area and as such must satisfy the design excellence criteria under this clause.

In addition, Clause 7.5(4) specifies criteria that trigger the requirement for a design competition to be undertaken for a development, however the development proposed under the Concept Plan or subsequent detailed design applications does not trigger any of the specific criteria. Whilst UON is not required to undertake a competitive design process, Clause 7.5(3) of the Newcastle LEP will be achieved through UON's own alternative design excellence process, which has been specifically developed for this project and which includes a competitive procurement process as detailed below.

5.1 Design Excellence Approach

This Strategy sets out techniques that follow a clear and iterative process where the critical review and input of design ideas can be exchanged between the design professionals on the UON project team as well as external independent design experts.

The approach is consistent with what has been adopted for other major State Significant Development projects in Sydney and beyond. By following this framework and its design development process, the community and the consent authority can have confidence that an excellent design outcome will be achieved.

The design excellence strategy, as set out in this document, revolves around four key elements:

- The engagement of an expert and varied design team through UON's established competitive procurement process, featuring;
 - Shortlisting of capable design firms and their key nominated team members who demonstrated experience in the achieving design excellence through previous projects;
 - Inclusion of a concept design criteria for evaluation of the proponents submission with a requirement to evidence how design excellence is achieved in the proponents proposed concept design;
 - A technical assessment of the concept design submission by Subject Matter Experts including an assessment of the proponents ability to achieve design excellence through their concept design submission;
 - A Concept Design Evaluation Panel to evaluate the concept design submission.
- The selection of an internal Design Review Panel and engagement with the NSW State Design Review Panel;
- The adoption of Design Guidelines that will guide the design development and assist the Design Review Panel in their deliberations;
- Engagement with other Design Advisors; and
- The implementation of reporting and review processes to safeguard design excellence and design integrity.

5.2 The Concept Plan Design Process to Date

Design Framework

The University of Newcastle is committed to buildings that not only meet their specific educational and services requirements but are well designed, well resolved and appropriate to site and location.

The Structure Plan for the Honeysuckle Campus precinct provides a framework for the future delivery of high quality buildings and public domain detail. The design principles seek to create a precinct and new buildings that are:

- Engaged;
- Unique; and
- Sustainable.

The emphasis at Honeysuckle will be on quality and developing a coherent and consistent language on the new campus. The New Space building on Hunter Street, opened in late 2017 has been designed as a landmark expression of the University and its new commitment to establishing a greater presence in the CBD. It is not intended that the Honeysuckle Precinct complex will replicate this powerful and unique statement but create its own distinct character that complements the existing heritage context and new development within the Honeysuckle precinct.

Design Excellence Requirements

The Newcastle LEP outlines the city's Design Excellence criteria. The Structure Plan provides a framework that outlines the overall requirements of key elements within the site as the basis for design excellence. The Structure Plan identifies:

- The overall form of the development and its relationship to the quality and amenity of the public domain;
- Impacts on view corridors identified in the Newcastle City Development Control Plan 2012;
- Heritage issues and streetscape constraints;
- The location of tall buildings, having regard to the need to achieve an acceptable relationship with other buildings on the site and on neighbouring sites in terms of separation, setbacks, amenity and urban form;
- Bulk, massing and modulation of buildings;
- Street frontage heights; and
- Pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and service access, and circulation requirements.

Individual building designs must demonstrate:

- Whether a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location will be achieved; and
- How the development addresses:
 - Environmental impacts such as sustainable design, overshadowing, wind and reflectivity
 - The achievement of the principles of ecologically sustainable development
 - The impact on, and any proposed improvements to, the public domain

To address the Design Excellence framework, design guidelines have been prepared for the precinct. These requirements identify the common elements intended to unite building designs within a strong public domain framework. The guidelines address:

- Design Principles
 - Planning Principles
 - Development Parcels
 - Building Heights
 - Setbacks
 - Address
 - Site Infrastructure
- Public Domain Strategies
 - Site Interfaces
 - Public Domain
- Public Domain Elements
 - Planting
 - Paving
 - Public Domain Lighting
 - Street Furniture
 - Public Art
 - Heritage Interpretation
- Built Form Elements
 - Articulation
 - Materials
 - Building Lighting
 - Building Signage
 - Sustainability

A series of control diagrams for each lot illustrates the built form requirements

5.3 UON Procurement Process

The University is invested in achieving design excellence outcomes throughout the procurement processes when delivering future developments in the Honeysuckle City Campus.

The University's procurement approach includes the following key features which contribute to the achievement of design excellence outcomes in the procurement process:

- Shortlisting of capable design firms and their key nominated team members who demonstrated experience in the achieving design excellence through previous projects;
- Inclusion of a concept design criteria for evaluation of the proponents submission with a requirement to evidence the approach to 'Better Placed' and how design excellence is achieved in the proponents proposed concept design;
- A technical assessment of the concept design submission by Subject Matter Experts including an assessment of the proponents ability to achieve design excellence through their concept design submission;
- A Concept Design Evaluation Panel to evaluate the concept design submission.

The above procurement process demonstrates UON's commitment to achieving design excellence.

5.4 Design Review Panels

Ongoing engagement with the State Design Review Panel (SDRP) and the establishment of a UON Design Review Panel (UDRP) forms a major component of the overall framework to ensure design excellence is achieved. An overview of the role that the two Panels will have throughout the design process is provided below.

5.4.1 State Design Review Panel

The recently established SDRP is convened by the NSW Government Architect and its role is to provide independent, expert and impartial design advice on significant development proposals across the State. The SDRP evaluates the design quality of a proposal by reviewing it against the objectives of *Better Placed* and the requirements of any relevant planning instruments.

The UON project team is committed to meaningful engagement with the SDRP for this significant project and endeavours to meet with the SDRP at key stages throughout the design process in accordance with their Terms of Reference and the project SEARs for each stage.

Feedback provided by the SDRP both verbally and through written minutes will be considered by the design team and applied to the project where practicable. A summary of how the proposal responds to matters raised by the SDRP through the consultation process will be documented within the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for each stage.

5.4.2 UON Design Review Panel

The UDRP will be a project-specific panel, compiled specially to oversee the development of the new campus, and will be tasked with providing independent, impartial advice on the design of buildings, infrastructure, landscapes and public spaces being delivered. The detailed process, governance, and composition of the UDRP will be outlined in the UDRP Terms of Reference and are discussed broadly in the sections below.

Objectives

The objectives of the UDRP are:

- To provide independent, high-level, design advice for UON Honeysuckle City Campus.
- To advise on the implementation of the Design Guidelines adopted by UON (see Section 5.5).
- To help ensure 'design excellence' is achieved.

Role

The UDRP will review and provide feedback on the detailed design of each stage of the proposal as it emerges. This approach ensures the UDRP interacts with the design team and their advisors early in the process to more fully contribute to the design as it emerges and develops. More specifically, the UDRP will be required to:

- Meet at key milestones during the preparation of the Development Application, up to the lodgement of the application;
- Provide feedback on design development and advise on the application of the Design Guidelines to key design elements;
- Provide feedback on responses to any design-related conditions of the Concept Plan, if required; and
- Review design and confirm design integrity is retained in any s4.55 modifications to the SSD approved plans, and construction drawings (if necessary).

It is noted that the role of the UDRP is advisory, and that its recommendations are non-binding. The UDRP will not be responsible for authorising any expenditure, works or consultancies, and all meetings and discussions will be confidential unless otherwise confirmed.

Figure 4 below illustrates the iterative process and relationship between the UDRP, Design Team, and advisors through the design and delivery stages of the development.

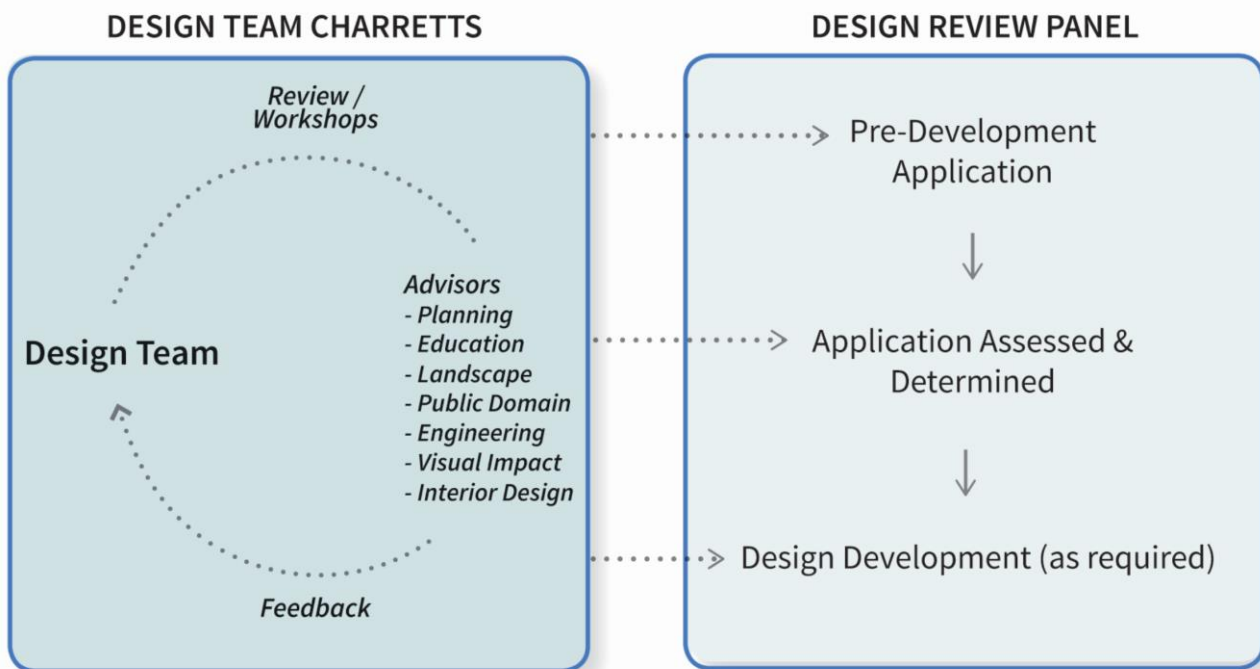


Figure 4 Process and relationship between Design Team, Advisors and Design Review Panel

Composition

The UDRP will comprise of minimum three independent experts in the fields of architecture and/or urban design. The independent members of the UDRP will be required to demonstrate their relevant design expertise and experience.

The chair of the UDRP may approve changes to the UDRP membership, with the concurrence of the proponent and DPE, including extensions to appointments and alternate members.

Operational Matters

The UDRP will meet at key milestones, to review the design of all components up to the lodgement of each Development Application. The UDRP is expected to provide verbal advice and comments at any meetings and review material circulated prior to a meeting and confirm written advice, minutes, and action lists. The UDRP may provide formal feedback on particular items when requested by a presenter. Feedback from the deliberations will be provided to the Design Team as soon as practical, either as recorded in meeting minutes, or in more detailed Advice Sheets attached to the minutes.

UON will provide secretarial services to assist the UDRP. An agenda will be prepared and circulated prior to each meeting, including a review of the minutes from the last meeting, discussion and feedback on the project, agreed actions moving forward, and a forward agenda. Deliberations will occur in closed session following any presentations and may include any invitees as relevant. The final minutes and formal feedback will be prepared by the secretariat but will be endorsed by the UDRP and issued by the Chair.

Independent Observer

Representatives of the Department of Planning and Environment and Government Architect Offices will be invited to attend sessions of the UDRP as observers.

Other Design Advisors

To provide additional technical advice, and design rigour to the various aspects of the proposal, UoN has also engaged a number of specialist consultants to act as expert advisors to the Design Team. These advisors have been tasked with providing on-going advice on technical matters and specialised operational matters as the design progresses, including critically evaluating the design and providing feedback to the Design Team at key milestones. This ensures that the final design achieves the relevant engineering, social, cultural and functional standards necessary.

5.5 Design Guidelines

To guide the architectural and urban design of the UON Honeysuckle City Campus, specific design principles and objectives have been developed for the site as a whole as well as each individual stage. These will be used as part of the evaluation and assessment process to determine whether each stage of the development achieves design excellence, and are detailed in the UON Honeysuckle City Campus Design Guidelines that accompany this Strategy at **Appendix A**. The Design Guidelines have been developed to shape development and assist in creating:

- A high standard of architectural and urban design, materials and detailing appropriate to the building type and location;
- A form and external appearance for each building that benefits the quality and amenity of the public domain;
- A unique and engaged campus that is welcoming to students, staff and visitors and contributes to a sense of identity and place;
- A functional and inclusive design that satisfies the varied uses and users of the university; and
- Development that meets the university's sustainability standards including demonstrating a commitment to social, environmental and economic leadership.

The Design Guidelines are specific to the new campus and ensure a high quality design and amenity outcome is achieved for the future visitors and neighbouring developments. Their application during the design development and assessment of each development stage will safeguard the delivery of an excellent and coherent vision for the campus.

5.6 Reporting and Review

This component of the Strategy confirms that the final design outcome has achieved design excellence, and that design excellence is translated through to the buildings' construction.

Design Excellence Statement

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement for each stage, a Design Statement will be prepared by the relevant architectural firm on the project team. This Statement will demonstrate how the proposed development has achieved the adopted Design Guidelines discussed in Section 5.5, how it achieves design excellence, how it addresses *Better Placed*, and how the design development has incorporated and addressed feedback from the SDRP and UDRP process.

Design Integrity

To ensure that design integrity is maintained, the nominated Design Team will also be retained throughout the design process for the relevant stage. In addition to preparing the relevant Development Application documentation, the Design Team will be expected to:

- Retain lead roles over the relevant design decisions in the preparation of the design drawings for a construction certificate for the preferred design;
- Retain lead roles over design decisions in the preparation of the design drawings for the contract documentation; and
- Maintain continuity during the construction phases to the completion of the project.

6.0 Conclusion

This Design Excellence Strategy uses tried and tested methods to ensure design excellence is achieved for the delivery of the UON Honeysuckle City Campus. It ensures the community and consent authority can have confidence in the project team achieving an excellent design outcome across the campus.