

Professor Philip Goad

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Founding Director, Melbourne School of Design*



7 May 2013

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: SSD 5752-2012 Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and
Entertainment Precinct – redevelopment of convention centre, exhibition
centre, entertainment facilities and associated public domain**

SYDNEY CONVENTION CENTRE, DARLING HARBOUR

I write with reference to the above Major Project Proposal, which includes as part of it the proposed demolition of the Sydney Convention Centre. This letter relates specifically to that component of the application.

I strongly object to any consideration of demolition and/or removal of the Sydney Convention Centre as part of the NSW State Government's proposed demolition and redevelopment of existing convention and exhibition facilities at Sydney's Darling Harbour.

The Sydney Convention Centre was completed and opened in 1988 as part of Australia's Bicentennial celebrations. It was designed by the internationally significant Australian architect, John Andrews (1933-) and contains within it, 21 significant in-situ works of art by renowned Australian painters and sculptors including Brett Whiteley, John Olsen, Ann Thomson, Tim Storrier and Lloyd Rees. In the building's forecourt facing the Sydney CBD is a spiral fountain designed by Australia's foremost fountain designer, Robert Woodward (1923-2013).

John Andrews AO, a graduate in architecture from the University of Sydney and Harvard University, was the designer of the CN Tower, Toronto (1976), at the time the world's tallest tower and the world's tallest free-standing tower, the Intelsat Headquarters, Washington DC (1980-88), the Miami Passenger Terminal (1967), and Gund Hall (1968) in Boston, home to Harvard University's famous Graduate School of Design. In Australia, Andrews designed numerous large-scale institutional works, including the Cameron offices at Belconnen, ACT (1968-77) and the American Express Tower, Sydney (1970-6). In 1980, he was the recipient of the RAIA Gold Medal, the highest award of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and in 1981 he was awarded the Order of Australia for services to architecture. He is an architect of national and international standing.

The Sydney Convention Centre is one of the last remaining intact works by John Andrews in New South Wales.

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The Sydney Convention Centre is one amongst four major buildings of this type designed by Andrews in Australia in the 1980s. The other three, each (unlike Sydney) associated with accompanying hotels, are in Perth (1984), Melbourne (1985) and Adelaide (1989). At the time, these buildings were the first purpose-built facilities of their kind in Australia, containing large-scale flexible auditoria, multiple meeting rooms and large-scale dining/function facilities. In Sydney, the building's strong semi-circular form externally was not only a deliberate visual counter to its context of over-sailing concrete bridge and freeway structures but also a reflection of the time-honoured form of the semi-circular Roman amphitheatre which offers shorter viewing distances and reduced structural spans. In Sydney, this elevated semi-circular auditorium seats 3450 people. The Sydney Convention Centre, its interiors and public spaces are remarkably intact and are an excellent example of this type.

I strongly encourage retention of the Sydney Convention Centre, its in-situ artworks, and its external landscaping including the fountain on the building's harbour-side forecourt. Full consideration should be given to the realistic future of this important complex that has successfully served Sydney's convention needs for more than twenty-five years. The building, its interior and its exterior landscaping are of state significance and deserve to be listed by NSW heritage agencies. The building is robust, flexible and a complete reflection of its architect's ideals; it contains an important and large series of large-scale artworks and is a fitting expression of the state's confidence and aspiration in redeveloping Darling Harbour to celebrate the nation's bicentenary in the 1980s.

In short, the Sydney Convention Centre is architecturally, historically and socially significant to the State of New South Wales, and as such deserves appropriate protection and respect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Goad', with a stylized, cursive script.

Professor Philip Goad
Chair of Architecture
Founding Director, Melbourne School of Design