

1 November 2013

Sam Haddad,  
Director General,  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39,  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Haddad,

**EIS Exhibition - Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP) - International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel)**

The Urban Taskforce is a strong supporter of the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP) and the International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel). We believe that the economic impact of such a development will be of great benefit to the New South Wales economy. We previously contributed to the debate on renewal of Darling Harbour and the Barangaroo project where we have been very supportive of the free-form hotel/ resort building designed by architects Wilkinson Eyre. Having strongly championed Wilkinson Eyre's iconic tower design for Barangaroo we believe that the hotel design for the International Convention Centre does not take the same approach.

**1. Concern over design approach**

The Convention Centre hotel is essentially an isolated tower located amongst lower rise buildings. Therefore a more sculpturally shaped building would make a better signal of the character of Darling Harbour. While the current design is well resolved as a square tower it does suggest that it would be better located amongst other rectangular and square towers. A review of the Design Report reveals that the design of the building was driven more by the street grid of Pyrmont than the dynamics of the Darling Harbour water body. For instance the Design Report says:

A tower aligned with the local urban grid; and,

Orientation relates to the local Pyrmont grid.

However the Urban Design Objectives says:

Bring a new vibe and spirit to this quarter of the city.

Based on the design report, I feel that the efficiency of the floor plate has been the main driver of design.

**2. A four (4) star Hotel**

While it is understood that the hotel is to serve the Convention Centre and will be a four (4) star hotel and not at the same standard of the Barangaroo Hotel/ Resort, there are examples of more dynamic shapes for hotels in the same category as that proposed. For example the four (4) star Novotel Hotel at Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush is a fluid oval shape, twenty-two (22) floors high. Some of the other hotels aimed at the convention market in the vicinity of Darling Harbour adopt more fluid shapes, displaying a better response to the theme of the harbour and water.

**3. Another design approach**

Another design approach to the proposed hotel would be to make the eastern side of the building a more flowing shape relating to the water, with the western side adopting a more rectangular shape, relating to the warehouse buildings of Pyrmont (the ANA Hotel at Circular Quay does this). This could lead to more rooms facing the water and the western view of the city. Our belief is that a more fluid shape to the building would give a better signal of the spirit of the quarter than a static square building, no matter how well it was detailed.

The Urban Taskforce is a strong supporter of development and good design and would be pleased to provide further input to the redevelopment of key sites for Sydney and should you wish to discuss any of the above in more detail, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Urban Taskforce Australia**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Johnson AM  
Chief Executive Officer