

4 November 2013

Mr Sam Haddad
Director General
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
23-33 Bridge Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Thomas Mithen

Dear Mr Haddad, 

**Re: SSDA6 Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct -
International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel)**

I write in support of proposed development application SSDA6 under assessment by your department for the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP). The proposal, known as the International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel), will play an important role in driving economic activity in the state. Adequate accommodation supply in the Sydney CBD is critical to the sustainable growth of the NSW visitor economy.

As you would be aware, Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) is the peak industry group representing the Australian tourism, transport, aviation and investment sectors. A national, member-funded CEO forum, TTF advocates the public policy interests of 200 leading corporations and institutions in these sectors.

TTF has been a long-standing advocate for the redevelopment of the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre. In 2007, TTF in partnership with the Property Council of Australia commissioned a report by URS Finance & Economics that indicated the NSW economy foregoes \$477 million in economic activity, \$218 million in GSP, and 3037 jobs each year as a result of capacity constraints at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre¹. Since this report, TTF has continued to advocate for expanded facilities at Darling Harbour and welcomed the NSW Government's commitment to this major infrastructure project.

The proposed International Convention Centre facility alone will deliver significant benefit to the state, generating an estimated \$200 million in annual economic activity. This equates to more than \$5 billion over the course of the 25-year operating life of the new facilities. The Darling Harbour Live proposal will create 1,600 new jobs during construction and up to 4000 operational jobs across the precinct upon completion.²

The ICC Hotel will play an important role in meeting additional demand generated through the new convention and exhibition facilities. TTF commends the inclusion of the ICC Hotel as part of the proposal.

¹ URS Finance & Economics, *Economic Impact of Expanded Convention and Exhibition Facilities in Sydney*, February 2007

² Infrastructure New South Wales, Darling Harbour Live Factsheet

The presence of sufficient high-quality accommodation acts as a significant destination selection criterion for international conventions and conferences and the ICC Hotel will enhance Sydney's accommodation offering, and as such, the ICC Hotel constitutes an integral part of the larger SICEEP development.

The Sydney market has consistently maintained occupancy levels at well above 80% for an extended period of time and additional hotel capacity will be required to accommodate increased demand generated by expanded facilities, as well as addressing capacity constraints that currently exist in the Sydney CBD. According to the most recent *TTF-HOSTPLUS National Accommodation Barometer*, Sydney CBD's hotel occupancy remained at over 82% in the June quarter (traditionally the low season for hotel demand in Sydney).³

Addressing exhibition capacity constraints

The Darling Harbour Live proposal will deliver flexible world-class facilities that will reaffirm Sydney's standing as a leading destination for business events, conventions, exhibitions and entertainment. Additional capacity will be required if the state is to host larger business events in the future and achieve the state's tourism growth target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. This target has been adopted by Destination NSW and supported by the NSW Government's response to the Visitor Economy Taskforce Report. The flexible 40,000m² exhibition space committed as part of the concept plan is strongly supported by industry.

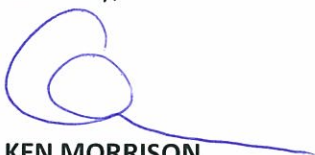
In addition, the Darling Harbour Live proposal will address significant public amenity and connectivity issues currently affecting the site and its relationship with neighbouring precincts Chinatown, Haymarket and the education hub concentrated at UTS. By addressing these issues, there is a significant opportunity to make this a must-visit destination for both international and domestic visitors, encouraging increased visitor expenditure and length of stay in Sydney.

The proposed Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct will play a critical role in growing the visitor economy in NSW and increasing Sydney's capacity to host an increasing number of large-scale international and domestic events into the future. The proposal for a world class hotel will enhance the visitor experience at Darling Harbour for residents and visitors alike.

For all these reasons TTF strongly supports the application, which will help to meet the additional demand for visitor accommodation generated by the new exhibition and convention facilities and the broader precinct.

Should you require any additional information regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Adele Labine-Romain on (02) 9240 2017 or alabine-romain@ttf.org.au.

Sincerely,



KEN MORRISON
Chief Executive

³ Tourism & Transport Forum, *TTF-HOSTPLUS National Accommodation Barometer*, 2013 Q2 edition – October 2013