

## Tourism & Transport Forum

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8 May 2013

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

Attention: Thomas Mithen

Dear Mr Haddad, *Sam,*

### Re: SSD 12\_5752 Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct

I write in support of proposed development application SSD 12\_5752 under assessment by your department for the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct. The proposal, known as Darling Harbour Live, will play a critical role in driving economic activity in the state, and will support the future growth of the NSW visitor economy through business and major events.

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 the 200 leading corporations and institutions in these sectors.

TTF has been a long-standing advocate for the redevelopment of the Sydney Exhibition and Convention 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 3,037 jobs each year as a result of capacity constraints at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre<sup>1</sup>. 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 4,000 operational jobs across the precinct upon completion.

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,

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<sup>1</sup> URS Finance & Economics, *Economic Impact of Expanded Convention and Exhibition Facilities in Sydney*, February 2012

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.

#### **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 40,000m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space committed as part of the concept plan is strongly supported by industry.

#### **Precinct activation and connectivity**

Darling Harbour is a major visitor hub, attracting over 21 million visitors each year. TTF welcomes the enhanced public domain and spaces as part of the concept plan. The proposed neighbourhoods, including 'The Haymarket' and upgraded facilities at Tumbalong Park, will provide new and innovative spaces for major events and community activities.

By way of background, a UTS report found that for the year ending July 2011, visitors to the Sydney Entertainment Centre spent a total of \$58 million in the local economy<sup>2</sup>. The study found this expenditure was dispersed among surrounding precincts including Chinatown (46%), Darling Harbour (29%), and the City of Sydney municipality (25%). In particular, the study found visitors spent an average \$128 during their visit to the Chinatown/Haymarket precinct. This demonstrates the ability of entertainment facilities and public spaces to attract local residents as well as visitors to the destination, activating the precinct and encouraging increased visitor spend in surrounding areas.

In addition, the concept plan also addresses poor pedestrian access to surrounding suburbs and visitor precincts. The proposal provides improved pedestrian linkages to the Ultimo Pedestrian Network, creating greater access to Central Station and the surrounding entertainment precincts of Chinatown, Ultimo, and Pyrmont. The enhanced pedestrian linkages will also help to reduce congestion during major events, with clear access and egress to public transportation.

#### **Accommodation supply**

Adequate accommodation supply in the Sydney CBD is critical to the sustainable growth of the NSW visitor economy. TTF commends the inclusion of accommodation build as part of the proposal. Additional hotel capacity will be required to accommodate increased demand generated by expanded facilities, as well as address capacity constraints that currently exist in the Sydney CBD.

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 outlines a bold and imaginative precinct that will enhance the visitor experience at Darling Harbour for residents and visitors alike.

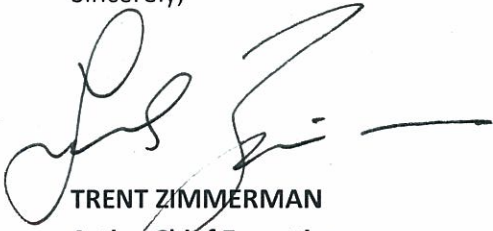
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<sup>2</sup> UTS Business School, *The Sydney Entertainment Centre: Measuring the inscope Expenditure into Chinatown, Darling Harbour and the City of Sydney*, 2012

For all these reasons TTF strongly supports the application, which will meet the needs of the visitor economy and revitalise Darling Harbour and its environs.

Should you require any additional information regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact Carlita Warren, Director – Tourism Policy on (02) 9240 2017 or [cwarren@ttf.org.au](mailto:cwarren@ttf.org.au).

Sincerely,



**TRENT ZIMMERMAN**  
Acting Chief Executive