



MEDIA RELEASE

28 August 2006

The World Comes To Hobart – More Than 60 Countries

International community registers to re-design Hobart Waterfront

New York, London, Vienna, Beijing, Santiago – just some of the global locations from where architects, urban designers and landscape architects have registered for the Hobart Waterfront International Design Competition.

Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority Chief Executive Jeff Gilmore said more than 450 registrations from 62 countries worldwide have been logged on to the competition web site since the event was launched four weeks ago.

“To get this response – from more than one-quarter of all the countries in the world – in the first month of the competition launch is extremely heartening,” Mr Gilmore said.

“And the advertising in the international design journals is only beginning to kick in.

“The bulk of the registrations have come from Australia, understandably, with 150, but also serious numbers from the United States, the United Kingdom and throughout all the continents – from as far afield as Ethiopia, Morocco, Colombia and Siberia.

“As we hoped, the world has come to Hobart, because the world has a keen interest in the design and development of our waterfront.”

Mr Gilmore said 21 registrations have been logged from Tasmanian designers.

The Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority foyer now carries a world map marking all the countries and registrations.

“We want everyone who shares our love of the waterfront to see how this beautiful patch of Tasmania has captured the imagination of the world’s design community,” Mr Gilmore said.

The international design competition – ‘Floating New Ideas for the Hobart Waterfront’ – will be judged by an international jury, including two architects renowned worldwide for

their work on complex waterfront projects: Carme Pinos, of Spain, and Wiel Arets, of the Netherlands.

The competition closes on 1 December 2006. Entries will be put on public display at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in January and February next year.

The prize pool is \$160,000, with \$10,000 for the winning tertiary student entry.

“Everything will be considered – nothing is off limits,” Mr Gilmore said.

“We’re looking for great ideas and world-class concepts for this magnificent site, from architects, urban planners, landscape architects and engineers everywhere – within Tasmania and Australia, as well as overseas.”

The competition area includes landmark sites such as the Wapping Corner (the vacant land next to Theatre Royal), City Hall, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Dunn Place, Franklin Wharf and Kings Pier Marina.

“The creative challenge is to embrace the area’s rich history and design a contemporary cultural hub to revitalise the space,” Mr Gilmore said.

In the competition brief, entrants are asked to consider and acknowledge the structure and scale of Hobart and explain how their ideas will reinvent the area to:

- create a major focus for Hobart that enriches the cultural life of the city with new activities, buildings and spaces (both commercial and public);
- create effective and innovative connections between the city centre and Sullivans Cove;
- interpret and embrace the Cove’s rich cultural heritage; and
- attract and extend activity across Sullivans Cove.

The Competition Adviser is the internationally recognised and respected Professor Tom Heneghan, from the University of Sydney.

The Chair of the jury is Geoffrey London, the Government Architect of Western Australia and Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia. Prof London is also a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne and a Life Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. Other members of the jury are Melbourne-based landscape architect Catherin Bull and Professor Daryl le Grew, of Hobart.

The competition’s specially designed web site is at: www.hwidc.tas.gov.au.

Our Waterfront Challenge to the World

The Hobart Waterfront International Design Competition is one of the most significant design competitions in the Southern Hemisphere since the Sydney Opera House emerged from the brilliant mind of Danish architect Jorn Utzon almost 50 years ago. In this article, Jeff Gilmore, Chief Executive of the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority, describes the complexity and importance of the area under scrutiny in Hobart and explains why the competition is attracting global attention from architects, urban designers and landscape architects.

It takes about 475 steps to get from the front door of the Theatre Royal to the waters edge of Sullivans Cove.

Depending on how fast you walk, the journey usually takes between five and six minutes, although it could take as long as nine if the traffic is particularly heavy in Macquarie and Davey streets and you hit red lights all the way.

As you walk, however, there is little to remind you that this is a culturally and historically important part of our city with a magnificent heritage that goes back thousands of years. This is where the area's Indigenous inhabitants, the Mouheneer tribe, utilised the fresh water of the Hobart Rivulet and where Lieutenant Governor David Collins chose over Risdon Cove as the new settlement for the township of Hobart 202 years ago.

Yet for all its historic and civic attributes, few people use this broad band of space, which is known in urban design terms as the City Hall Axis. When it comes to moving between the city centre and the waterfront, Elizabeth Street and Murray Street are more popular, are more sheltered and offer more to see and do along the way.

Neglected, the City Hall Axis remains an ad hoc and confused mix of bland street frontages and empty spaces. But it needn't be this way. If we get it right, the City Hall Axis could some day support an exciting new layer that celebrates our past yet is thoroughly contemporary – and a pointer to the future.

This area is central to any planning vision for the Cove and the City Hall Axis has the potential to become a 'home' to an outstanding concentration of cultural activities and community events. That's precisely why we're holding the Hobart Waterfront International Design Competition – to uncover brilliant ideas for this important space.

The competition will not lock us into a commitment to construct the winning entry. Instead, it will uncover ideas and concepts to guide future consideration of the City Hall Axis, both for the complexity of the entire area as well as the challenges associated with each individual sites within the area.

The disappointment of the Axis as it currently exists starts as soon as you leave the Theatre Royal and head towards Sullivans Cove. Immediately on your left is a bare patch of dirt, on the corner of Campbell and Collins streets, next door to a run-down auto garage, although under the dirt lies the Shakespeare Hotel, the oldest licensed premises in Tasmania.

Across the street is one of the few remaining glimpses of the Hobart Rivulet, these days a bare trickle of water in a concrete canal where once a thriving stream emptied cool, clear water from Mount Wellington into the Cove. Before European settlement, this place was of importance in Aboriginal life, and because Sullivans Cove and the Hobart

Rivulet together offered safe anchorage and fresh water, the area was subsequently the key to European settlement and Hobart's foundation as a colonial capital.

Crossing Collins Street, you walk alongside the bare walls of City Hall, once a focal point of Hobart nightlife but these days used fewer than 70 days of the year.

Crossing Macquarie Street, you enter the bare ground of Dunn Place car park, adjoining one of the true jewels of our city – the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, hopelessly cramped with no room to properly display its renowned collection of artefacts and artworks.

Then it's time to brave the motorised chaos of Davey Street and enter the concrete dock-way between our fishing boats and fish punts, before crossing Franklin Wharf to emerge at Kings Pier Marina as it extends into Sullivans Cove.

Despite all the studies that have been conducted into the Hobart waterfront over the past 200 years, including several dozen consultants' reports and urban design blueprints, the City Hall Axis has always been bypassed. While the other connections between the city centre and the waterfront are mature and well understood, the City Hall Axis remains the weakest and least successful link.

Ideas generated by the Hobart Waterfront International Design Competition, closing 1 December 2006, will illustrate the potential of the area and influence the long-term strategic planning of Hobart's waterfront.

The creative challenge is to embrace the area's rich history and design a contemporary cultural hub to revitalise the space. Entrants are expected to protect and enhance what is uniquely Tasmanian about the waterfront while letting their imaginations soar to unearth new visions for Hobart, reinventing this civic area with new activities, buildings and spaces, both commercial and public.

Everything will be considered – nothing is off limits. We're looking for great ideas and world-class concepts for our world-class blend of maritime heritage, working port, business hub and cultural heart.

Once the entries are in, an esteemed international jury will analyse them and tell us which ones are the best.

Then it will be over to the people of Tasmania to view, wonder, discuss and even argue about the results.

* * * * *

About the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority

The Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority is the planning authority responsible for protecting, enhancing and developing Sullivans Cove and surrounding areas. The Authority aims to preserve the unique qualities of the Hobart Waterfront, which defines the identity, vitality and image of the Tasmanian people.

Media Enquiries

Jo Cook

Communications Officer

Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority

p 03 6216 4283

m 0403 077 019

f 03 6216 4289

e jo.cook@waterfront.tas.gov.au

www.waterfront.tas.gov.au

Address: 5 Franklin Wharf, Hobart, Tasmania, 7000