

Resolution of Council

14 May 2018

Item 3.2

City Projects Featured in 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City of Sydney actively encourages design excellence in private development and our own public projects. We are advised by our Design Advisory Panel, made up of eminent practitioners, and we have an innovative design excellence program that requires a competitive design process for all major buildings - a world first.

Since 2004, we've completed over 250 major projects including parks, playgrounds, childcare, pools, libraries, theatres, and community and cultural spaces. Our public infrastructure projects have won over 135 national and international awards.

This remarkable track record has led to our growing reputation and international profile for city design and liveability.

Most recently, three City of Sydney projects have been selected for the Australian contingent at the world's top architecture exhibition - the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale.

The projects were selected from around Australia from more than 150 applications. The fact that three, out of the 15 selected, are City of Sydney projects, affirms our commitment to excellent design.

The three projects - Waterloo Youth and Community Services, Prince Alfred Park and Pool, and the Glebe foreshore walk - will all be featured in the Australian Pavilion at the Biennale as part of an exhibit titled 'Repair'.

1. Waterloo Youth and Community Services

Designed by local architects Collins and Turner, the Sulman Medal winning Waterloo Youth and Community Services Centre has a very distinct and eye-catching design. Its “crown” canopy is covered in vines and plants and blends into the surrounding landscape. This green crown helps insulate the rooms underneath, and it also shields the barbecue and vegetable patch on the roof.

The \$3.5 million Centre is sustainable, with energy-efficient materials used throughout, including low-energy lighting, thermal heating and cooling and natural ventilation. There are rainwater tanks and many of the materials used were recycled - the old slate roof tiles became pebbles for the garden and the timber pavers in the internal courtyard were once railway sleepers that had been made from one of Australia’s first plantations of ironwood back in the 1930s.

The Centre is home to Weave - an independent non-profit organisation that does great work educating, empowering and encouraging young people in the local community. The Centre's construction was partly funded by a grant from the Federal Government's Community Infrastructure Program as part of their stimulus program.

2. Prince Alfred Park and Pool

Our \$20.5 million major upgrade of the 7.5 hectare Prince Alfred Park and Pool has won numerous awards.

The design of the Pool, with Sue Barnsley Design and Neeson Murcutt Architects, was developed so that it fit into the landscape of the park and was not a dominant building. The first design for the project was replaced by the current beautiful scheme which sees the building enveloped in native meadow and surrounded by grassy hillocks.

The project includes a fully accessible, outdoor year-round heated Olympic pool, sky-lit change rooms, café and kiosk and a splash deck with water toys for toddlers. The native grass green roof regulates the temperature of the complex and it also includes the latest filtration systems and water saving fixtures, energy efficient lighting and heating.

The 7.5 hectare park offers tennis and basketball courts, fitness and leisure equipment, kids’ play areas, walking and cycling paths, an off-leash area for dogs and barbecue and picnic areas built with custom-designed tables and seating. An underground stormwater re-use system collects runoff from surrounding streets to supply 95 per cent of the park’s water.

3. Glebe Foreshore Walk

Designed by JMD Design, the Glebe Foreshore Walk allows the community access to an uninterrupted 2.2 km stretch of waterfront for the first time in 225 years. The City invested \$20 million over 10 years transforming the once eroded embankment with a collapsed sea wall into a beautiful public space.

The project started with new lighting and furniture, new fig trees and landscaping at Bicentennial Park and Bicentennial Park East. Bellevue House and Jubilee Park Grandstand were then restored and the pavilion, sports field and children's playground were upgraded.

The final part of the project involved opening the final stretch of land connecting 27 hectares of open space with streets, paths and new facilities. It included granite and sandstone paths, new seating, steps for safe access to the water, over 50 new native trees and shrubs and native grasses. The paths have walking, cycling and wheelchair access, racks for canoes and storage and energy-efficient lighting.

The edge of the foreshore was excavated to create a small beach and saltwater mangrove and endangered coastal saltmarsh habitats were planted. New habitat for native plants, birds and marine life was also included along the foreshore to attract once-abundant wildlife back to the area.

Each of these projects were the result of close consultation with local communities and long term collaboration between City staff and excellent architecture, landscape design and construction teams. This result is a real testament to their dedication.

Australia is often cited among the top eight countries for progressive architecture and our presence at the Venice Architecture Biennales in 2018 and 2020 underlines that reputation.

2018 Venice Architecture Biennale

The biannual global event attracts the world's best architectural minds and provides an opportunity for architects and designers to showcase new projects. The 16th International Architecture Biennale in Venice will run from 26 May to 25 November 2018.

Australia has one of only 30 permanent pavilions for the display of new national works. Opened by Cate Blanchett ahead of the 2015 Art Biennale, the award-winning Australian Pavilion is the only 21st century building in Venice.

Presented by the Australian Institute of Architects and curated by architects Baracco + Wright and artist Linda Tegg, the theme for the Australian Pavilion is 'Repair', with Australian architecture involved in the rehabilitation of the local natural environment.

The exhibition also features 10,000 endangered plants creating a striking multi-sensory living installation entitled 'Grasslands Repair' and 'Skylight' – 100 LED lights simulating the sun's energy to keep the vegetation alive. Large-scale projections above the plants highlight Australian architectural works that repair the ecosystems they occupy and engage with their urban, social, and cultural environments.

The City is also providing more than \$20,000 in cash support, through its knowledge exchange sponsorship program, to the Institute of Architects for the 2018 and 2020 Venice Architecture Biennales.

Feedback from creative directors and the Australian Institute of Architects Venice Architecture Biennale Committee

Louise Wright, Baracco + Wright (Creative Director for Australia's exhibition at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale)

"These projects demonstrate diverse iterations of repair – an architectural approach required in one of the most diverse and ecologically sensitive landscapes in the world."

"The City has done an incredible job with these projects that show careful consideration for the use of the land."

"These are great works to shine an international spotlight on architecture's role in acts of repair."

Jill Garner, Victorian Government Architect (Chair of the Australian Institute of Architects Venice Architecture Biennale Committee)

"These Sydney projects will make a valuable contribution to bring a distinctively Australian creative vision to life.

"The curators – Louise, Mauro and Linda – have done a remarkable job in creating Repair and selecting a broad showcase of work that demonstrates Australia's approach to architectural thinking that we believe will become a critical strategy of the practice worldwide."

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council note:

- (A) the City's achievement in design excellence recognised by the nominations of the Waterloo Youth and Community Services, Prince Alfred Park and Pool, and the Glebe foreshore walk to show in the Australian Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale as part of the exhibit titled 'Repair'; and
- (B) the importance of the City's ongoing commitment to design excellence to create beautifully designed public spaces and facilities that serve our communities, and, in the case of the three featured projects for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, encourage our communities to get out, explore and restore their connections with the natural environment.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Thalís –

That the Minute by the Lord Mayor be endorsed and adopted.

Carried unanimously.