

## **10.5. Reformation of Design Excellence Panel for 2021/22 - 2022/23**

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**ENDORSED BY:** Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy

**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

To seek Council's endorsement of the recommended appointments for the Design Excellence Panel (DEP) for 2021/22 – 2022/23.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

North Sydney Council encourages high quality urban design in the North Sydney local government area (LGA). This is achieved, in part, by seeking the independent advice of the Design Excellence Panel (DEP), established under North Sydney Council's *Design Panel Policy*.

In accordance with the *Design Panel Policy*, membership of the DEP should be renewed every two years. Expressions of interest for DEP membership for the 2021/22 – 2022/23 term were sought from Friday 4 June 2021 to Friday 18 June 2021. A total of 23 applications were received.

Support for the recommended appointments will enable the reformed DEP to commence in August 2021. A review of the *Design Panel Policy* and *Design Excellence Panel Charter* was undertaken. No updates are proposed.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The recurrent budget of \$80,000 will cover the operation costs of the DEP. Panel member remuneration is currently a yearly retainer of \$2,000 (provided the Panel member has attended a minimum of two meetings within a 12-month period) and \$1,100 for each meeting attended. The Panel Chairperson shall be paid \$1400 for each meeting attended. If the role is shared, each Panel Co-Chairperson shall be paid \$1250 for each meeting attended.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1.THAT** Council endorses the appointment of the recommended panel members nominated within the confidential report for the reformation of the North Sydney Design Excellence Panel for the 2021/22 - 2022/23 term.
- 2.THAT** Council writes to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the previous members of the Design Excellence Panel.
- 3.THAT** the confidential report remains confidential unless Council resolves otherwise.

## LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

### 3. Our Future Planning

3.4 North Sydney is distinctive with a sense of place and quality design

## BACKGROUND

On 13 June 2006, the Design Excellence Panel (the 'DEP') was established.

On 24 July 2017, Council endorsed the appointment of six persons to the DEP, under North Sydney Council's *Design Panel Policy*. The appointments commenced in August 2017 for a two-year term.

On 29 April 2019, Council endorsed an amendment to the *Design Excellence Panel Charter* to enable the General Manager to reappoint the current panel members for an additional two-year term. These appointments are due to expire in July 2021.

A full review of the *Design Panel Policy* was scheduled for the 2020/21 financial year.

## CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

## DETAIL

### 1. Function of the Design Excellence Panel

North Sydney Council encourages high quality urban design in the North Sydney local government area (LGA). This is achieved, in part, by seeking the independent advice of the Design Excellence Panel (the 'DEP'), established under North Sydney Council's Design Panel Policy.

The policy is working well. The DEP has been operating since 2006 and its success is attributed to the high calibre of members that Council has been able to attract and engage. Their advice has been regularly sought by Council's strategic planning and development services staff. It has clearly informed the deliberations of the Sydney North Planning Panel (and its predecessor), the Independent Planning Commission and more recently, Council's own North Sydney Local Planning Panel (NSLPP).

Most importantly, the DEP's advice has informed the final design of major development across North Sydney LGA with significant improvements being achieved to both the built form and the public domain.

### 2. Extension of membership in 2019 for an additional two-year term

In accordance with the Design Panel Policy, membership of the DEP is renewed every two years. On 29 April 2019, Council endorsed an amendment to the Design Excellence Panel

Charter to enable the General Manager to reappoint the current panel members for an additional two-year term.

This reappointment was due to a) the appointed panel members working exceptionally well, and b) concern that advertising for new panellists would yield fewer results due to increasing competition for experienced design professionals to sit on panels across Sydney at the time. Reappointing the panel for a further two years allowed the market time to increase the pool from which new panel members could be drawn.

### **3. Reformation of the DEP for 2021/22 – 2022/23**

Current membership for the DEP is due to expire in July 2021. Expressions of interest for DEP membership for 2021/22 – 2022/23 were sought from Friday 4 June 2021 to Friday 18 June 2021. A total of 23 applications were received.

To be selected for membership on the DEP, North Sydney Council's Design Panel Policy requires the following:

- 4.1.1 To receive the support of both the community and the development industry, the panel needs to be recognised as an expert body capable of providing high quality design advice. Accordingly, the panel will be comprised of well-known and respected professionals who are involved in the design of major projects and have extensive expertise architecture, urban design or urban planning. The inclusion of at least three professionals on the panel with a range of expertise will encourage debate and develop creative design solutions.

To bring a local perspective, the panel should also have a community representative with a demonstrated understanding and experience in architecture, urban design, urban planning or related field.

The City Strategy team has reviewed the submissions and recommends four members of the previous 2017 - 2021 DEP be retained, and two new members be appointed to the 2021/22 – 2022/23 DEP. This will give the DEP a level of continuity whilst providing new expertise that complements the current skill set.

### **4. Acknowledgement of former panel members**

Two current panel members, Philip Graus and Angela Koepp did not reapply for the DEP for 2021/22 – 2022/23 and will end their tenures in July 2021.

Philip Graus is one of the original members of the panel and has held the position of Chair for over eight years. As Chair he has been instrumental in the success of the DEP and the many improvements to North Sydney LGA's built form and public domain.

Angela Koepp has been a member of the panel since 2017 and has provided valuable urban design advice on a range of projects presented to the DEP.

Their professionalism and expertise have contributed greatly to both the DEP and North Sydney's future. It is recommended that Council write to acknowledge the valuable contribution they have made to design excellence in North Sydney.

**5. Full review of the Design Panel Policy in the 2020/2021 Financial Year**

The Design Panel Policy had been scheduled to be reviewed in the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

A review of both the policy and the Design Excellence Panel Charter was undertaken prior to advertising for expressions of interest for membership on the DEP 2021/22 – 2022/23. Both the policy and the charter are currently working well, and no changes are recommended.

**6. Budget**

The recurrent budget of \$80,000 will cover the operation costs of the DEP. Panel member remuneration is currently a yearly retainer of \$2,000 (provided the Panel member has attended a minimum of two meetings within a 12-month period) and \$1,100 for each meeting attended. The Panel Chairperson shall be paid \$1400 for each meeting attended. If the role is shared, each Panel Co-Chairperson shall be paid \$1250 for each meeting attended.

**7. Conclusion**

The independent advice of the Design Excellence Panel has been instrumental in improving the design quality of development throughout the North Sydney LGA. It is also a valued resource for obtaining feedback on strategic planning projects.

The recommendations of this report will maintain the high calibre of relevant expertise on the DEP that will assist Council achieve design excellence and remain highly competitive in the metropolitan area.

Support for the recommended appointments will enable the DEP to commence in August 2021.