



Australian Institute of Architects

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Museum (NATSIAM)

The Australian Institute of Architects Northern Territory Chapter supports the Northern Territory Government's initiative to build an Indigenous art museum in Alice Springs (Mparntwe), one that celebrates the important place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the history of contemporary art and art practice.

The Institute endorses the fourteen recommendations contained in the Initial Steering Scoping Committee's Report, and urges the NTG to honour the process it established in selecting an eminent panel of experts to explore the outlines of this important cultural institution.

The steering committee's promotion of a "national art museum dedicated to the study, collection and interpretation of the myriad cultural traditions and contemporary artistic expressions of Australia's first peoples" (p.18), is critical to the success of this endeavour.

All other desired outcomes including increased tourism, job creation, economic stimulus, and cultural reconciliation will follow if the museum is one of international standing.

The Institute firmly believes that the selection of a site should not be driven by considerations that are outside the museum's mission, but rather be the result of meaningful consultation with the Native Title holders and the traditional custodians of the Country on which the museum will stand. As such, we support the process that has been established through the expert panel and believe the steering committee's recommendation for a site at the Desert Park should be honoured with further community consultation.

The Institute understands the desire to locate the museum within the CBD. The boost to local businesses will indeed be profound, but we agree with the steering committee that an institution of international stature will have this impact regardless of its proximity to the town centre. The AIA notes and supports as well, the committee's recommendation for a multistage international design competition in accordance with the AIA's competition guidelines. The Institute maintains that a building of such significance will benefit from a procurement process that values quality design.

The Australian Institute of Architects welcomes the opportunity to assist the NTG as it continues to shape this important contribution to the cultural landscape of Central Australia.

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