

Barneson Boulevard Submission Brief sent to Minister Nicole Manison

The Australian Institute of Architects is a keen supporter of the 2015 Darwin CBD Master Plan and in particular we keenly support those parts of the plan that would make the CBD more attractive for tourists and locals and improve livability in the CBD and greater Darwin area. The partial development of Barneson Boulevard could be a significant driver in the development of the Tank farm for residential and other uses. However the full development of the road as a dual carriageway from McMinn Street to Smith street has the potential to split the CBD into two halves while taking away the community amenity of the Frogs Hollow precinct.

As a local example the Daly Street dual carriageway is similar to this proposal, a dual carriageway with landscaped median strip. It does not contribute to the urban life of Darwin, and acts as a barrier to extension of the CBD, rather than promote urban development along its path it has many vacant lots and little urban appeal. While there may be a case in the future, we do not see the full development of *Barneson Boulevard* as critical to the development of Darwin at this time.

We urge the government to reconsider the scope and nature of this project.

We provide the following comments.

1. Timing

There is potentially a case for the future development of the Barneson Boulevard and other links to create a better flow of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists as a natural and sustainable response to our increasing urban populations. Correctly timed, we believe that each linkage is able to facilitate the provision of additional high density housing opportunities in the CBD area which are in close proximity to employment, goods, services and existing levels of high amenity.¹ We note, however, that any new road work needs to be balanced by strategic planning to oversee its timing in relation to supporting and encouraging population & density increase. We do not believe a Dual carriageway dissecting the city is necessary.

We are concerned with the short term, high cost, spending cycle. At this point in time, 2017, when the NT population is decreasing and expected to decrease further, funds could be better directed to enrich the quality of the lives of Darwin & wider NT residents in more people and environmental interaction oriented projects, with longer term health benefits, at other parts of the CBD plan such as the following:

MP 046 Urban Forrest, listed as desirable Page 87,

¹ Connectivity was highlighted in the 2015 CBD Master Plan as crucial to increasing flow of people to increase economic activity. In this light the Barneson link is poor compared to the Knuckey Street linkage for example which already connects from McMinn street to the Esplanade. **MP 015** Knuckey Street extension, Refer Page 50, listed as Critical.

MP 005 Darwin central park, Page 35, listed as Critical
 MP 006 Darwin Central park and storm-water management, page 36, listed as critical;
 MP 012 Esplanade Parade path development, page 41, listed as desirable
 MP044 Cooling & weatherproof street canopy prototype, page 86, listed as critical
 MP 047 Integrate parking, walking and shopping, Page 91, listed as Critical
 MP 043 proposed bus loop and parking garages, Page 81, listed as critical.

2. Improving the CBD to make it a more people appropriate place

The 2015 Master Plan proposed a range of principals developed in community workshops, including:

- Increased 'walkability';²
- Increased business activity;³
- Increased urban density;⁴
- Shady, accessible safe, dry car parking;⁵
- frequently departing CBD loop routes and linked routes;⁶
- Increased shade & rain shelter to streets;⁷
- Increased visits to the city for retain/ social outings;
- Increased safety for pedestrians;
- Reduced car traffic.

We strongly support the development of a relevant and responsive set of design control mechanisms to support these principles and direct funds aimed at making the CBD more people friendly. These design controls should take into consideration and be responsive to various issues, such as:

- Urban spaces not to be overly built out (ratios of built area and roads to open space),
- Appropriate road design that prioritizes people over cars, with consideration to orientation, breezes, and cross ventilation, affecting neighbors & streets;
- Greening the CBD with Landscaping for shading & screening elements;⁸
- Neighbourhood character;
- Public open spaces;⁹

² 2015 CBD Master Plan **Design Rationale 04**, Page 66, 'walkability' is directly proportional to public transport. In addition, **Design Rationale 06 moving around**: Page 89, To increase prosperity of Darwin city, increased pedestrian movement needs to occur, this is in turn related to:

(a) less car traffic, as a result of easy to access to parking garages and frequent public transport links;
 (b) shady, cool, pedestrian links between access points and destinations.

³ **MP 047** integrate parking, walking and shopping, Page 91, listed as Critical

⁴ such as suggested in **MP 072** city centre north development, a new super mixed use residential enclave, with its success based on rapid link transport system, Page 121, listed as Critical.

⁵ Refer to 'A walkable city' map and rationale, Page 15.

⁶ **MP 042** Integrated Public Transport Plan, Page 80, discusses the desire for frequent and fast, smaller public transport options than buses only, but any real investigation into possibilities has been curtailed by nt gov, listed as Critical.

⁷ **MP044** Cooling & weatherproof prototype, page 86, listed as critical.

⁸ **MP 046** Urban Forrest, listed as desirable page 87

⁹ **MP 005** Darwin central park, Page 42, (perhaps the best spot for proposed new water park?) listed as Critical ; Also page 43, **MP 006** Darwin Central park and storm-water management, listed as Critical ; Also page 51 MP012 Esplanade Parade path development, listed as desirable.

- Parking garages and parking structures focused on connectivity, safety, human scale mixed use development at ground level;
- Parking requirements to be developed and conceived in partnership with parking garages and public transport loops;¹⁰
- Safe pedestrian and cycle access throughout CBD with increased connectivity to existing path networks from inner suburbs;¹¹
- Encourage mixed use developments even at the smaller scale such as shop houses to improve casual surveillance of public spaces.

2. Loss of the "Darwin Dream"?

Our members understand that community concerns with car parking relate to what might be called the "Darwin Dream" – the ability to park one's car immediately in front of the primary destination, with shade and rain protection.

Whilst the proposed ideals do involve some change, we do not believe that such change need necessarily equate with loss; and that with adequate design controls the "Darwin Dream" of an easily accessible destination with shady dry access can not only be maintained, but enhanced.



*Submitted in a letter to Minister Manison October 2017
CC: Chief Minister Michael Gunner & Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis*

¹⁰ **MP 020** McMinn St Upgrade with transport loop linking parking garages, Page62, listed as desirable.

¹¹ Refer ideas for Creating a city for bike riding map and rationale, Page 23. Also **MP 060** Bike path network, page 113, please make it coherent, listed as desirable.