

2020 BARANGAROO PIER PAVILION DESIGN COMPETITION JURY REPORT



Introduction

The following report outlines the deliberations of the Jury for the two stages of this competition, articulating the process and considerations in arriving at the selection of the winning scheme for the Barangaroo Pier Pavilion Design Competition.

This report is structured in three distinct parts (i) the background and broad objectives of the competition, (ii) the Stage 1 judging process and (iii) the Stage 2 judging process.

Competition Sponsor

Infrastructure NSW is a state government organisation for the state of New South Wales. Infrastructure NSW's role is to manage the city waterfront development at Barangaroo and to deliver world class benchmarks in urban design, public domain and sustainability.

Competition Advisor and Registrar

Infrastructure NSW engaged Stephen Varady, Architect and Director of Stephen Varady Associates as Competition Advisor and Registrar. This report was prepared by Stephen Varady.

Introduction

In June 2020 Infrastructure NSW invited registered Australian architects to participate in an Architectural Design Competition for a Pavilion on the new Watermans Cove Pier in Barangaroo. This competition was specifically prepared to engage with the broad talent pool of the Australian architecture profession to reveal a very special work of architecture.

Infrastructure NSW is committed to achieving design excellence and sustainability for all projects within Barangaroo. The Competition design proposals therefore had to pursue design excellence, and express the broader sustainability ambitions for Barangaroo, while providing a thoughtful, creative response to the Project Brief, while adhering to the budget constraints of the project.

A Two Stage Competition

The competition was divided into two stages.

- Stage 1 was an open and anonymous Ideas Competition open to registered Australian Architects
 - Stage 1 was about ideas.
 - Stage 1 was about finding entrants who could best distil a strong idea into an appropriate, coherent design on 3 x A3 pages.
- Stage 2 was an Invited Design Competition with five shortlisted Entrants from Stage 1 invited to prepare developed designs.
 - Entrants were provided with further Brief documents for Stage 2;
 - Entrants were paid a fee;
 - Entrants worked with the Infrastructure NSW Quantity Surveyor and had their design costed at 50% and 100%;
 - Before lodging Stage 2 entries for judging, entrants were required to meet Capability Criteria; and,
 - Designs were assessed by a Jury based on the merit of the design and it's alignment with the Competition Brief and Budget.
 - The Entrant's response to the Stage 2 Invited Design Competition was the basis upon which the winning entry was selected.

Jury

Infrastructure NSW assembled a highly respected five person jury from the Australian architectural community to judge the Stage 1 and Stage 2 entries.

The Jury members were:

- **Robert Nation AM (Jury Chair)**
Barangaroo Design Advisor; Director, Nation Architects
- **Bridget Smyth**
City Architect / Design Director, City of Sydney
- **Abbie Galvin**
New South Wales Government Architect
- **Peter Poulet**
Professor of Practice, Architecture, Western Sydney University
- **Kim Crestani**
City Architect, City of Parramatta; Director, Order Architects



Stage 1 Judging

The Barangaroo Pier Pavilion Design Competition was launched on 23 June 2020 with the Stage 1 entries due on 6 August 2020. Following probity and eligibility checks Infrastructure NSW received 173 eligible entries.

All 173 entries (3 x A3 sheets per entry) were pinned up on display in a specially prepared area in Sydney with the Jury assembling and studying all entries professionally and methodically. The Registrar and an Infrastructure NSW representative were present throughout the judging process.

The Jury was open and generous in its first viewing of schemes and after the first round of deliberations they selected 59 entries to proceed forward for further consideration. Those entries were:

104, 106, 111, 114, 117, 119, 123, 124, 126, 129, 133, 139, 144, 151, 157, 163, 165, 166, 167, 182, 183, 185, 186, 191, 198, 201, 208, 212, 214, 217, 218, 221, 222, 224, 225, 227, 229, 236, 238, 239, 243, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 251, 254, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 265, 266, 267, 274, 275.

These 59 entries were reviewed in open discussion by all Jury members leading to 18 schemes proceeding to Round 2:

106, 114, 123, 126, 133, 139, 166, 183, 191, 198, 217, 227, 238, 243, 249, 251, 257, 264.

The Jury also checked all eliminated schemes to be sure that no worthy scheme had been missed. After a third round of deliberations the Jury selected 9 entries to proceed to the next round:

106, 166, 191, 217, 227, 238, 243, 257, 264.

This was further reduced to 7:

106, 191, 217, 238, 243, 257, 264.

These entries were studied again closely by each jury member before another round of rigorous, extensive open discussion.

Of these the Jury unanimously selected the following 5 entries as Stage 1 Finalists:

106, 238, 243, 257, 264.

Following the Stage 1 Judging, the finalists were identified as:

Entry #106 - Jessica Spresser (SPRESSER), Brisbane

Entry #238 - John Bohane and Luke Pigliacampo, Sydney

Entry #243 - Mitchell Thompson (Retallack Thompson), Sydney

Entry #257 - Amy Muir (MUIR Architecture, Openwork, Sarah Lynn Rees), Melbourne

Entry #264 - Neil Durbach (Durbach Block Jagers), Sydney

These finalists were invited by Infrastructure NSW to enter Stage 2 of the competition.

Stage 2 Briefing Session

On 7 September 2020, each Finalist team participated in a Stage 2 Briefing and an individual one hour Jury Feedback session.

Stage 2 Brief Addendum

Finalists were provided with a Stage 2 Brief addendum containing important general recommendations for all Finalists along with specific feedback for each scheme from the Jury. The addendum also included more detailed information about the Stage 2 Entry Requirements.

Stage 2 - 50% Cost Assessment

Finalists were asked to lodge their 50% designs on 7 October 2020. These were assessed by quantity surveyor WT Partnership who prepared a 50% Cost Assessment of each scheme. This assessment was sent to each finalist, followed by a one hour teleconference feedback session with the QS, Registrar and Infrastructure NSW representative, to assist them in completing their design within budget.

Stage 2 - Capability Assessment

Finalists were also required to lodge full details of their practice and their team of consultants on 7 October 2020. As a result of this process some Finalists chose to team with more established practices were they to be selected as winner.

For Stage 2 the Finalists teams were comprised of the following:

Jessica Spresser (SPRESSER) + Peter Besley + ARUP

John Bohane and Luke Pigliacampo + Peter Stutchbury + ARUP

Retallack Thompson (Mitchell Thompson, Jemima Retallack) + COX

MUIR Architecture, Openwork, Sarah Lynn Rees + Scott Carver

Durbach Block Jagers + Sue Barnsley Design

Stage 2 Judging

The five finalists lodged their Stage 2 schemes on 3 November 2020. All entries were presented on 6-8 A0 mounted boards and were supported by an A3 competition report.

These schemes were again checked by quantity surveyor WT Partnership who prepared a 100% Cost Assessment of each scheme to assist the Jury in their deliberations.

The schemes were also checked by Infrastructure NSW and their technical consultants who prepared technical reviews for structure, sustainability and precinct management to also assist the Jury in their deliberations.

During the period of 10-11 November 2020 the Jury met to review the Finalists' schemes. The Registrar and an Infrastructure NSW representative were present throughout the judging process.

The Jury were interested in how each Finalist had further developed their initial schematic ideas and how successfully they had addressed all of the feedback they had received.

On the first day the Jury studied the A0 panels and reports, then deliberated, discussing and debating each scheme in great detail in preparation for the Finalist presentations.

On the second day, each of the five Finalist teams presented their schemes to the Jury, after which the Jury visited the site again before completing their deliberations and selecting a winner.

Stage 2 Jury Assessments

The Jury was impressed with the ideas contained in the Stage 1 Competition Entries from all of the Finalists and were further impressed with how each of the Finalist teams developed their designs for Stage 2. The Jury commends all of the teams for their clear and informative verbal and visual presentations and thanks them for their serious and considered efforts.

The Jury assessed all Finalist schemes against the following Evaluation Criteria:

- Competition Design Proposal's merit in meeting the Competition Brief with respect to intelligent and imaginative design excellence, sustainability, space, function and utility;
- Competition Design Proposal's merit in meeting the Construction Budget and Programme; and
- Capability of the proposed team (demonstrated managerial and coordination capability, qualifications, experience and sufficient resourcing to carry out the work).

All five finalists had the potential to be the winner of this competition, and the following comments should therefore be read as both constructive feedback for each of the Finalist teams and as explanation for Infrastructure NSW. At the conclusion of Stage 2 deliberations the Jury made the following assessments of each scheme:

Jessica Spresser (SPRESSER) + Peter Besley + ARUP

- The Jury found this proposal extremely compelling and unanimously selected this design as the competition winner.
- The design celebrates the elements that compose this site - land, sea and sky. This 'Land, Sea and Sky Pavilion' is an extremely strong and refined design, and its timelessness and potential longevity sets it apart from the others as the appropriate winner. It is of this place and celebrates place.
- The Pavilion's form responds to the geography of the landscape of this site creating a democratic gathering space under a landscape canopy. This response to geography changes its geometry from rectilinear to organic, therefore allowing a constantly changing relationships with people moving around it.
- This Pavilion links past, present and future. It contains a magic ambiguity, appealing to people's intuitive feelings of place. It addresses ideas both for a public building and a pavilion - its form is both bold and civic from a distance, yet also permeable and habitable - a place to pause, to meet, to contemplate.
- The Pavilion also responds with calm to the complex context that it sits within - it is at once a meeting place, a site for events, a memorable moment in the city, and a place of respite within the busy urban context.
- The material quality of the concrete is beautiful and poetic. The idea to use oyster shells in the concrete is exquisite, intelligent and sensitive. By referencing oyster shells as a marker of human gathering there is also a subtle reference to indigenous habitation.
- The singularity of the material unifies the building, yet there is an understanding that the natural light will play on the column surfaces and the interior, constantly changing the character of the building inside and out. Night lighting would continue that change and experience.
- The 18m long two-sided seat was greatly appreciated for its dual orientation and experiential qualities.

The Jury very much appreciated the sophisticated combination of simplicity and complexity in this scheme and would make the following suggestions to this team as they move forward with their design development.

- The non-regular shape of the building and its colonnade are critical to the success of this design, however the design would benefit greatly from some gentle re-calibration of the spacing between the columns, perhaps with different (re-calibrated) spacing on each elevation responding to each different orientation, allowing for better views and greater connection between inside and outside. The verbal presentation referred to a great deal of testing through models, and more of this would be greatly encouraged moving forward.
- The colouring and shade of 'whiteness' of the concrete mix will need to be explored and tested to alleviate issues of glare and reflectivity inside and outside the Pavilion.
- While the southern storage wall was seen to have great operational benefit with the elements housed within, it may benefit from a reduction in length and/or increase in permeability allowing for views to the south without compromising its function and effectiveness as a wind barrier.
- The landscaping on the internal and external roof, particularly around the oculus, will need careful consideration moving forward.
- Perhaps the size of oculus could be considered in proportion to the space without compromising the design, and it may be beneficial to consider a sensitive solution for a temporary cover for adverse weather conditions during events, or potentially integrating landscape as was done on the storage wall.



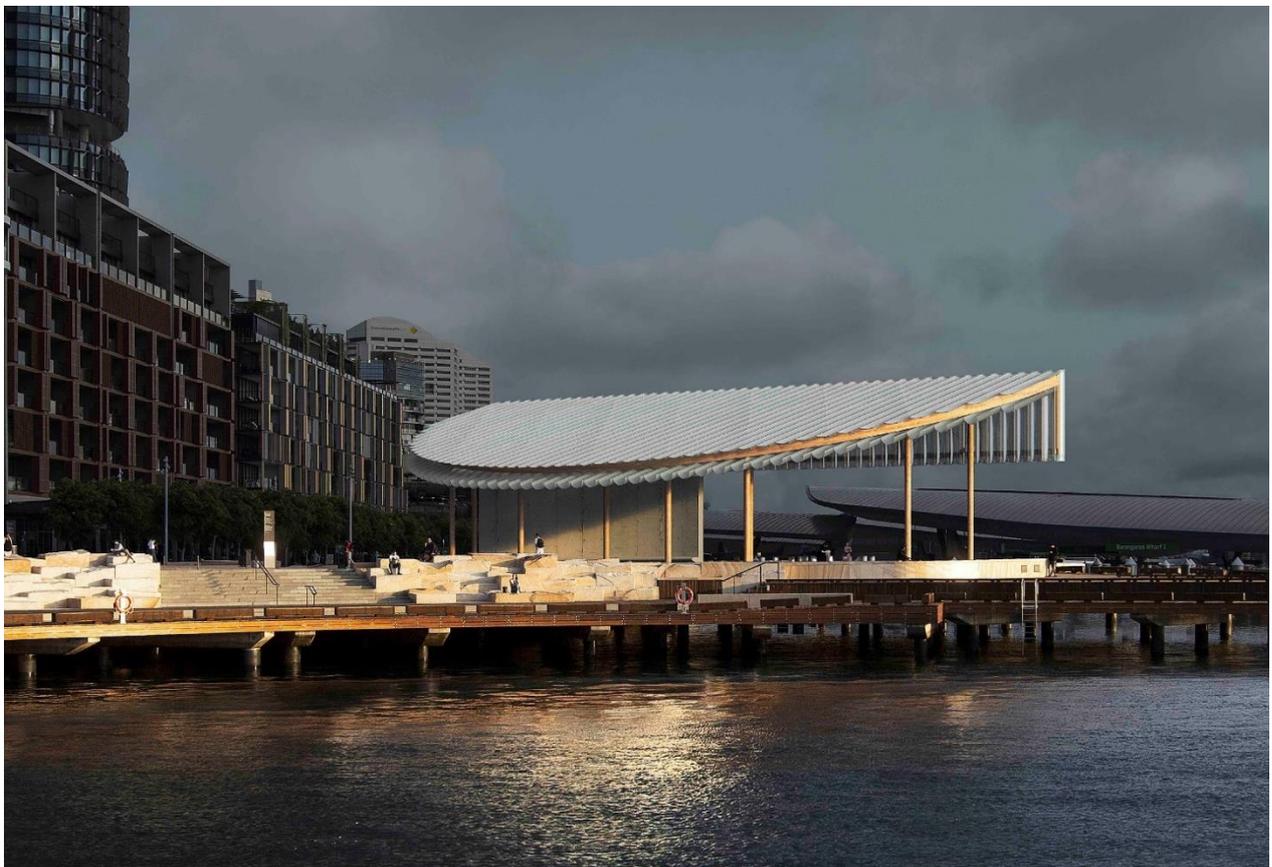
John Bohane, Luke Pigliacampo + Peter Stutchbury + ARUP

- This design is a simple monument of place and presents as a strong sculptural marker in the surrounding urban landscape.
- It is powerful and focussed, and would be a memorable event along the foreshore walk.
- The material quality of the dome's glass lining and the quality of changing light that would occur within the space was beautiful and poetic.
- The southern wall was well located and substantial enough to be an appropriate windbreak while also allowing views through the coloured glass panel.
- However, the Jury agreed that while the overall structural approach had become much more convincing, the combined geometry had not evolved as they had hoped, leaving it somewhat heavy and unrefined.
- There was discussion about whether the design would benefit from the shorter eastern wall being reduced in length or becoming a column.
- The overall size of the roof appeared to have been reduced from Stage 1, leaving an impression of reduced coverage for events.
- There appeared to be a contradiction between the calmness of the contained space and the multiple elements, materials and ideas contained within the overall structure
- Whilst the concept of the 'black stain' was understood, there was some concern regarding the 'ownership' of the narrative.
- The original idea of stingray scales seems to have been lost in the development of the design.
- Despite the explanations during the verbal presentation, there was still concern about issues with acoustics within the domed space.
- There was discussion about the solar panels. Some jury members liked the idea of another layer on the roof while others were concerned about them diminishing the strength and beauty of the singular bronze roof form.
- There were questions about how effective the 'thermal lounge' idea would be in such a shaded and open location.
- There was much discussion about the introduction of marble in addition to the granite, and the Jury felt that the singularity of the local granite would result in a stronger design.



Retallack Thompson (Mitchell Thompson, Jemima Retallack) + COX

- The Jury acknowledged the detailed development of this scheme, resulting in a very simple, crystalline structure that would also be a beautiful lantern at night.
- The Jury however was concerned that too much attention had been given to the technical details of the scheme and the more poetic, conceptual reasoning had been lost, leaving it somewhat unconvincing as a 'memorable place'.
- The Jury was also not fully convinced that the cantilever and structure could be supported without additional bracing needing to be added.
- The lightness and purity of geometry of this scheme was supported, however it would have benefited from additional layers of complexity through Stage 2.
- The scheme appears very sparse and too open and exposed at ground level. While this may allow for the potential for multiple uses, it seems to be lacking atmosphere, and a sense of 'enclosure' for the everyday users.
- The amelioration of wind did not appear to be fully resolved. While the 20m sliding wall might help resolve this problem, the detailed resolution of this element was not convincing, particularly its stability.
- There was concern about glare, reflection and heat gain through the large expanse of glass, as well as concerns about cleaning and maintaining the 'crystalline' feel of the building over time.
- Given the detailed development of clamps and other details resolving some elements of the construction, the Jury would have preferred a more detailed resolution of the joints between the glass tubes, with glazed cover strips for instance, rather than a reliance on silicone.
- The concept of commissioning local designers for the seating elements was commended, however the design proposal and language of the elements were not convincing for the site.



Muir Architecture, Openwork, Sarah Lynn Rees + Scott Carver

- The Jury was impressed with the poetic and 'fantastical' conceptual framework of this scheme and found it to be a beautiful, organic and mysterious structure with very evocative 3D representations.
- The design was very carefully resolved and considered as a memorable object to be seen and experienced 'in the round'.
- The complex, ever-changing play of light - both reflected off the material, or directed through the tubes - was extremely well received. It was seen to be a beautiful and lively place marker for this site - something dynamic yet also very still.
- There is a clever permanence to the flexible seating combined with storage. It is also enclosed and contained and feels comforting.
- While the design did extend to give coverage to the adjacent plaza zones, the Jury identified this proposition as an object unto itself rather than complementary to its location, and expressed concern about the 'intensity' of this design adding to the overall 'noise' of the architecture around it.
- The Jury was concerned about the 'density' of the columns and the perceived weight and perceived 'heaviness' of the overall building and had hoped for a reduction in column elements in Stage 2 to alleviate this issue.
- The Jury found the ideas for indigenous engagement to be very positive and potentially powerful, however some concerns were raised that the ends of the tubes would be too small for the artistic interpretations.
- Some Jury members questioned the singularity of stainless steel for the entire structure while others found this extremely positive and like 'a jewellery box'.
- Concerns were raised about creating a truly continuous 12mm edge without undulations.
- Concerns were expressed by the Jury about the costs of this complex and detailed construction, and ultimately feared it may go well beyond the budget.



Durbach Block Jagers + Sue Barnsley Design

- The Jury found this to be a beautiful and joyful proposition, that created a light-filled garden room beside the water, as a contrast to the intensity of the built forms around the site.
- This design creates a memorable space that would be playful and engaging - a reminder of the simpler beauties of life.
- The central garden concept and the tactile materiality of the enclosing walls was compelling, however concerns were raised about the height of the walls and the creation of a 'retreat' that would ultimately create a barrier to, not a connection with, the surrounding public space.
- The Jury also questioned the contrast between the geometry of the garden and geometry of the canopy - these were considered to not read as a coherent whole.
- The Jury was fascinated with the aluminium material proposed for the canopy, but was concerned the result would appear more solid than the intended cloud-like concept.
- Concerns were raised about looking down onto the proposed metal deck roof, which is a significant elevation of the structure for those in surrounding buildings.
- Overall, the Jury was enchanted by the 'garden' concept, but was ultimately concerned that it did not sit comfortably onto this tight site on a pier, and had more of an inwards focus rather than an outwards and embracing one. There was also concern about the internalisation of the circle seating - which enclosed the space rather than taking advantage of the views.
- The Jury found this to be a sensitive compelling and beautiful design that would be more suited to a different site.



Jury Recommendations

The Jury was unanimous in its decision and recommends the Jessica Spresser (SPRESSER) + Peter Besley + ARUP scheme as the winner of the Barangaroo Pier Pavilion Competition.

The Jury believes that this proposal will add a striking and beautiful civic moment, and be a new world class public space and iconic landmark within the Barangaroo public domain precinct, further enhancing Barangaroo's reputation for world class architectural design excellence and sustainability.

The Jury would recommend that a Design Integrity Panel composed of members of the Jury (or the Chair at the very least) be set up to assist the winning team in the development of their proposal as it moves through to completion.

Afterword

The Jury would like to congratulate Infrastructure NSW for its commitment to improving the built environment through the professional running of this form of architectural design competition. The Jury believes that the process has been successful in providing opportunities to a broader range of Australian architectural talent to present their ideas in a public forum. They also believe that this has been an exciting and worthwhile process and hope that the successful conclusion to this competition might provide the impetus to other bodies in Australia to follow this example.