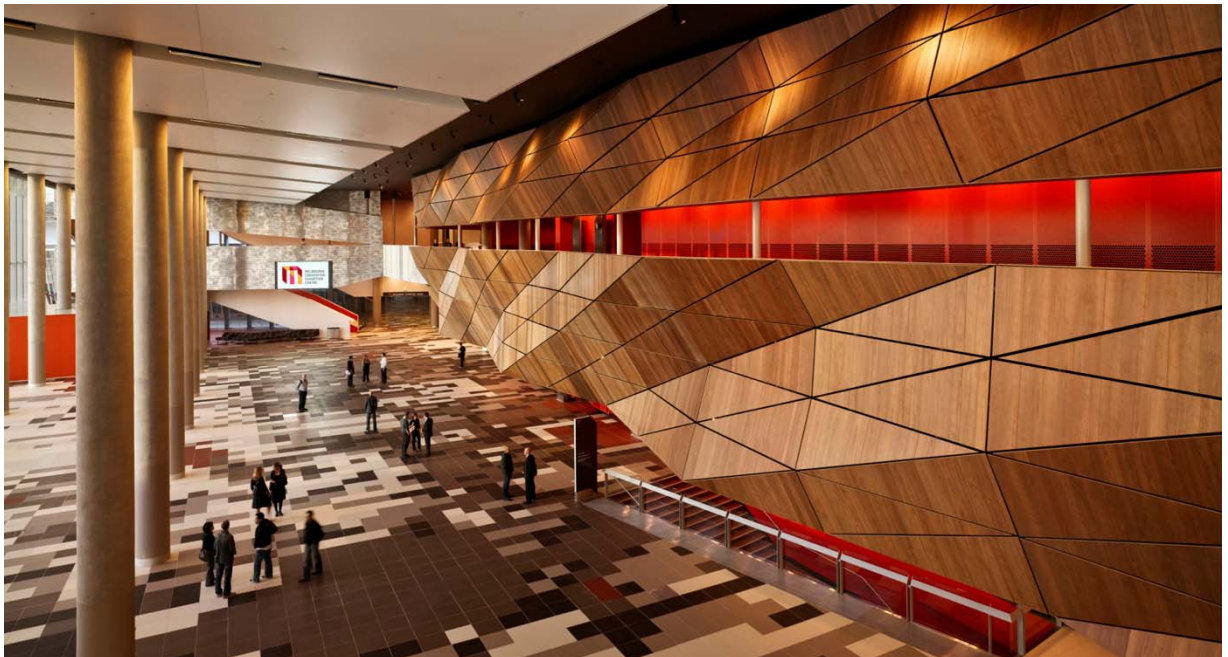


27 APRIL 2010

## Beyond the Conventional: MCEC Design Applauded for Public Domain Contribution

**Woods Bagot and NHArchitecture's Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) design has been celebrated by the DIA for its contribution to Victoria's next generation of public amenity – named as 'Best in State for Commercial Design' in addition to overall 'Public Design' at the 2010 Interior Design Awards.**



Recognising and encouraging interior design excellence, innovation and experimentation, the Design Institute of Australia (DIA) has recognised the MCEC as transcending traditional convention centre stereotypes and serving the public as a building whose permeable spaces 'belong' to the vibrant cultural life of Melbourne.

Moreover, the Public Design award honoured Woods Bagot and NHArchitecture for setting a new global benchmark in sustainable design, notably as the first large public building of its kind to be awarded a Six Star Green Star rating by the Green Building Council of Australia.

Woods Bagot and NHArchitecture established a unique interior response to the purpose and patronage of each venue within the site; combining the specifics of place with the generic demands of its global usage.

"Convention centres are not often known as engaging public destination venues. This project, however, confronts this realisation and deliberately creates three separate activity zones, each with its own character. The three activity zones comprise civic, hospitality and corporate, creating a hierarchy of interior intensity. Each of these three zones has been imbued with a specific Melbourne quality," said Nik Karalis (Woods Bagot Co-Principal Design Architect).

**CONTINUED**

The civic sites are linked to the adjoining Maritime precinct; the hospitality venues celebrate the qualities of the arts and sporting culture of the city, and the corporate spaces were influenced by the regular and austere colonial grid of the central business district. In accordance with these three operational modes, the centralised interior spaces of the Plenary Hall, foyer, pre-function area, banquet and meeting rooms are organised and embellished with appropriate symbolism and surface treatments.

A graduation exists in the level of detailing throughout the building: progressing from a more robust, approach in the public areas, to the highly refined details and polished finish in the Plenary Hall at the building's core. The timber panelling wall in the foyer, surrounding the Plenary Hall, has rough, exposed edges, whereas within the auditorium, the detailing is finer.

“Convention centres are a global building type - places of permanent emptiness able to accommodate transient fullness, having no program to express and accommodating anything of any scale. They are generic and flexible and defy the norms of architectural composition,” emphasised Hamish Lyon (NHArchitecture Co-Principal Design Architect).

“Embedded within the physical and historical context of the site, the MCEC serves as a counterpoint to Federation Square, which represents the creative and artistic life of Victoria. Accordingly, the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre will become a new focus for business, trade and the global exchange of ideas and information,” Karalis said.

“We hope that these awards are a sign that the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is developing a place in the collective consciousness of Melbournians and all Victorians.”

**END**

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)**

Area: Convention Centre – 66, 000m<sup>2</sup>, Retail and Lifestyle - 60, 000m<sup>2</sup>

Sustainability: Certified to 6 star GreenStar Convention Centre Design PILOT rating

Joint Venture Architects: Woods Bagot and NHArchitecture, for the Plenary Group Consortium

## **ABOUT WOODS BAGOT**

Woods Bagot's commitment to global excellence has resulted in a workforce of 650 staff based in five regions, in cities such as Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Sydney, Beijing, Hong Kong, London and most recently San Francisco, New York and Shanghai. Woods Bagot has also announced planning permission for what will be one of the world's most luxurious hotels at 10 Trinity Square, London and unveiled plans for the Middle East's tallest tower – at more than 1km high – in Dubai.

Woods Bagot's Australian studios have recently completed several award-winning flagship projects, including ivy, Sydney (with collaborative partners HP&G and Merivale), Qantas International First Lounges (with collaborative partners Marc Newson and Sebastien Segers) and the University of Western Australia Business School, Perth. Recently unveiled by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Premier Mike Rann, Woods Bagot Adelaide has also designed the new \$200 million South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI).

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