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Arts Queensland  
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Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Queensland Cultural Precinct Draft Master Plan**

The Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Queensland Cultural Precinct Draft Master Plan*. The South Bank Cultural Precinct is a critical demand driver for cultural tourism in Brisbane, attracting visitors from around Australia and the globe.

As a national CEO forum representing the interests of leading organisations in the visitor economy, TTF brings together cultural institutions with accommodation and other tourism operators, transport and aviation providers to ensure a sector-wide approach to its cultural tourism policy. In Brisbane, TTF works with some of the largest tourism and transport operators including Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), Brisbane Marketing, Accor Hotels, Treasury Casino, Brisbane Airport, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads.

TTF congratulates the Queensland government on its *Queensland Cultural Precinct Draft Master Plan*, particularly the plan's recognition of the value of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is important to Australia's visitor economy, attracting high-yielding visitors who spend more and stay longer than the average traveller. International cultural visitors to Australia stay on average 30% longer and spend 27% more per trip, while domestic overnight cultural visitors stayed on average 35% longer and spend 51% more per trip<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, cultural tourism supports the precinct's institutions and plays a role in global engagement, developing the international brand and reputation of Brisbane as a 'new world city'.

In this submission, TTF will look to provide feedback on the plan, highlighting key items which we believe will have the greatest impact on the attractiveness of the precinct for visitors. Further opportunities to leverage the cultural tourism value of the precinct are also discussed.

#### **Connectivity and accessibility**

Creating ease of access both to and within the cultural precinct will be critical to attracting visitors and making the area an active and lively place to visit. Connectivity principles are also especially important to visitor precincts where users have a very limited knowledge of the area, both how to get there and move around. TTF commends the Queensland government on its inclusion of transport access and pedestrian wayfinding as a key pillar of the master plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia, (2013), International Visitor Survey (IVS) and National Visitor Survey (NVS)

TTF was pleased to see the new pedestrian bridge over Melbourne Street included in the draft plan and believes it will play a key role in improving the pedestrian flow in the precinct, especially if the new 10,000 person festival arena comes online. As the precinct looks to develop its wayfinding strategy, TTF would recommend that the signage, maps and digital applications are consistent with the rest of Brisbane city. A citywide approach to visitor wayfinding will improve the take up, legibility and effectiveness of the system.

TTF commends the Queensland government on the draft plan's integration with the proposed Bus and Train (BaT) tunnel. TTF has been a long term advocate of the new CBD rail crossing and believes it will be critical to improving bus and rail capacity through the Brisbane CBD and South Bank.

### **Cultural tourism and events**

TTF commends the Queensland government for the recognition and prominence its draft plan gives to the visitor economy and its potential to develop the cultural precinct. In 2013, Brisbane received 513,400 international visitors who participated in cultural and heritage activities (53% of all international visitors to Brisbane), and 939,000 domestic overnight visitors (18% of total)<sup>2</sup>. These figures are higher than the overall level of cultural visitor engagement in Australia, demonstrating the growing attractiveness of Brisbane as a cultural tourism destination for both the domestic and international markets.<sup>3</sup>

Investment in infrastructure such as the new 1500-seat theatre at QPAC will improve the attractiveness of the precinct to international performing arts companies, ensuring the world's best touring shows can perform for up to a year at a time. Brisbane has begun building its reputation as a global city for the performing arts through the successful QPAC International Series. The Series, a partnership between Tourism Events Queensland and QPAC, has attracted some of the finest performing arts companies exclusively to Brisbane including the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra with the Hamburg State Opera and the Hamburg Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and this year the American Ballet Theatre. Cultural events of this kind play an important role in attracting visitors, building the cultural brand of a destination and connecting the local arts industry to the global cultural network. As Brisbane continues to build its destination brand, continued investment in performing arts infrastructure and event programming will be critical.

Improved exhibition spaces at the Queensland Museum (QM) and Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) will enable the institutions to attract and host world-class 'blockbuster' exhibitions. TTF's position paper [Backing Major Events](#) highlights the importance of cultural exhibitions in the events calendars of destinations<sup>4</sup>. Cultural exhibitions receive a large number of visitors: the recent *Cai Guo-Qiang: Falling Back to Earth* exhibition attracted 229,323. Due to the longevity of cultural exhibitions as opposed to the limited timeframe of major sporting events, exhibitions encourage a more manageable stream of tourists, avoiding accommodation bottlenecks and providing steady and sustained income for local businesses. TTF recommends that improvements to exhibition spaces are considered key priorities as the master plan develops.

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<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia, (2013), *International Visitor Survey (IVS)* and *National Visitor Survey (NVS)*

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Tourism & Transport Forum (2014) *Backing Major Events*

### **Commercial and retail opportunity**

TTF has long been an advocate for the development of mixed-use precincts. Precincts which have multiple purposes and different reasons to visit, be it retail, cultural, commercial, educational or residential, help to ensure the area remains an active and lively place to visit. TTF was pleased to see commercial and retail opportunities, such as the proposed hotel on the QPAC site, included in the draft plan. These will not only add to the vibrancy of the precinct but also assist in funding its initiatives.

### **Innovation and learning**

TTF commends the Queensland government for the proposed digital strategy, which includes interactive panels, precinct WiFi, and digitalised collections. Enhanced digital technology will not only improve the visitor experience while in the precinct, but act as a demand driver, attracting domestic and international visitation. While booking methods vary between markets, the majority of visitors from Australia's key international markets, including China, United Kingdom and United States, rely on the internet for information more than guidebooks and friends and relatives when planning a trip<sup>5</sup>. Online devices continue to play a key role in the visitor's booking, destination and post-trip phases<sup>6</sup>. It is vital to build the digital capacity of institutions in the South Bank Cultural Precinct so they remain competitive with other destinations and improve the visitor experience.

The proposed Learning Centre at QAG and stand-alone ScienCentre at QM are excellent initiatives which have the opportunity to grow the education visitor market, made up of both school groups and those travelling with children. 317,000 domestic overnight visitors to Brisbane in 2013 were travelling as part of a school group, while 16.4 million additional domestic overnight trips were undertaken with children, making up 22% of the market<sup>7</sup>. Recent research conducted by TNS in its *Domesticate* study highlights the growing desire for families with young children to incorporate an educational component into their holiday<sup>8</sup>. Interactive experiences, such as those proposed for the QAG Learning Centre and QM ScienCentre, were identified as experiences which encourage learning and provide shared memories for families which is appealing to the entire travel party.

TTF congratulates the Queensland government on the development of the *Queensland Cultural Precinct Draft Master* and looks forward to working with you as the plan is implemented.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 9240 2014 or [alabine-romain@ttf.org.au](mailto:alabine-romain@ttf.org.au).

Yours sincerely



**Adele Labine-Romain**

Executive Director

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<sup>5</sup> PwC, (2013) Distribution 2020: Situational Analysis

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Tourism Research Australia, (2013), *National Visitor Survey* (NVS)

<sup>8</sup> TNS, (20113), *Domesticate*, Understanding Australian travellers