

MEDIA RELEASE

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Architectus, Henning Larsen and Arup announced as the consortium to transform the Canberra Theatre Centre

Australian architecture and design firm Architectus, international studio Henning Larsen and global consultants Arup have been chosen as the winning consortium to transform the Canberra Theatre Centre into a vibrant, multi-event, all-inclusive space that will, in consultation with First Nations peoples, be the anchor project for the future of Canberra's Civic and Cultural District into an internationally recognised arts precinct.

The consortium of design leaders will create a world-class destination for artists and audiences in the heart of the planned Canberra Civic and Cultural District.

The design vision for the Canberra Theatre Centre is an environment that reflects and represents diverse cultures and voices. An internationally recognised cultural precinct with impeccable design credentials that serves as a new community meeting place for Canberrans, and a home for artists from across the globe.

The winning tender included early preliminary designs that depict a new theatre building with a bold and sophisticated façade treatment, and which references to the formal landmarks of Canberra.

Architectus Principal and Public Sector Leader, Dr Stephen Long said, "Our collective is thrilled to be working alongside the ACT Government to deliver a world-class experience that has the potential to fuel the creative spirit of Canberra.

"We will approach the design process through the lense of the audience and the performers. We will continue to work from the inside out to create a National theatre with an international reputation. We will also work from the outside-in to create a theatre that is enmeshed in the city and landscape, one that holds its place in the context of Canberra's ensemble of National culture and arts buildings and brings vibrancy to the Canberra Civic and Cultural District. We seek to create a project that is an exemplar of elegance, function and sustainability."

Henning Larsen Partner and Design Director, Viggo Haremst said, "We are honoured to have been selected for the renewal of the Canberra Theatre Centre. Our design ambition is for the centre to become a national landmark and an international destination, drawing artists and audiences from around the world to Canberra's new cultural heart.

"Together with Architectus and Arup, we've approached the design with great care considering the architecture and all other elements of design to create a vibrant and inclusive place that honours the history and beauty of the land. A cultural hub that celebrates the community, its diverse heritage and artistic expression, where people come together to share in the power of performance and storytelling."

Arup, a world leader in theatre planning, will collaborate with Architectus and Henning Larsen to ensure the theatre has the form and function required to support the highest level of national and international touring shows.

Arup Australasian Arts & Culture Business Lead, Hannah Slater said, “We are excited to be working in collaboration with Architectus and Henning Larsen on this landmark project that embeds dialogue and creation in the civic heart of Canberra.

“Our design approach will provide the opportunity for the project to knit the stories of this place into the city through establishing a transparent, connected and inviting Centre. Arup provides diverse technical engineering skills and detailed Theatre Architecture expertise, contributing to the realisation of this ambition.”

The team shares a long history of delivering globally significant cultural projects including the multi-award winning Harpa Concert Hall in Iceland by Henning Larsen and Arup, and Architectus and Arup collaborated on the recently opened Art Gallery of New South Wales Sydney Modern Building. Architectus and Henning Larsen also work together on several high-profile commercial projects in Sydney and Brisbane.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Architectus, Henning Larsen and Arup acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

About Henning Larsen

Henning Larsen is an international studio for architecture, landscape, and urbanism with design hubs in Copenhagen, New York, Hong Kong, Munich, Oslo, Sydney, and Singapore. At the heart of our design philosophy is the play of light and nature. We bring joy to those who occupy our spaces by shaping the conditions for human interaction. We work at the nexus of creativity and experimentation, always looking to the lasting impact on communities and their environments.

Drawing on a Scandinavian ethos, we develop context-driven, sustainable designs that provide lasting value to users, local communities, and cities. We aim to contribute social spaces that engage people and inspire human interaction. We approach our clients with curiosity and a desire to listen, inspire, collaborate, and innovate.

Our distinctive portfolio has received some of the highest honors in our profession, including the Architecture Laureate of the Premium Imperiale, The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award, and the European Architect of the Year Award, 2019.

About Architectus

Architectus is a national practice that combines deep expertise in every sector with critical problem solving skills and a commitment to exceptional design. Our insightful, human-centric approach and collaborative ethos lead to design outcomes that exemplify elegance, functionality, and sustainability.

In April 2023 Architectus and Conrad Gargett merged our business operations. As a unified force, we are one of Australia’s largest design firms, with more than 700

employees and seven studios. We also have a strong relationship with our associated New Zealand studios in Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington.

Significant projects include the multi-award winning State Library Victoria Vision 2020 Redevelopment, Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, and Art Gallery of New South Wales Sydney Modern Building (as Executive Architect in support of Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architectural and design firm SANNA), and National Herbarium of NSW.

About Arup

Dedicated to sustainable development, Arup is a collective of designers, consultants and experts working globally. Founded to be humane and excellent, we collaborate with our clients and partners using imagination, technology, and rigour to shape a better world.

Arup works across all areas of the arts and culture market. Our collaborations with clients and partners result in iconic and innovative museums, galleries, concert halls, theatres, libraries and archives of varying sizes, budgets and complexity. Our inspiration and consideration is always the visitors, artists and employees who use these buildings on a daily basis. Arup's goal is to create enjoyable, functional and comfortable spaces through innovative building design, modelling, acoustics and lighting.

Since coming to Australia in the 1960s to work on the Sydney Opera House, Arup has built a strong reputation in the region, founded on quality and technical expertise. Outstanding solutions, innovation and value characterise our work and as professional consultants, we have a vast pool of technical expertise from across the world, enabling us to achieve the best possible results for our clients.