

CM13.2. Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre Detailed Design Contract No. 20/03195

DATE	22 April 2021	FIL REFERENCE	FIL20/03195-02
CONFIDENTIAL	No		
FURTHER ENQUIRIES	Andrew Lawson City Projects	PHONE	6023 8111
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Purpose of Report

To recommend a preferred consultant to undertake architectural design services for the Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre.

Background

Situated on the Murray River only a 10-minute drive from central Albury, the Wonga Wetlands is a testament to how a simple idea can have a lasting and positive impact on our environment.

Following the construction of the Hume Dam between 1919 and 1936, the Murray River has been primarily utilised for irrigation, which has significantly changed the natural flow patterns of the river. This change has reduced flooding and altered the time of year that floods occur. Effectively reversing the natural river flow from high in winter and low in summer, to low in winter and high in summer – enabling irrigation downstream during the drier months of the year. As a result of this change, many of our floodplain wetlands and billabongs that occur along the Murray River have dried out, disrupting the breeding habitats of local birds and fish.

However, since the late 1990s, the Wonga Wetlands has operated as a reclaimed water wetland, recreating the natural flow and river fluctuations. In summer, Albury's reclaimed water from the wastewater treatment plant irrigates 150 hectares of hardwood plantations and nearby pasture. In winter, the lagoons of the wetlands are flooded with reclaimed water, attracting vast birdlife. The wetting and drying cycle recreated by this system replicates what would happen in an uncontrolled river floodplain - flooding in winter and drying out over summer.

Since the establishment of the Wonga Wetlands, it primarily catered to research, curious visitors and school groups. However, in 2014, the Wonga Wetlands Tourism Product Development Masterplan was produced in response to the wetlands becoming a tourist destination and a fantastic opportunity for AlburyCity to enhance the existing facility and further deliver an educational experience to its visitors. It described the existing facilities and experience as follows:

"... the current arrival node and surrounding visitor area is tired, lacks strong and attractive natural landscape features, and the current wetlands experience is too passive to attract the significant growth being sought. The existing arrival node and visitor centre is poorly positioned and configured, does not engage the visitor with the wetlands and comprises older buildings that are not fit for purpose."

The plan also highlighted nine strategies, including a new main visitor arrival experience featuring an iconic entry, a wetlands interpretation centre and events space located on the edge of the wetlands as a high priority.

In 2018, Council was awarded a grant under the Regional Growth – Experience and Tourism Fund (RGETF), to undertake works for the Albury Riverside Precinct, Parks and Wetlands Redevelopment. The construction of a new Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre would provide a modern facility that includes larger and purpose-built offices and educational spaces, in addition to kitchen facilities to cater for visitors, research and school groups.

The facility would also become a centrepiece in a growing trail network along the Murray River and Wonga Wetlands, where it would provide a central hub for visitors to learn about and experience the significant cultural heritage of the area. The facility also enables visitors to discover how the wetlands have become a living example of conservation and further understand how reclaimed water can be utilised to restore and enhance the natural environment.

To date, concept designs for the multi-purpose visitor education centre have been developed internally at Council and have been granted Development Consent with several conditions. The next stage of the project is to engage an architect for design services to further progress the concept design of the visitor education centre to a fully detailed design package to enable and support the subsequent construction phase.

The scope of the works includes four phases, with a hold point at the completion of each phase. The deliverables under each phase are as follows:

- Phase 1 – Site Investigation and Concept Design Review
 - Site Feature Survey
 - Underground Utility Service Mapping
 - Geotechnical Investigations
 - Electrical Investigations
 - Hazardous Building Materials Audit
 - Building Performance Requirements
 - Review Cost Estimate Report
 - Concept Design Review Presentation
- Phase 2 – Design Development
 - Detailed Design and Documentation
 - Civil Design
 - Structural Design
 - Building Services Design (Mechanical, Electrical, Hydraulic)
 - Landscape Design
 - Safety in Design Report
 - Fire Safety Engineering Consultant
 - Access Consultant
 - Detailed Cost Plan
 - FF&E Schedule

- Design Development Presentation
- Phase 3 – Construction Tender and Evaluation
 - Tender Drawings and Documentation
 - Construction Methodology
 - Tender Period and Evaluation

and

- Phase 4 – Construction Documentation
 - Construction Drawings and Documentation

Tenders were invited for Contract No. 20/03195 – Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre Detailed Design and were advertised in the Border Mail, Sydney Morning Herald and on Tenderlink. Tenders closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 2 March 2021.

The contract duration to complete Phases 1-3 is estimated at 30 weeks and will be completed in the second quarter of the 2021/22 fiscal year.

The budget allocated for these services is \$242,000 including GST.

Tender Assessment

At the close of the tendering period, 12 submissions were received from the following companies:

- Akimbo Architecture Pty Ltd (Albury, NSW);
- Antarctica Group Pty Ltd (Melbourne, VIC);
- Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd (Crows Nest, NSW);
- Barnson Pty Ltd (Dubbo, NSW);
- Best Advocates of New (Pahran, VIC);
- Bokor Pty Ltd (Surry Hills, NSW);
- Centrum Architects Pty Ltd (South Yarra, VIC);
- CK Architecture (Australia) Pty Ltd (Barton, ACT);
- Loft Architecture Pty Ltd (Camberwell, VIC);
- Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd (Parramatta, NSW);
- SQC Architecture (Bruce, ACT); and
- Sibling Architecture (Surry Hills, NSW).

All tenders were evaluated in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and Guidelines. The assessment panel for the tender comprised of Team Leader Treatment Services – Isaac Greene, Engineering Technical Officer Water – Chris Murphy, Urban Designer – Andrew Glen and Design Engineer – Alex Carroll. Furthermore, the tender panel was supervised by Team Leader Procurement Services – Elisha Lieschke.

Conformity Check

A conformity assessment was undertaken to ensure all submissions received were in accordance with the contract documentation and specification.

Company	Pricing Details	Supporting Information	WHS Documentation	Comment
Akimbo Architecture Pty Ltd	✓	x	✓	Non-conforming
Antarctica Group Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Barnson Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Best Advocates of New	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Bokor Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Centrum Architects Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
CK Architecture (Australia) Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Loft Architecture Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
SQC Architecture	✓	✓	✓	Conforming
Sibling Architecture	✓	✓	✓	Conforming

As indicated above, all submissions except for Akimbo Architecture Pty Ltd were assessed as being conforming.

The submission from Akimbo Architecture Pty Ltd did not meet the insurance requirements as specified in the request for tender documentation. The submission acknowledged this deficiency and proposed a higher level of insurance if the tenderer was successful, however, the proposed higher level of insurance was also significantly less than the level of insurance required. As such, the submission was deemed non-conforming and is not considered further in this report.

Quantitative Assessment (100%)

The lump sum tender prices and ratings relative to the lowest price are tabulated below.

Company	Estimated Contract Value (incl. GST)	Rating (100)
Loft Architecture Pty Ltd	\$ 195,800.00	100
Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd	\$ 237,864.00	82
Centrum Architects Pty Ltd	\$ 238,953.00	82
Bokor Pty Ltd	\$ 240,607.40	81
Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd	\$ 248,732.00	79
Barnson Pty Ltd	\$ 301,624.40	65
Best Advocates of New	\$ 342,203.40	57
SQC Architecture	\$ 360,261.00	54
Antarctica Group Pty Ltd	\$ 374,731.50	52
Sibling Architecture	\$ 446,495.50	44
CK Architecture (Australia) Pty Ltd	\$ 479,397.60	41

The budget allocated for design services for the project is \$242,000 including GST, with four submissions being within this amount.

As detailed above, the submission from Loft Architecture Pty Ltd was the most favourable from a cost perspective, being \$42,000 (21%) more favourable than Atlas Urban and Strategy Pty Ltd; \$43,000 (22%) more favourable than Centrum Architects Pty Ltd and between \$45,000 (23%) and \$284,000 (145%) than other submissions.

Considering the available budget allocated for the contract, the considerable number of submissions received and the high degree of competitiveness of submissions, it was determined that shortlisting submissions based on their quantitative scoring was appropriate. Furthermore, to ensure a rigorous assessment to determine best value for money, a conservative upper threshold of 30% (\$73,000) above the allocated budget was set to shortlist submissions.

Therefore, based on the methodology above, six submissions were shortlisted for further evaluation. This included submissions from Loft Architecture Pty Ltd; Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd; Centrum Architects Pty Ltd; Bokor Pty Ltd; Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd and Barnson Pty Ltd.

Submissions received from Best Advocates of New; SQC Architecture; Antarctica Group Pty Ltd; Sibling Architecture and CK Architecture (Australia) Pty Ltd were outside the determined threshold and therefore not recommended for further evaluation and are not further considered in this report.

Qualitative Assessment (100%)

A qualitative assessment of the submissions considered a range of criteria including:

- Past performance – including referee checks, relevant experience, and expertise in performing same or similar projects;
- Methodology and program – project methodology and proposed program;

- Capacity – current and future commitments and workload;
- Capability – including availability of resources, equipment, and contract management capabilities; and
- Benefit to local region – social and community benefit to the Albury/Wodonga region.

Company	Past Performance (35%)	Methodology & Program (25%)	Capacity (20%)	Capability (10%)	Local Benefit (10%)	Total (100%)
Bokor Pty Ltd	33	23	20	10	1	87
Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd	28	23	19	9	1	80
Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd	26	23	17	9	1	76
Centrum Architects Pty Ltd	30	15	17	8	1	71
Barnson Pty Ltd	26	13	17	7	0	63
Loft Architecture Pty Ltd	26	10	15	6	1	58

Bokor Pty Ltd is based in Surry Hills, New South Wales. The company has previously completed design services for a New Sea Life Exhibition and Education Facility at the Sydney Aquarium, Darling Harbour; Greenway Plaza, Wetherill Park, NSW; City of Parramatta Council Office, Staff Accommodation & Training Rooms, Parramatta, NSW; and Centennial Park Tennis Centre, Sydney, NSW.

Their current work commitments include upgrade of the Epping Community Centre and Library, Epping, NSW, end-of-trip facilities, which includes bike storage and amenities, for Dexus, Sydney, NSW; and a package of three projects for the City of Sydney Council, which includes the Glebe Library, Glebe, NSW; PACT Community Theatre, Erskineville, NSW; and the Ultimo Community Centre, Ultimo, NSW.

Referee information indicated that the company scored very highly in all categories, with reference to their ability to respond quickly to client requests and design changes, excellent design skills and high quality of work as well as responsibility and ownership of the design outcome, providing smooth project delivery, all without pursuit or need for variations.

The proposed methodology is detailed with clear tasks and deliverables for each phase and further demonstrated a clear understanding of the project scope, complexity, risks and opportunities. This level of understanding is likely a reflection of their experience with similar projects, including end-of-trip facilities and visitor experience designs. Specifically, the submission also included an extended appreciation of material use and sustainability, which are key considerations for the design. The delivery program follows a logical sequence aligned with the required phases, indicating a total delivery period of approximately 30 weeks to complete Phases 1-3.

Local benefit was deemed by the panel to be negligible based on the criteria. Bokor Pty Ltd nominated three local subconsultants as part of their submission.

Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd is based in Crows Nest, New South Wales. The company has previously completed a 1000-student Dining Hall for the PNG University of Technology, Papua New Guinea; Katoomba Planetary Health Hub, Katoomba, NSW and a considerable number of high-end residential and commercial projects of a similar scale and nature.

Their current work commitments include undertaking design services for Blue Mountains City Council and two other private clients.

Referee information indicated that the company scored highly in almost all categories. Specifically, it indicated that Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd are highly proficient at allocating resources, scaling up and down as the project demands, managing large numbers of key stakeholders in a collaborative way and understanding the project nuances from design to construction.

The proposed methodology clearly defined tasks and deliverables for each phase of the project, confirming a clear understanding of what is required. Furthermore, their project understanding indicated significant insight given the project's environmental and cultural aspects, specifically highlighting the Government Architect NSW's (GANSW) discussion paper on Designing with Country (DwC) and potential to adopt this approach as part of the design development process. The delivery program proposes a logical and sequenced approach, indicating 27 weeks to complete Phases 1-3.

Local benefit was deemed by the panel to be minimal. Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd nominated seven local subconsultants as part of their submission.

Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd is based in Parramatta, New South Wales. The company has previously provided design services for a new 400sqm Sporting Pavilion, Parramatta, NSW; Town Hall House – Level 4 Function Centre, Sydney, NSW; and the John Wearn Music Bowl, Carlingford, NSW.

Current design services being delivered by Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd include Boronia Park Sporting Pavilion, Epping, NSW; Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, St Marys, NSW; Intermain HQ, Alexandria, NSW; Crownland Maintenance for DPIE; Gordon Tennis Pavilion and Gateway, Gordon, NSW; and Lomatia Park Clubhouse, Springwood, NSW.

Referee information indicated that the company scored high to very high across all categories. Specifically, it indicated that Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd demonstrated exceptional proficiency in communication, co-operation, and their ability to talk-through solutions with clients.

Methodology and program were clearly detailed in a logical sequence, including descriptions of each key phase of the scope of works, with specific reference to quality management and safe design processes to ensure a high degree of quality. Additionally, the methodology identified potential risks and stages of the design that these risks could be further appreciated and mitigated. The delivery program indicated a total of 36 weeks to complete Phases 1-3.

Based on the scoring criteria, local benefit was deemed to be minimal. Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd propose to engage seven local subconsultants if successful.

Centrum Architects Pty Ltd is based in South Yarra, Victoria. Previously, Centrum Architects Pty Ltd has undertaken design services for a large number of projects, including Mulligans Flat Woodlands Sanctuary, Gungahlin, ACT; Blackburn Lake Visitors Centre, Blackburn, VIC; Riverdale Community Centre, Tarneit West, VIC; Seaford Community Hub, Seaford, VIC; Yarra Glen Community Hall and Child & Maternal Health Centre, Yarra Glen, VIC; Shepparton Sport and Events Centre, Shepparton, VIC; and Greenvale Recreation Reserve, Greenvale, VIC.

Current design services being delivered by Centrum Architects Pty Ltd include Alfredton Recreational Reserve Sports Pavilion, Alfredton, VIC; Morack Golf Clubhouse, Vermont South, VIC; Miles Pavilion Refurbishment, Seaford, VIC.

Additionally, Centrum Architects Pty Ltd is also currently engaged by Council to undertake detailed design services for the Lauren Jackson Sports Centre. To date, this engagement has been productive and delivered without issue.

Referee information indicated a proficient level of delivery across all categories. Specifically, it indicated that Centrum Architects Pty Ltd were open and approachable, able to justify design decisions and happy to listen to client and community feedback.

The methodology submitted, whilst providing value, appeared to be general in nature and a framework for good design developed through extensive experience rather than being project specific. The methodology also identified quality, asset, WHS and risk systems that support work delivered by Centrum Architects Pty Ltd. The delivery program proposed indicated approximately 28 weeks to complete Phases 1-3.

It should also be noted that the submission included several exclusions, which has the potential to attract additional expense during delivery.

Based on the criteria, local benefit was found to be minimal, with Centrum Architects Pty Ltd indicating they would use local resources where possible as well as nominating five subconsultants as part of their proposal.

Barnson Pty Ltd is based in Dubbo, NSW. A multi-disciplinary company, Barnson Pty Ltd has previously supplied services for Dubbo Regional Cycling Facility, Dubbo, NSW; Wellington Visitors Information Centre, Wellington, NSW; Lightning Ridge Visitors Centre, Lightning Ridge, NSW; and Dubbo School of Distance Education, Dubbo, NSW.

Their current work commitments include St Johns College Multipurpose Hall, Dubbo, NSW; RFS Aviation Training Facility, Dubbo, NSW; and Kanandah Nursing Home, Mudgee, NSW.

Referee information indicated that Barnson Pty Ltd was proficient across all aspects of project management and delivery. Specifically, the information provided indicated that the company provides highly proficient project managers and comprehensive documentation.

The methodology was brief and not project specific, however, the delivery program provided was detailed, logical and included all the required phases and tasks. Additionally, the submission included comprehensive WHS Management and Quality Assurance Systems. The delivery program showed approximately 36 weeks to complete Phases 1-3.

Based on the scoring criteria, local benefit for Barson Pty Ltd was assessed as being negligible. No local subcontractors or subconsultants were nominated for the project. However, this is likely a reflection of the company's multi-disciplinary nature and ability to deliver services internally.

Loft Architecture Pty Ltd is based in Camberwell, Victoria. The company has previously provided design services for the Upper Murray Events and Community Centre, Corryong, VIC; Alpine Events Centre, Bright, VIC; and Mirboo North Outdoor Pool Redevelopment and Community Rooms, Mirboo North, VIC.

Their current work commitments include the Foster Indoor Stadium, Foster, VIC; Greensborough Hockey Club New Pavilion, Plenty, VIC; Cambridge Tennis Pavilion, Hoppers Crossing, VIC; and Dorney Reserve Pavilion (Community Centre) Extension, Park Orchards, VIC.

Referee information indicated a high level of proficiency across all categories, with specific reference to their ability to deal with a dynamic environment and complex relationships. In addition, their ability to co-operate and achieve good design outcomes within a budget were also highlighted.

The methodology and program provided as part of the submission were brief. The methodology did not expand on project specifics, and did not identify any considerations, risks or opportunities; providing only a general understanding of how the required services would be delivered. Additionally, the program submitted did not identify all tasks and deliverables as included in the original tender documentation. The program allowed approximately 43 weeks to complete works for Phases 1-3, which is the longest timeframe of all submissions considered.

Based on the scoring criteria, local benefit was deemed to be minimal. Loft Architecture Pty Ltd propose to engage three local subconsultants if successful.

From the information provided, all companies demonstrated in principle, the required management systems, experience, resources, and availability to undertake the works. However, there were several companies that have provided superior submissions, which is reflected in the above scoring and would provide Council with greater confidence in executing the works.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – The business risk for this project is assessed as low. The works to be carried out include off-site design work with minor site investigations during Phase 1. This will have minimal impact on current operations of the existing visitor centre.

- **Corporate Risk** – Albury 2030 clearly sets out community expectations in relation to the priority to be applied to the provision of Council facilities and assets that contribute to the visitor economy and cultural experiences available in the city.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – WHS risks due to the site investigation works will be controlled in accordance with AlburyCity procedures. The consultant will be WHS registered with AlburyCity and will be required to implement relevant Safe Work Method Statements and safety inspections.
- **Environmental Risk** – Given the site is of cultural and heritage significance, AlburyCity is currently seeking the approval of an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) from Heritage NSW to enable site investigation (i.e., geotechnical) and future construction work. This permit will outline conditions for how work can be undertaken to minimise any potential damage to artifacts during the site investigation and subsequent construction phases.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – Given the above environmental risk, there is potential for delays to the delivery program if artifacts are encountered. However, given the main effort of this project is to undertake further design work with only minor site investigations, this risk is currently assessed as low.

Community Engagement

This tender is relevant and linked to both the Albury 2030 and the Two Cities One Community Strategic Plans, both of which have included extensive community consultation and engagement.

Stakeholder engagement is included as a deliverable under Phase 1 of this tender.

To keep the broader community informed of the project's progression, it will be included in the Major Projects section of the AlburyCity website, with updates provided through News from AlburyCity and via social media.

Furthermore, this project has also been included in the current works program which was placed on public exhibition prior to adoption by Council.

Summary

The scoring for the qualitative and quantitative assessment is summarised in the following table:

Company	Quantitative	Qualitative
Bokor Pty Ltd	81	87
Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd	82	80
Nimbus Architecture and Heritage Pty Ltd	79	76
Centrum Architects Pty Ltd	82	71
Loft Architecture Pty Ltd	100	58
Barnson Pty Ltd	65	63

The budget allocated for design services for the project is \$242,000 including GST.

From a quantitative perspective the submission from Loft Architecture Pty Ltd was assessed as being the most advantageous. The submission was between \$42,000 (18%) and \$106,000 (35%) more favourable than the other shortlisted submissions.

Although from a qualitative perspective all shortlisted companies demonstrated the ability to undertake the project, the submission from Bokor Pty Ltd was assessed as being superior in terms of the submission, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the scope and delivery requirements of the project, their relevant experience on similar projects and their methodology and program fully and effectively addressing all required elements of the project delivery phases.

Atlas Urban Design and Strategy Pty Ltd and Centrum Architects Pty Ltd both provided good submissions and would provide a minor cost saving (less than 1.5%) when compared against the submission from Bokor Pty Ltd. However, this saving is believed to be immaterial when compared to the additional value and benefits displayed in the submission from Bokor Pty Ltd, as detailed above.

Additionally, whilst it is believed that Loft Architecture would in principle be able to deliver the works, based on their submission there was significant uncertainty regarding their methodology, program and project understanding, which further extends to the general nature of their submission. Whilst the evaluation process does not specifically quantify risk for a given submission, it should be noted that the tender panel assessed that an element of risk exists with regard to the potential of the final product not fully meeting the requirements of the tender, based on the project understanding displayed in their submission.

Whilst Bokor Pty Ltd's submission is not the most financially competitive, their submission does fall within the allocated budget and provides the greatest confidence with regard to the execution of the works. Therefore, based on both the qualitative and quantitative assessments, it is deemed that the submission from Bokor Pty Ltd, having clearly demonstrated a sound understanding of the complexities of the project and further, possessing unique design experience and capability superior to the other submissions, provides the best value for Council to deliver this project.

Conclusion

Council invited tenders for Contract 20/03195 – Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre Detailed Design and received 12 submissions.

The purpose of the project is to progress the concept design to a fully documented design, including tender and construction drawings, schedules and supporting documentation so that Council can undertake subsequent construction works.

Construction of a Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre would create a leading regional facility, that is innovative and inspiring; complementing the natural beauty of the world class wetlands that surround it.

Additionally, the development will further enable the facility to cater to increased visitor numbers, expanding its ability to provide educational and awareness programs to visitors, schools, and

university groups. It will also provide end of journey amenity so visitors setting-off or returning from a walk, run or ride around the wetlands or along the Murray River are able to stop, relax and replenish.

A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the submissions indicated that Bokor Pty Ltd was the most favourable submission, demonstrating best value for money. Their tendered price of \$240,607.40 including GST is within the budget allocation of \$242,000 including GST.

Recommendation

That Council accepts the tender from Bokor Pty Ltd for Contract No. 20/03195 – Wonga Wetlands Visitor Education Centre Detailed Design for the lump sum amount of \$240,607.40 including GST.