

Today, of the 14 million or so visitors a year 55% are Sydneysiders and 22% are foreigners. At the time of writing, the exhibition space at the Convention Center was being increased by 10,000 square metres (107,000 square feet) with the building of two new warehouse-type structures to make a total of 40,000 square metres (428,000 square feet) of convention and exhibition space. Financial assistance from the government was reduced from \$A17.6 million in the 1996–7 fiscal year to nil in 1999–2000. Still, questions are asked as to whether a stronger overall architectural image could have been obtained with some additional forethought. Similar questions are asked about the links between Darling Harbour and its surroundings. In many ways it turns

its back on them. The site was dealt with as an island by a single authority.

### Major references

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### Commentary

A wide variety of urban design products have been produced through the procedures of all-of-a-piece design. Both public and private interests have initiated them. Increasingly they have involved close cooperation between the two sectors of the economy. Given an overall vision, the degree of control over the design of their individual components has varied considerably. Tight building design guidelines were used in places such as Seaside and Paternoster Square; much looser ones were applied in schemes such as Darling Harbour, and largely advisory ones in Glendale. The goal of all of the guidelines has been to create some level of visual unity, and pedestrian and other user amenity while allowing for diversity.

The quality of urban designs varies considerably. Market-driven schemes such as La Défense and Canary Wharf are based on ease of development within the framework of an international money market largely uninterested in local concerns. They have proven good enough to sell once some basic design flaws were eliminated but they have also missed opportunities. With the wisdom of hindsight it is clear that they have incurred substantial opportunity costs – other designs could have met their ends better and, at the same time, have catered to a wider range of needs. The designs meet their goals but how good were the goals? Should one of the goals of these two projects have been to provide a greater variety of uses from the outset?

A recent study drawing on considerable empirical evidence (i.e. from Garvin, 1995; Punter and Carmona, 1997; Punter, 1999, 2003) has attempted to develop a