

**PROJECT
BACKGROUND**

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

In March 2010, the Board of Queensland Museum released an 'Invitation to Offer' for the Master Plan for North Ipswich Rail Yards. In July 2010, the RPS led consultant team was selected to undertake this Project.

This planning process was informed by the outcomes of the *Ipswich Regional Centre Strategy*, launched in 2008, identifying the Ipswich rail yards as "a key site in the revitalization of the Ipswich City Centre and... a key catalyst project, presenting a truly outstanding opportunity to create a regionally significant precinct, in close proximity to Ipswich City Centre". (The Ipswich Regional Centre Strategy, February 2008).

The Brisbane City and Hinterland Regional Tourism Investment and Infrastructure Plan 2008-2018 (RTIIP) also recognises the Ipswich Rail Yards site as a key tourism opportunity, identifying it as one of nine catalyst investment projects which supports sustainable development of tourism in the broader Brisbane region, up to 2018.

The Vision Plan was commissioned as a joint initiative between Queensland Rail, Queensland Museum, Brisbane Marketing and the City of Ipswich.

The brief for the planning process sets out the vision statement for the Rail Yards:

"TO CREATE A DISTINCTIVE WORLD CLASS WORKSHOPS PRECINCT OF BOTH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, WHERE A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND HERITAGE FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES INTEGRATE IN A UNIQUE WAY THAT CELEBRATES THE PAST WHILE BUILDING THE FUTURE". (Ref. Ipswich City Centre, North Ipswich Railway Workshops Precinct Feasibility Study and Action Plan, August 2009).

The purpose of the Vision Plan is to provide a vision and staged framework for the potential redevelopment of the rail yards' precinct into a distinctive world class heritage and tourism destination of both regional and national significance. The Plan acknowledges that the Plan is required to be flexible in nature and subject to future operational requirements of current owners; Queensland Rail and Queensland Museum.

1.2 STEERING COMMITTEE

The Ipswich Rail Yards Steering Committee is headed by Andrew Moritz, Director The Workshops Rail Museum QLD and project manager for the master planning process.

Steering committee members include;

- Janet Hewitt, Tourism Development Manager, Ipswich City Council
- Jan Sommer, Destination Management Officer, Brisbane Marketing
- Kristine Clarke, Manager Heritage, Queensland Rail
- Erich Barkmeyer, Principal Infrastructure Management Officer, Arts Queensland
- Mark Tierney, Director, Infrastructure Planning & Planning, Arts Queensland
- Phil Davies, Business Facility Manager, The Workshops Rail Museum
- Glenn Price, Marketing & Sales Manager, The Workshops Rail Museum
- Danny Keenan, Centre Strategy Officer, Ipswich City Council.

The Steering Committee played a pivotal role in the development of the 'vision' and master plan for the rail yards precinct, engaging with the consultant team from project inception to finalisation of the Vision Plan, as well as reporting back to their organisations on the outcomes of the planning process.

1.3 CONSULTANT TEAM

The multi-disciplinary consultant team, lead by RPS principal Urban Designer and project manager, Jo-Ann Baynham included;

- RPS Group:

- Project management
- Urban Design
- Economic feasibility
- Town Planning

- EC3 Global:

- Tourism Development opportunities
- Workshop facilitation

- BVN Architects:

- Rail Museum architects

- Jacqui Pearce Architects:

- Heritage Architect

- Kittelson, Transport Engineers

1.4 PROJECT STRUCTURE

The project duration spanned approximately six months and was broadly divided into four key Phases;

Phase 1: Site analysis - site based opportunities and constraints analysis and heritage assessment (refer to section 2).

Phase 2: Visioning and opportunities development - proposed land use concepts, visioning and benchmarking analysis, development principles and base assumptions confirmation (refer to section 3).

Phase 3: Master plan development - adaptive reuse options, new structures, public realm improvements, movement and access networks (refer to section 4).

Phase 4: Economic feasibility - visitor expenditure and tourism expansion opportunities, preliminary capital costs and revenue potentials (refer to section 5).

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1.5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to Steering Committee representatives, more than 36 individuals from 23 organisations/ companies participated in the visioning and planning process for the Ipswich rail yards, either meeting with individual members of the consultant team or attending workshops and presentations.

Overwhelmingly, their shared vision for the site is to achieve two complementary goals which are encapsulated in the following statement:

To realise the potential of the site to grow into an **ICONIC DESTINATION** of **NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**, celebrating the unique heritage of this precinct and to unlock the potential of the site as a grassroots **COMMUNITY ASSET** for Ipswich and the broader SEQ region, establishing a relevant, accessible and attractive community node, offering users a broad range of opportunities and experiences.

(For a full list of participants, refer to Appendix 1)

