ICC Sydney Theatre

9,000
total capacity

Australia’s biggest stage
with unique fan-shaped tier design

layered mesh facade
wraps entire auditorium

180 square metres
digital welcoming screen on entry

1,400 square metres
retail space

World class concerts,
sporting events and
mega conferences

ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre

internal space equivalent to
26 Olympic size swimming pools

7 exhibition halls + Gallery
total 35,000 square metres

5,000 square metres
open air event deck

Ceiling height of 10.5m to accommodate the world’s largest events.

Australia’s first multi-storey exhibition space

Concealed loading dock
reduces noise and light impact on surrounding areas.

Meeting pods at front of building connect with surrounding parkland.

International Convention Centre Sydney

5 storeys high

Australia’s largest ballroom
can accommodate
3,500 guests

3 concurrent conferences

270° views of Sydney skyline
across the Harbour

70 meeting rooms total

2 plenary theatres

$1.5Bn
development

$5Bn
generated in economic benefits each year

more than 400
events already secured
Spread over 250,000 square metres in the heart of Sydney, ICC Sydney at Darling Harbour is a new global benchmark in exhibition and convention venues and an important city-shaping project set to transform Sydney.

Joint venture partners HASSELL + Populous worked together to design the new convention, exhibition and entertainment venues for Sydney, with inspiration from the site's spectacular city and harbour surrounds as well as Cockle Bay's history.

HASSELL Fellow and Project Design Director, Ken Maher, believes the project’s significance extends beyond the Darling Harbour site.

"I think architecture has a role, if not a responsibility, particularly in a project of this size, to think beyond the project itself to bring a whole new dynamic quality and reputation to the broader city, and that’s what this project will do, perhaps more than any other project in the last generation," Ken said.

"When Darling Harbour was originally conceived it was very inward looking; this project not only renews the Darling Harbour site but provides important new connections, from Central to the harbour, and from the CBD to the neighbouring suburbs of Pyrmont and Ultimo."

With particular expertise in the design of convention and exhibition centres, Populous Senior Principal and Joint Architecture Director Richard Breslin said the team was inspired by the natural beauty of the Sydney context to challenge traditional design for convention and exhibition buildings and capitalise on ICC Sydney’s unique setting.

“Sydney was very much our driver: the natural beauty, the built beauty, but also the people and culture of Sydney,” Richard said.

“Convention and exhibition buildings have a tendency to be introverted by their very nature, but we worked to ensure that the line between the outside and the inside was blurred – so visitors coming to any of the venues could engage with the natural and built beauty of this city.”

"The NSW Government’s goal was to have the best convention and exhibition centre in the world and they’ve certainly got it," he said.

HASSELL Principal and Joint Architecture Director Glenn Scott explained how the precinct was designed as a whole – not three individual buildings – to achieve the overall vision of a connected public place for all of Sydney to enjoy that also reflects and celebrates aspects of Sydney in its design.

"While the design creates a cohesive whole, there was a conscious decision to design three distinctive buildings, each with their own character and identity, informed by their use and their context in the landscape: the boldness and robustness of the ICC Theatre, close to Chinatown and the city’s nightlife; the warm, earthy tones of the ICC Exhibition set in the parklands; and the reflective, crystalline ICC Convention on the harbour’s edge. In return each building connects with its immediate context physically and visually, taking in the differing views, to ensure that it is not only an internal experience but one that embraces the uniqueness of its Sydney environment” he said.

ICC Sydney precinct includes:

- A convention facility capable of holding three separate concurrent events of up to 2,500 delegates
- Total exhibition capacity of 35,000 square metres
- A flexible entertainment theatre with a seated capacity of 8,000
- An external event deck of 5,000 square metres featuring spectacular city views
- A grand ballroom with banqueting space for up to 2,000 or 3,500 in cocktail mode
- 8,000 square metres of total meeting room space across 70 rooms

HASSELL + Populous are joint venture design consultants to the Darling Harbour Live consortium, comprising Lendlease, HOSTPLUS, First State Super, Capella Capital, AEG Ogden and Spotless which is partnering with the NSW Government to create Australia’s premier convention, exhibition and events destination, ICC Sydney.
Overview of the buildings

HASSELL and Populous jointly designed the three world-class venues to create a cohesive overall precinct, while at the same time giving each building its own personality and unique architectural character – from the cool reflective style of the convention centre, to the warm natural features of the exhibition centre, and the vibrant energy of the theatre. The HASSELL + Populous design creates stunning new venues that will attract the lucrative convention and exhibition dollar to Sydney, while at the same time renewing the harbour front precinct to create a vibrant new inner city quarter for visitors and locals alike.

Key themes:
ICC Theatre – vibrant, urban, playful
ICC Exhibition – Warm, landscape, natural
ICC Convention – Cool, water, reflective

“*The three new venues – the Convention Centre, the Exhibition Centre and the new Theatre – are all connected yet each given an independent identity related to their location: the Theatre in the south with its robust urban character; the Exhibition Centre in the centre drawing on the parkland landscape character of Tumbalong Park; and the International Convention Centre in the north taking its inspiration from the delight of the harbour.**”
Ken Maher, HASSELL Fellow, Project Design Director

“*In designing the new ICC Sydney, HASSELL and Populous have created world class venues that connect with their surrounding built and natural environments as part of a new inner city destination that people will love. The design for the new ICC Sydney unlocks the economic, social and cultural potential of the harbour side site for visitors and Sydneysiders alike.*”
Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director

“*Engagement is at the heart of the design – engagement with both the surrounding built and natural environments and engagement with Sydney’s residents and visitors. The needs of the meeting industry are changing and while Convention and Exhibition centres do retain a unique focus, it is now combined with a desire to contribute to the local neighbourhood. ICC Sydney is a development for a modern urban community, a catalyst for business and a major international destination.*”
Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal: Joint ICC Architecture Director

ICC Sydney Theatre

The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Theatre creates Sydney’s largest theatre that will provide an unrivalled Sydney concert experience.

Every one of the venue’s 8,000 seats is focused on the centre of the stage, and a fan-shaped vertical seating layout ensures an optimal view from every seat in the house. With an additional standing GA floor, the venue will accommodate 9,000 people.

The venue’s expansive stage is designed for rock concerts and other large entertainment events.

The ICC Theatre’s layered mesh facade wraps the entire volume of the auditorium to create a unique and memorable venue, with the vibrant red foyer areas glowing in the evening - signalling the exciting energy of the entertainment industry.

While inside the auditorium the experience is inward looking, focused on the event, the foyer and VIP areas of the ICC Theatre boast spectacular views of Sydney’s city skyline to create an all-encompassing experience for fans – a connection to the performance and a connection to Sydney.

“*The innovative fan shaped bowl of the 8,000 seat HASSELL + Populous designed ICC Theatre draws the audience closer to the performance for a more intimate and engaging experience in line with the latest evolution in arena design.*”
Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director

“*The ICC Theatre will provide an unrivalled Sydney concert experience – one that starts outside the front door, with its wrap-around high definition LED screen, and continues inside the theatre, where the vertical stacking of seats will ensure a high intensity experience. There is no doubt that the ICC Theatre will be the number one venue in Sydney for rock concerts and other big entertainment events*”
Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director
The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Exhibition creates Australia's first multi-storey exhibition space and the largest exhibition space in Australia - with the floor-space on the upper and lower halls equivalent in size to 26 Olympic size pools.

Another unique design feature is the location of the meeting room pods and break-out spaces at the front of the building, to connect and engage with the outside environment. The design has significantly increased the available exhibition space, and meeting capacity to provide an asset capable of attracting the best conferences, exhibitions and events in the world.

The immense scale of the venue is dramatically reduced by being integrated into its terraced park surrounds which cleverly conceals a substantial proportion of the building. Vastly improved loading facilities will reduce 'bump in' and 'bump-out' time which will substantially improve operational costs.

"The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Exhibition creates the largest exhibition space in Australia, seamlessly integrated into its surrounds as part of the broader precinct."  
Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director:

"While exhibition centres tend to be introverted by the nature of their function, the HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Exhibition connects and engages with the outside environment, providing delegates with a view of the park and the City."  
Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director:

A key feature of the HASSELL + Populous design is an expansive elevated open air Event Deck which sits atop the ICC, adjacent to the ICC Theatre, offering spectacular views of the city.

Taking advantage of Sydney's weather and natural beauty, the Event Deck is an outdoor extension of the ICC Exhibition, with paved and landscaped areas, and a large lounge and bar area which offers spectacular views of the city.

The Event Deck is accessible from Quarry Street, Ultimo to the west, and from Tumbalrong Park in the centre of Darling Harbour, forming part of the key new east-west links integrated into the master planning of the site.

"The Event Deck is another example of the HASSELL + Populous design of ICC Sydney that illustrates engagement with the city and illustrates what we're all about- open, welcoming and global. A unique event space for Sydney has been created."  
Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Project Director

"The Event Deck is a key feature of the design- a unique outdoor extension that effectively puts Sydney and the harbour on exhibition."  
Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director:
Adjacent to Cockle Bay, the crystalline glass facade of the HASSELL + Populous designed ICC Sydney Convention reflects light and the sparkle of water.

The venue can accommodate three concurrent conventions, and boasts Australia’s largest ballroom with a stunning 270-degree view of the Sydney skyline across the harbour, as well as more than 70 meeting rooms, two theatres, a multipurpose event space, a media centre, VIP areas and business suites.

“The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Sydney creates a uniquely Sydney venue that embraces its harbourside location with views of the city and the harbour, and facilities that will make it the top convention centre in Australia.”

Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director

“The HASSELL + Populous team had three goals with the design of the project - to redefine the experience of what convention and exhibition is all about, to showcase the natural beauty of Sydney and to make the precinct and this part of Sydney a better place for people to live.”

Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director

The Grand Ballroom is part of ICC Sydney Convention, adjacent to Cockle Bay.

As part of the ICC Sydney Convention, the Grand Ballroom reflects its waterfront location, with its use of a cool blue and grey palette, complementing the crisp pearlescent white porcelain façade and ceiling.

The Grand Ballroom embraces the cool reflective theme with a ceiling of sculpted mirror polished blades that reflects the colours and activity below. A reference to the water of Cockle Bay and the spiralling Woodward fountain, this chandelier-like ceiling floats above a bespoke designed rich blue and grey triangulated broadloom carpet, to finish the luxury dining experience.

“The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Sydney Grand Ballroom creates a uniquely Sydney venue that embraces its harbourside location with views of the city and the harbour, from inside as well as from an open-air balcony.”

Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director

“*The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Grand Ballroom creates a place that is luxurious, and distinctively Sydney in both its colour scheme and its special features like the ceiling of sculpted mirror polished blades.*”

Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal, Joint ICC Architecture Director
Interiors

The HASSELL + Populous team has designed all Interiors for the three ICC Sydney venues.

The ICC Theatre was designed with live music concerts in mind, so the Interiors reflect a raw and robust palette along with a louder colour scheme and form to showcase the building’s dynamism and energy.

The materials palette for the ICC Exhibition has a warmth through the use of timber both externally and internally which reflects both its setting within Tumbalong Park and its function built on foundations of years of trade and industry with references to old timber warehouses and wharfs. The timber is Spotted Gum, a local gum species, and the spaces use natural colours of greens, browns and greys to maintain calm environments and allow the exhibition event branding to be the star.

The ICC Convention reflects its waterfront location, with its use of a cool blue and grey palette, complementing the crisp white porcelain cladding used internally and externally. The Grand Ballroom embraces the cool reflective theme with a ceiling of sculpted mirror polished blades that reflects and distorts what is happening below, referencing the water of Cockle Bay and the Woodward fountain.

“The Interiors of each building is special and different to reflect its setting, function and status as part of a landmark development for Sydney reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of the city.”
Richard Breslin, Populous Senior Principal and Joint ICC Architecture Director:

“While the three venues form a cohesive whole, we also wanted to create a unique identity for each, and this is achieved through the exterior and interior design – from the cool reflective nature of the ICC Convention, to the warmth of the ICC Exhibition, and the vibrant red of the ICC Theatre, each has its own unique but cohesive experience.”
Glenn Scott, HASSELL Principal and Joint ICC Architecture Director
Joint venture partners, HASSELL + Populous designed Sydney’s new international convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct at Darling Harbour.

ICC Sydney includes three world-class venues which create a cohesive overall precinct, while at the same time giving each building its own personality and unique architectural character - from the cool reflective style of the convention centre, to the warm natural features of the exhibition centre, and the vibrant energy of the theatre.

The design creates stunning new venues that will attract the lucrative convention and exhibition dollar to Sydney, while at the same time renewing the harbour front precinct to create a vibrant new inner city quarter for visitors and locals alike.

The precinct reflects the dynamism of Sydney’s cityscape, redefining Darling Harbour, while respecting the precinct’s parkland setting. One of the most important features of ICC Sydney is that it provides more public open space than was there before, a better space with greater amenity for everyone. It is about being open welcoming and enjoying what makes this a truly global and unique city

The precinct includes:

- A convention facility capable of holding three separate concurrent events of up to 2,500 delegates
- Total exhibition capacity of 35,000 square metres
- A flexible entertainment theatre with a seated capacity of 8,000
- An external event deck of 5,000 square metres featuring spectacular city views
- A grand ballroom with banqueting space for up to 2,000 or 3,500 in cocktail mode
- 8,000 square metres of total meeting room space across 70 rooms
Adjacent to Cockle Bay, at the north end of the Darling Harbour precinct, the crystalline glass facade of the HASSELL + Populous designed ICC Convention Centre reflects the light and sparkle of the water.

The venue can accommodate three concurrent conventions and boasts Australia’s largest ballroom with an expansive view of the Sydney skyline across the harbour. It also includes more than 70 meeting rooms, two theatres, a multipurpose event space, a media centre, VIP area and business suite.

The grand ballroom embraces the cool reflective theme of its waterfront location, with a chandelier-like ceiling of sculpted mirror polished blades that reflect the colour and activity below.

While most ballrooms are in the basement, the grand ballroom sits at the top of the building with a stunning 270 degree view of the Sydney skyline across the harbour.

The ICC has two theatres. Darling Harbour Theatre, a 2,500 seat plenary hall for conferences and shows, has been specifically designed to cater to the changing events within the building. The Pyrmont Theatre is a refurbishment of the existing 1,000 seat plenary hall.

The Gallery is a 2,500m2 flat floor multi function convention and exhibition space in the heart of the building. This location gives it and its associated prefunction area direct views of the harbour and city skyline. The building also contains two levels of large format meeting and convention rooms with state of the art integrated AV equipment and 180 degree views of the city.

All the spaces can be operated simultaneously with massive back of house infrastructure which makes this possible including a commercial kitchen that serves both Convention and Exhibition buildings.
The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Exhibition creates Australia's first multi-storey exhibition space and the largest exhibition space in Australia. The Exhibition Centre has 35,000m² of indoor exhibition space over two levels, equivalent in size to 26 Olympic size pools.

The Exhibition halls have a ceiling height of 10.5m to accommodate some of the world's largest events. Adjacent to the exhibition centre, and serving as an extension of it, is a 5,000m² open air event deck, overlooking Tumbalong Park. It includes a large lounge and bar area (1000m²) which offers spectacular views of the city.

The stacked nature of the exhibition halls capitalises on the venue’s inner city location but the immense scale of the venue is dramatically reduced by being integrated into the terraced park surrounds. The scale of the building is further reduced by the location of the meeting room pods and breakout spaces at the front of the building.

Another clever design approach is the location of the loading dock for the lower halls at the front of the building, concealed by the folded landscape, while a new loading ramp for the upper halls has been created at the rear of the building. Together, these facilities will significantly reduce the bump in time.

The design has significantly increased the available exhibition space and meeting capacity to provide an asset capable of attracting the best conferences, exhibitions and events in the world.
The HASSELL + Populous design for the ICC Theatre creates Sydney's largest theatre that will provide an unrivalled concert experience.

Every one of the venue’s 8,000 seats is focussed on the centre of the stage and a fan shaped vertical seating layout ensures an optimal view from every seat in the house. With an additional GA standing floor, the venue will accommodate 9,000 people.

The venue’s expansive shape is designed for rock concerts and other large entertainment events.

The theatre is designed to enrich the live experience. It brings audiences closer to performers by providing unobstructed, 100% forward facing views of the stage from every seat in the house. The ICC Theatre’s layered mesh facade wraps the entire volume of the auditorium to create a unique and memorable venue, with the vibrant red foyer areas glowing in the evening - signalling the exciting energy of the entertainment industry. Guests will experience a world class welcome from the moment they enter the theatre through a 180m2 digital screen.

The theatre also features unique views looking out over the city. The building reconnects visually with the Sydney CBD on all foyer levels, providing Sydney with three new living rooms from which to view the spectacular lights of the CBD.

The theatre is connected to ICC Sydney and also links to Tumbalong Place. It has 1400m2 retail space, various VIP areas and multiple foyers with views of Sydney’s CBD over Tumbalong Park.

As well as concerts, the theatre can be used for sporting events and mega conferences. The innovative design reduces the footprint of the building - allowing for an expansion of open space in the precinct.
ABOUT HASSELL
HASSELL is a leading international design practice with studios in Australia, China, South East Asia and the United Kingdom.

We judge the success of the buildings and places we design by the way people use and enjoy them - the clients who commission them, the people who inhabit them. Good design is about helping clients meet their needs and objectives. It is also about the way people feel when they experience it, a sense of meaning, connection and belonging.

For more information visit www.hassellstudio.com

ABOUT Populous
Populous is a global architecture and design firm that designs the places where people love to be together, like Suncorp Stadium, Yankee Stadium, the London Olympics, and the new Los Angeles Convention Centre. Over the last 30 years, the firm has designed more than 2,000 projects worth $40 billion across emerging and established markets. Populous’ comprehensive services include architecture, interior design, event planning and overlay, branded environments, wayfinding and graphics, planning and urban design, landscape architecture, aviation and transport design, hotels and hospitality, and sustainable design consulting. Populous has 17 offices on four continents with regional centers in Kansas City, London, Sydney and Brisbane.

For more information visit www.populous.com