

defying convention

New Zealand's tourism industry responds to the 2.5 million visitors who arrive in New Zealand each year. Our biggest export earner, tourism's 100% Pure brand is focussed on unspoilt landscapes, indigenous Maori culture and our adventurous engagement with nature. Tourism's strategic importance is emphasised by Prime Minister John Key personally taking responsibility for this Cabinet portfolio.

A key market as yet untapped is the international conference circuit. **With major conferences boasting four to five thousand delegates and spanning up to a week in duration, the economic benefit to the host economy is significant.** Importantly, delegates follow up with adventure and wilderness seeking side journeys, multiplying revenue. Unlike our neighbours on "West Island", New Zealand has yet to establish an international best practice Convention Centre.

Recently, central government has begun the process of registering interest from potential providers.

Working with ASB Showgrounds and Cornwall Park Trust Board, Archimedia has prepared an international standard national Convention Centre concept that is integrated with both Maungakiekie / Cornwall Park and the existing ASB Showgrounds Exhibition Centre. The experience targeted is "a green conference in a landscaped park, at the foot of an historic and culturally significant volcanic cone."

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Archimedia's design process begins with issues-based research to establish international best practice. The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre offers a formidable contemporary benchmark – a 25,000m² Exhibition Centre adjoining a six star Green Star, subdivisible Convention Centre for 5500 delegates, abundant car parking and an easy walk along the Yarra River from the Southbank hospitality precinct.

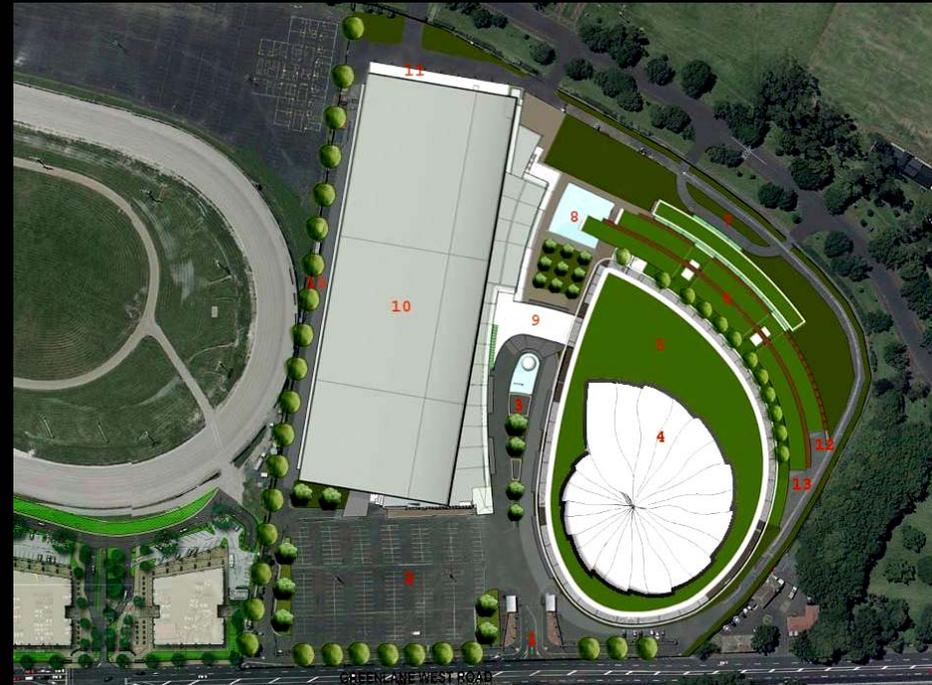
One of the reasons New Zealand lacks a network of established best practice facilities is the historic tendency toward ad-hoc and compromised development resulting from capital constraint.

To compete successfully internationally, co-location of best practice Convention and Exhibition Centres is fundamental. This implies that the footprint required for a flat floor configuration including adequate service and loading space requires about 4+ hectares – significantly bigger than the Convention facility brief. **The implication on capital cost in the CBD, where land costs per square metre are the nation's highest, is obvious.**

As part of Archimedia's study, montages were prepared of a comparable facility overlaid on some of the potential CBD sites: Wynyard Quarter, Victoria Quarter and Aotea – simply to gauge scale. Is an inwardly focussed structure of significant mass, completely in contrast to the desirable grain of the central city and potentially presenting a barrier to the Waitemata, the best use of a finite CBD / waterfront?

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Further, the duplication of existing facilities wastes scarce local resources. Co-locating a new Convention Centre with an existing Exhibition Centre, not only achieves best practice, but also reduces capital cost.

A Convention Centre is a component of urban infrastructure that may generate positive fiscal spin-off, but experience indicates real development risk - www.vancouverconventioncentre.com – and the possibility of ongoing operational losses – building it does not necessarily guarantee that “they will come”.

An Exhibition Centre is a synergetic and complimentary source of operational revenue that can bolster the income of a combined facility and, if co-located with an existing Exhibition Centre, would generate significant additional revenue immediately.

New Zealand would not lose an international convention because the venue was located in a magnificent sub-urban park. Travelling to a Conference venue by cab or luxury coach is the international norm. A journey to the centre of the isthmus can be both a positive experience, broadening delegate knowledge and generating additional revenue. Experience suggests over time hotel developments follow Convention Centres, but the vast majority of delegates return to central accommodation and hospitality outlets, so CBD revenue would not be affected.

There is both a potentially enhanced experience and a compelling economic logic in locating the new Convention Centre in the natural and historic landscape of Maungakiekie and Cornwall Park.

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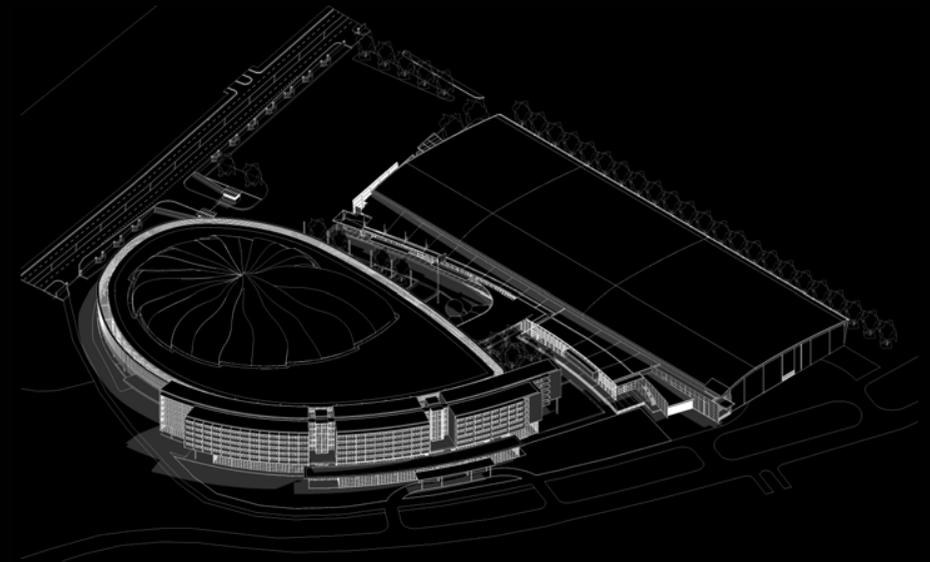
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As part of Archimedia's research-based approach, an outline best practice brief was established:

key proposal statistics:

- convention centre benchmarked to international best practice
- integrated mass transit or coach loop links convention centre to cbd and rail network
- 6 star Green Star esd philosophy
- subdivisible plenary auditorium for 5,500 delegates
- convention foyer for 7,500 guests, 11.5m high
- 2,800m² grand banquet hall and pre-function
- 5,300 m² flexible meeting and break-out rooms in 25 acoustically separate spaces
- adjoining 18,000+m² exhibition centre
- integrated pedestrian concourse links all convention and exhibition facilities for flexible operation of individual facilities
- integrated 450 room five star hotel, separate Puriri Drive address
- separate convention and exhibition BOH loading and set down apron
- 800+ on - site car parks
- future-proofed for future expansion
- adjoining development sites

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