



Frequently asked Questions – Community

How much will the new head office cost?

A final price will be known when the detailed design is complete and tenders are awarded. Based on the concept design, we expect that the construction cost will be in the order of \$74m, including allowances for consultant fees, contingencies and cost escalation.

How is it being funded?

The construction of the head office will be funded via a combination of debt, asset sales, grants and developer contributions. Council will initially take out a long-term, low interest loan for around \$72.6m of the project cost. Around \$20m of the loan will be repaid quickly via the sale of surplus Council properties in the CBD for which Council already has signed a Heads of Agreement covering the majority of properties. The principal and interest on the remaining \$52m loan will be paid for via lease income, merger savings, internal contributions, and savings from operating and maintaining the 11 cottages and other buildings currently occupied by staff.

No additional rates will be required to service the debt.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan shows that Council has the ability to service this debt, along with debt for other projects, and not exceed the local government benchmark for debt servicing.

Will my rates increase to fund this building?

No – Council will not be increasing rates to fund this project. The project will be funded from within the current resources of Council, generating new income from lease, rent and merger savings.

I don't live in Queanbeyan, why should my rates be going to this?

The redevelopment of the Queanbeyan administration building has been a long-term project, dating back to as early as 2012 prior to the merger of Queanbeyan and Palerang councils. Council's funding for roads, sportsfields, water and sewer etc will not be reduced because of this project.

Wasn't there a design a few years ago for this?

Yes – Council looked at co-locating the head office behind The Q within the Lowe Street Car Park with a government agency. That project did not proceed. Council resolved not to progress with the head office on that site and instead chose to pursue the option of demolishing the previous administration building and reconstructing a civic and cultural precinct, including a head office, on that site.

How much has already been spent on this project, including the demolition of the former administration office?

- Initial design - \$686K, including survey and investigations
- Demolition - \$643K including relocation of services
- Current concept - \$340K

How is this design different to the original one?

Obviously, the location is different, but so too is the layout of the office. In preparing this design, the architects also had to make allowances for the adjacent heritage buildings, the large stormwater pipe that passes through the middle of the site, and solar impacts on the neighbouring developments, hence the two towers.

The concept design on exhibition includes:

- i. two towers (3 and 5 levels above ground and mezzanine, connected to Bicentennial)
- ii. ~ 6500m² public realm
- iii. ~ 1450m² community space
- iv. ~ 2050m² commercial space
- v. ~ 4000m² council administration, including shopfront
- vi. public library space (+ integrating service desk and staff areas into head office)
- vii. meeting rooms and break-out spaces (for receptions and conference)
- viii. space for government offices (sold as strata)
- ix. lettable commercial space (available initially for rental return, then for future growth)
- x. gallery connecting office building to Bicentennial Hall and Q Theatre
- xi. ~100 car-space office and public basement parking
- xii. rooftop garden

What was wrong with the old administration building?

The former Council administration building at 257 Crawford St had been considered for refurbishment by the former Queanbeyan City Council. It was recognised that the building had reached the end of serviceable life and required significant maintenance and upgrade works to bring it up to an acceptable standard. Even with this work completed, the building would not have the capacity to accommodate all of Council's Queanbeyan-based office staff, who are currently inefficiently accommodated in 11 sites across the CBD. Council investigated options for redeveloping the building or adding additional floors to provide more room, however these options were not considered to be viable. On balance, replacing the former administration building on the current site did not provide scope for any public domain works.

Why do you need to build this when you already have offices for your staff?

Queanbeyan-based staff are currently spread across 11 different buildings in the Queanbeyan CBD. Staff are currently located in inadequate surrounds, including living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens of old cottages and other properties. This is both ineffective and inefficient. Council estimates that consolidating staff into one building and using much more energy efficient appliances and layouts could save up to \$330,000 per year.

Why can't Council be located in one of the empty buildings in the CBD?

There are no available buildings that are large enough and appropriate to service customers and accommodate all of Council's Queanbeyan-based staff.

What will happen to the current offices occupied by staff when the new building is complete?

Council sees the development of the civic and cultural precinct, including the new head office, as a catalyst for the transformation of the Queanbeyan CBD. Council has signed a Heads of Agreement with Downtown Q Pty Ltd following an unsolicited bid from the consortium to redevelop some of the vacated sites in the Queanbeyan CBD. This agreement was assessed against the NSW State Government's guidelines on unsolicited bids, and was found to comply. Under the agreement, Downtown Q would be able to purchase agreed sites within the CBD for redevelopment, once Council staff have vacated these buildings. The purchase of any land is subject to further decision from Council and the value of any land sold would be based on independent valuations. The redevelopment of those sites will be subject to independent determination by the Joint Regional Planning Panel of a development application lodged by Downtown Q.

Aren't some of those buildings heritage listed?

Yes – two Council-owned buildings in the Crawford-Rutledge St area are heritage listed. These are Dutton's Cottage and the Old Fire Station on Crawford St. These two buildings will be repurposed into commercial spaces such as a café and reception centre as part of the Downtown Q redevelopment, subject to independent determination by the Joint Regional Planning Panel.

How many car parking spaces will be affected?

The civic plaza area shown in the design out the front of The Q currently contains 40 parking spaces. As part of the development, a basement car park for ~100 cars will be constructed. Of this, 65 will be available for staff and public use out of business hours. In addition, around 120 car-spaces will be retained and refurbished behind The Q.

Won't the basement car park flood?

Whilst the car park is below the Queanbeyan CBD flood level, the entry / exit ramp has been located above the flood level. In the event that the basement is inundated, it will be equipped with sumps and pumps to remove any flood / storm water.

When will Council lodge the development application?

We are aiming to lodge the development application prior to Christmas 2019. Finalisation of the development application will occur during the community consultation phase, with any changes coming from the community consultation to be incorporated into the development application. When an application is lodged, the plans can be amended throughout the process.

Is this my only chance to have a say on this precinct?

No – there will be a number of opportunities for the community to provide feedback on the precinct. During this current consultation period, we will be focusing on the concept, potential uses of the building, feasibility and financials. As part of the development application notification, you will be able to comment on design and planning matters associated with the building. There will also be opportunities to present to Council on the precinct and the Joint Regional Planning Panel who will determine the development application.