

# Statement of Community Benefit & Assessment Against the Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme

Proposed STEAMM Gallery, 825 Stanley Street, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

## 1.0 Introduction

This report forms part of the Development Application for a landmark cultural facility, the STEAMM Gallery, as part of The Stanley (east tower) at 825 Stanley Street Woolloongabba. The proposal, conceived and operated by the Steammm Gallery and Big Questions Institute (BQI), seeks to establish a unique institution at the intersection of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths, and Music.

This document provides an assessment of the proposal against the objectives of the Woolloongabba Priority Development Area (PDA) Development Scheme. It demonstrates that the proposed use not only aligns with the scheme's vision but delivers exceptional community benefits that qualify it as a catalyst project, warranting development uplift.

## 2.0 Proposed Land Use

The primary purpose of the STEAMM Gallery is to serve the community through cultural enrichment, education, and research. Under the Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme, the proposed integrated facility is best defined as a combination of uses:

**Community Facility:** By providing publicly accessible galleries, a library, lecture theatres, and spaces for community education and outreach, the proposal directly fits this definition.

**Educational Establishment:** The facility is dedicated to promoting science to the public, hosting educational programs, and providing resources for research and study. The educational use is, however, ancillary to the primary community use.

**Food and Drink Outlet:** The inclusion of a ground-floor café and an upper-level licensed bar and restaurant is ancillary to the primary cultural use and serves to activate the site.

### 3.0 Assessment Against the Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme

The proposal has been designed to directly implement the vision and strategic outcomes of the Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme.

#### *3.1 Alignment with the PDA Vision*

The PDA Vision calls for Woolloongabba to become a "globally connected, dynamic and vibrant precinct" and a "showcase of innovation." The STEAMM Gallery is the embodiment of this vision. It is a ground-breaking project unique to Australia that will attract a world-class schedule of visiting scientists, artists, and musicians, enhancing Brisbane's cultural and intellectual identity on the world stage.

#### *3.2 Contribution to Strategic Outcomes*

The proposal makes significant contributions across the key strategic outcomes outlined in the Development Scheme.

##### *A Place for Community & Culture:*

The scheme seeks to foster a rich community life with diverse cultural experiences. STEAMM directly achieves this by providing a multi-use public space designed for art installations, music events, and community education. It will host a year-round calendar of events, including the STEAMM Lecture, a music festival as part of GabbaFest, and interactive activities during National Science Week, creating a vital community hub.

##### *An Active and Accessible Place:*

The proposal strongly promotes street-level activation, a key objective of the scheme. The ground floor is designed for public access with a café, bookshop, and gallery shop, creating an engaging and welcoming street frontage.

##### *A Place of Design Excellence:*

The brief explicitly calls for "Unique architecture" and an "'Instagramable' feature," demonstrating a commitment to creating a landmark building that contributes positively to the city's skyline and character. The integration of external sculpture gardens and a rooftop STEAMM Garden further exemplifies design excellence.

##### *A Productive and Innovative Economy:*

The scheme aims to create a hub for innovation, research, and creative industries. STEAMM is purpose-built to foster this, providing a platform for collaboration between BQI scientists and artists. The inclusion of 'in residence' studios, workshops for artists, and laboratories for scientists will directly support the growth of Brisbane's knowledge economy.

## 4.0 Conceptual Bulk, Scale, and Future Design Development

This application seeks approval for the proposed land use and a conceptual building envelope that is consistent with the vision for a landmark cultural institution. The proposed bulk and scale are informed by the programmatic requirements of a world-class facility, including the need for a large-format gallery for temporary art installations and music events, multiple smaller galleries, a lecture theatre, extensive back-of-house areas, and dedicated studios for resident artists and scientists. This scale is necessary to establish the gallery as a significant cultural anchor and destination within the precinct.

Upon approval of the use by EDQ, the proponent is fully committed to engaging specialist design and planning consultants, including gallery-renowned architects and curators, to evolve the detailed design. This next stage will refine how the STEAMM Gallery functions to create a seamless visitor experience, how its architecture and public spaces will invite the public in, and what the building will look like in more detail, both inside and out. This ensures the final built form will be of the highest international standard, befitting a catalyst project of this significance.

## 5.0 Annual Programming and Curated Events

The STEAMM Gallery will operate a dynamic, year-round program of bespoke exhibitions, events, and educational presentations designed to stimulate the public's imagination.

The programming is strategically aligned with major city-wide science events, including Brisbane's **World Science Festival** and Australia's **National Science Week**, further cementing the gallery as a key cultural and educational institution. The annual calendar will be anchored by a series of signature events, talks, and exhibitions.

Periodic educational presentations will be a core offering, featuring talks from BQI Fellows from partner universities UQ, QUT, and Griffith, covering topics from Cosmology to Consciousness. A highlight of the calendar will be the annual **STEAMM Lecture**, given by a prominent Australian or international "Big Question" researcher.

The gallery will also host regular educational science talks, seminars and events to broaden the minds of the science community alongside **BrisScience Lectures** and dedicated science events for high school and primary school students throughout the year.

Curated art exhibitions will include a major international exhibition exploring the intersection of science and art, alongside the **STEAMM Art Prize**, which is awarded to Australian artists pushing the boundaries of the field.

The adaptable event spaces will also host multiple music events, including the **STEAMM Music Festival** as part of **GabbaFest**.

In addition to the internal galleries, the facility's spectacular green terrace will be used to invite patrons and guests to enjoy curated functions and events in a unique setting.

## 6.0 Justification as a Catalyst Project

The Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme allows for development uplift for "catalyst projects" that deliver significant and unique public benefits. The STEAMM Gallery proposal unequivocally meets this threshold.

**Delivery of a Facility of State Significance:** The STEAMM Gallery is a unique concept for Australia, combining foundational science research with art and music in a publicly accessible format. It is not a conventional development; it is a piece of state-significant cultural infrastructure that aligns with Brisbane's "New World City" vision.

**Provision of Exemplary Community Benefit:** The project delivers an extensive suite of public goods beyond what could be required of a standard development.

These include:

- A comprehensive annual program of public exhibitions, lectures, and festivals.
- Dedicated educational outreach, with a focus on engaging young women and First Nations people in science.
- Publicly accessible research facilities, including the BQI Library.

**Demonstration of Design Excellence and Innovation:** The project's commitment to unique architecture and the innovative co-location of scientific laboratories and art studios sets a new benchmark for mixed-use cultural development.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The proposed STEAMM Gallery represents a significant investment in the cultural and intellectual capital of Brisbane. The development is wholly consistent with the strategic vision and specific outcomes of the Woolloongabba PDA Development Scheme. It will activate the precinct, foster innovation, and provide an unparalleled community and cultural facility.

As demonstrated, the project delivers exceptional and wide-ranging public benefits that qualify it as a catalyst project. We respectfully submit that the proposal warrants assessment and approval as a catalyst project.