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Cultural Precinct Stage 1 to take centre stage by 2018

Stage 1 of the Gold Coast Cultural Precinct is set to be ready ahead of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™.

Mayor Tom Tate today (17/2) unveiled the initial concept for the precinct's Stage 1, including a striking versatile outdoor stage.

"Cultural Precinct winning design team ARM Architecture and Topotek1 has created a concept which they have labelled the Splash as a uniquely Gold Coast response to our need for a truly versatile outdoor performance space," Mayor Tate said.

The concept, emerging from the proposed grassed amphitheatre like a giant water splash from the adjacent Nerang River, will be subjected to detailed design development over the coming months to ensure it can deliver a versatile performance and activity space. Its form could evolve further.

"We have great artists, the climate and the best precinct location with views to Surfers Paradise, and, by 2018, we'll have a striking outdoor stage with a jam packed civic and cultural program.

"This concept comes from ARM's Stage 1 design work over the past 12 months. After market sounding of local and national event promoters, they have tailored the amphitheatre concept to ensure it will be well-used year-round with events, entertainment, concerts and cinema.

"The stage will need to cater for everything from niche events like fashion parades and unplugged performances, to drawcard concerts attracting several thousand people. And it must provide concert-goers with one of the world's most breathtaking amphitheatre backdrops.

"Stage 1 is set to start early in 2016, offering new jobs for locals. And subject to detailed design, the outdoor stage could be finished well ahead of the Games."

Estimated at \$37 million over 3 years, Stage 1 will include:

- The Versatile Outdoor Space (The Splash concept), equipped with services and technology
- Riverside Hub – adapting Council's existing Riverside Building to accommodate a transitional gallery for visual arts exhibitions, along with creative partnership spaces, administration, civic reception space, a potential creative tenancy and café and
- Initial Artscape works – linking Stage 1 facilities and Evandale Lake enhancements

After 12 months of additional studies and consultation, ARM Architecture has also presented their 2014 draft Masterplan for staged delivery of the precinct over 10 – 15 years.

Mayor Tate said the refined Masterplan for the overall site had retained all the key elements of ARM's competition-winning concept.

"It also integrates some allied uses – previously confined to the precinct's western edge along Bundall Road - into the precinct, drawing in visitors, making it active around the clock and ensuring it will be more affordable to build and sustainable to operate.

"These uses could include an art hotel – a tourist draw-card in its own right - media and educational facilities, creative industries, residential accommodation and cafes," Mayor Tate said.

Throughout 2014 ARM and Topotek1 worked with Council, stakeholders and leading consultants to refine their competition concept. The process was informed by almost 20 supplementary studies and reports, key sector workshops, information sessions and community feedback.