



Creative Urban Design

Mixing outstanding urban design with commerciality, South Bank Corporation has created a world-class precinct that adds value to the Queensland economy and positions it as a desirable tourism destination.

Images courtesy of South Bank Corporation

Each year, more than 10 million visitors travel to South Bank. South Bank Corporation ensures they enjoy their stay by creating vibrant public spaces for them, as well as for residents, to explore and unwind in. The organisation has been responsible for the family-friendly parklands, the retail and dining strip in Little Stanley Street, and Brisbane's cultural boulevard in Grey Street. South Bank Corporation's latest project is Southpoint, which will break new ground as one of the state's largest mixed-use developments with three high-rise towers for apartments, business offices, and a five-star Emporium hotel.

The corporation was established to create a long-lasting legacy after the South Bank site was selected to host the World Expo 88. Prior to this event, the area had been

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- Jeff Weigh

reduced to a near-derelict port with a couple of old heritage hotels and industrial buildings, but was resurrected to provide suitable grounds for the showcase, which over 18 million people attended.

CEO Jeff Weigh, who has been leading South Bank Corporation for three years, says in those early days the original site was demolished with the exception of a couple of heritage buildings, and a master plan for a world-class inner urban community was laid down. "That plan is still there today, some 25 years after the expo," he says. "It has been a very successful project. People from around the world come to see just why it has been so successful, because a lot of countries have great difficulty dealing with a site that large in the middle of the city."

Jeff's professional background has been largely in the tourism and

marketing arena; however, he has also worked in the education, hotels, health, property, and hospitality industries. He was the chairman of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, deputy general manager of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, and also the owner and managing director of his own business Rotech Plastics. Furthermore, Jeff was recently approached to join the board of the Port of Brisbane, which was an incredibly proud moment in his career.

He believes a good leader is somebody who is able to gather the best talent and then inspire them. "To inspire them to be the best they can be and to inspire them to contribute their views in a non-threatening way so that you get the best ideas on the table," he explains. "I would liken the role of a good CEO to an orchestra >



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conductor—you don't have to be the number one violinist but you need to know how the violin mixes with the bassoon or the drums."

This leadership style has served him well as he consistently works to instil a strong set of values in the South Bank Corporation team. "We are an organisation that's more than 20 years old, and it is a constant task to build a culture of pride and quality in everything we do."

"The reason people come from around the world to look at South Bank and to learn of the success is the fact that we've always had very contemporary urban planning, beautiful design, a very positive relationship with the commercial sector in building outstanding buildings, and creating innovative

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"South Bank Corporation has always had a strong vision for the precinct and it has been a pleasure collaborating with them to design and deliver beautiful spaces for the community." - Andrew Gutteridge, Principal, Arkhefield

open spaces which have a sense of fun and entertainment for visitors to the precinct."

South Bank Corporation has always had a policy of excellence in urban design, and works closely with its architects, engineers, builders, investors, and the community to bring its works to fruition. Relationships are developed on a deep understanding of the business's needs now and in the future, and are longstanding.

"We always have to keep in mind that the people of Queensland are our stakeholders. Ultimately, we need to stay close to the reasons why people are coming here to our precincts. We survey people quite regularly to understand what they think of the new and exciting things we've developed, how they feel about the ones which have been there for a while, and how we can continually search to stay in front. When people do come here, they have

an exciting, refreshing experience at South Bank."

Since coming into the role, Jeff says, a significant challenge has been getting the \$600 million Southpoint project underway—the last project to complete the entire South Bank precinct. The venture had been on the books for about seven years and started construction late last year. It will be worth \$600 million once completed in mid 2016. Another challenge has been trying to find the right mix of tenants, as well as new and exciting contemporary concepts. The corporation prides itself on being innovative, which helps it to attract tenants to set up in the spaces, as well as to attract tourists and residents to enjoy what it has to offer.

"Now that South Bank is a mature precinct, and so successful commercially for our tenants, we tend to not have a lot of problems finding new tenants. We regularly have a look nationally at the trends

in retail and the food and beverage industry to see what we can embrace as the leading edge in Brisbane. South Bank is the only precinct of its size or anywhere near its size in Brisbane that has such a diverse and large offering.

"So that is one of the principal things we do every day of the week—that is, to stay in front of what the trends are and of what people in Brisbane are looking for. We keep refreshing it. There's something new every time we do a project."

As well as innovation, being sustainable and environmentally responsible is also important to the company. All of the buildings that South Bank Corporation is involved with have a 6-star sustainability rating, and in 2012 the precinct was recognised as a national sustainability leader when it became the first community in Australia, and one of only four communities in the world, to

achieve Silver Certification Status from EarthCheck.

In 2011, South Bank Corporation also developed Rain Bank, an innovative stormwater harvesting and reuse centre. Rain Bank can capture, store, and treat up to 77 megalitres of stormwater each year, which is enough to provide 85 per cent of the parklands' irrigation and non-potable water requirements. It also recycles most of the water used to backwash South Bank's pool filters. Rain Bank has received several prestigious awards, including the Premier's Sustainability Award in 2012, and the Healthy Waterways Water Sensitive Urban Design Award in 2011. "There are a lot of people who come from interstate and overseas to see the technology that we have used to do that. So the corporation has always had leading-edge environmental technology in everything we do."

The majority of South Bank Corporation's raw development



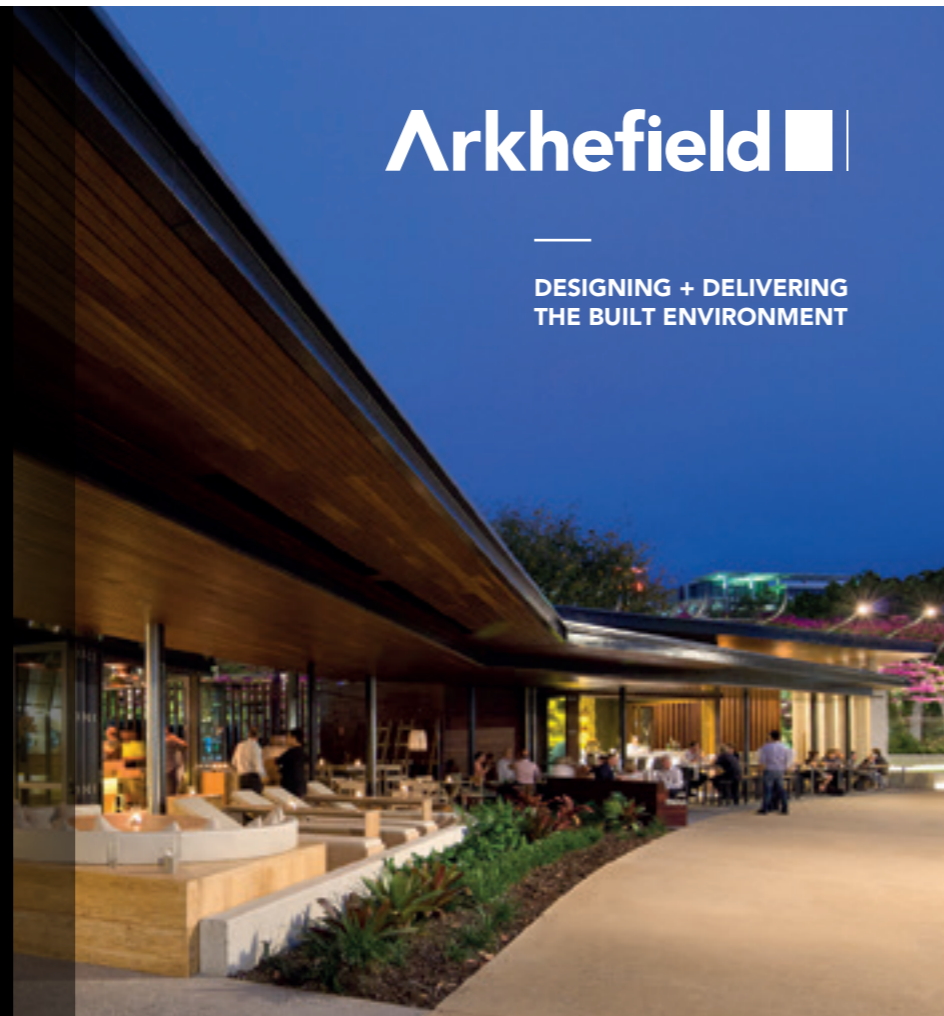
sites are now completed, which means its key role now is to continually rebuild and refresh, according to Jeff. "Some of our café precincts are now 20 years old, so we're looking to rebuild those; but again it will be about stepping out in front with a contemporary design and a contemporary mix of concepts. The task is always to keep refreshing and to keep exciting people with new concepts." •

RIVER QUAY

SOUTH BANK, BRISBANE

Conceived as an extension of the broader landscape, River Quay optimises the prime waterfront location opposite the CBD - one of the few remaining public riverfront sites in central Brisbane. A classic example of contemporary Queensland architecture, the River Quay building provides a spectacular base for five restaurants - including the Arkhefield designed Stokehouse and Jetty. The River Green opens the site to the public and river, restoring the natural edge to the riverbank.

Responding to South Bank Corporation's vision to create an experience and expression unique to Queensland, the linear building reinforces the fluid movement lines of the pedestrian promenade and river. Vernacular roof forms define the spatial experience and create a distinct presence. Celebrating subtropical dining, each restaurant features a distinct outdoor room, engaging with the landscape beyond.



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p + 61 7 3216 0776 f + 61 7 3216 0779 w www.newbase.com.au
a 88 Commercial Rd, Newstead Qld 4006 e info@newbase.com.au