

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Advocacy Manifesto

"A greener, healthier and more resilient Australia"



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia as the traditional custodians of our shared lands, waters, and seas.

We recognise their unique ability to care for Country and their deep spiritual connection with Country.

We honour Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom will ensure the continuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the values which uphold them.

We value walking side-by-side with all First Nations people, and we acknowledge our role in advancing respectful and authentic reconciliation through the design of our places, cities, and regions



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Landscape Architects

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Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

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Cover Image. National Museum of Australia Forecourt Garden | T.C.L. |
Ngunnawal, Ngambri and Ngunawal | Photo by Anne Stroud

AILA's Strategic Values

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) leads a dynamic and respected profession creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet.

We work together to create healthy communities, connected urban green infrastructure, and liveable, sustainable cities and regions.

The critical importance of these strategic values to the economy cannot be overstated. In 2022 the Business Council of Australia pointed to key structural weaknesses in the Australian economy that was holding back growth. Among these were:

- Our largest trading partners are moving away from carbon intensive products
- Unemployment rate for Indigenous Australians is only 50% and 70% in remote areas
- OECD* ranks Australia 24th out of 42 for participation in the workforce for mothers¹. (1. Business Council of Australia)



Climate Positive Design

AILA is committed to supporting our members to achieve Climate Positive Design outcomes. We adapt with our planet.



Connection to Country

AILA is committed to creating an inclusive and knowledge-diverse profession by encouraging cultural awareness of First Nations people across Australia. We believe in authentic, practical, and genuine reconciliation.

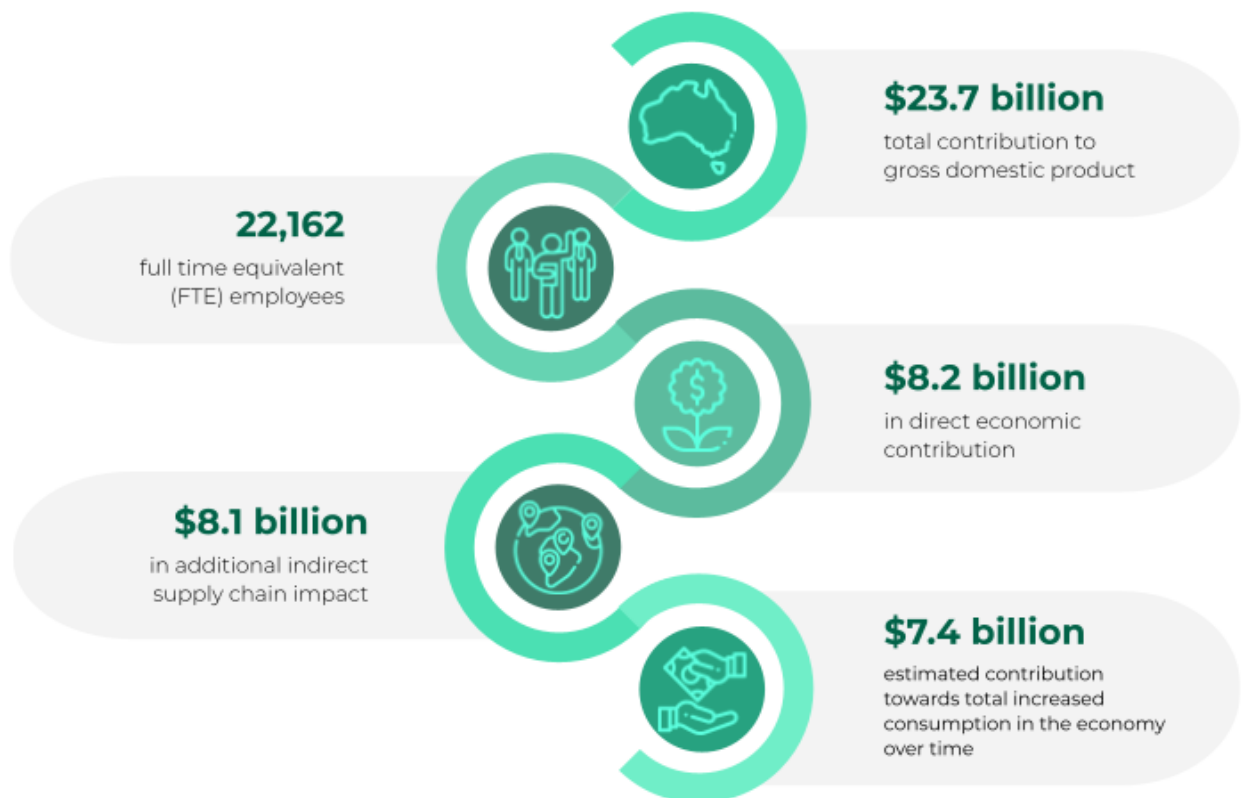


Gender Equity

AILA is committed to lead a profession that is inclusive, diverse, and equitable. We believe in equal opportunities.



ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE INDUSTRY TO THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY



Additional benefits of

WELL DESIGNED SPACES

Landscape architects generate additional economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits as a result of their work in the design, construction and maintenance of private and public use spaces.



With close to 3000 members driven by AILA's values, our advocacy and our Strategic Plan set out how well-designed and purposeful infrastructure can provide positive solutions to the multiple social, cultural, environmental and economic challenges facing the planet.

Infographic

atticusnow, 2021, draft. Economic contribution of the landscape architecture industry report. AILA, p.5

Our Advocacy

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Australia (AILA), has been working with Australian Governments for over 56 years.

We advocate for positive policies, strategies, budgets and projects that align to our strategic values and priorities to create greener, healthier, and climate resilient places for all.

Australia's well-designed, purposeful urban green infrastructure assets are key to tackling the major issues facing Australia socially, culturally, environmentally and economically.

Australia faces unprecedented challenges as we come to terms with the increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters, the threat to biodiversity and the implications of post-COVID world, and what these forces mean in terms of settlement, infrastructure planning, our relationship with First Nations people, and the land upon which we all live and depend.

AILA believes that Landscape Architects can play a pivotal role in both climate adaptation and mitigation to ensure an equitable and sustainable future for all Australians.

There are four broad themes across which AILA will work with Australian governments and the Landscape Architectural profession to support the growth of a greener, healthier, more resilient and stronger Australia.

1. Climate and Biodiversity Positive Design
2. Dedicated Green Infrastructure Investment
3. Workforce and Gender Equity
4. First Nations Recognition



Climate & Biodiversity Positive Design

We advocate for advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, attaining global net zero carbon emissions by 2040, advocating for climate justice and social wellbeing, learning from cultural knowledge systems and galvanizing climate leadership.



Dedicated Green Infrastructure Investment

We advocate for connected open and green space and places to improve social, cultural, economic, and environmental outcomes across Australia. We advocate for the critical role green places play in creating a sense of belonging, safety, identity, community and liveability in our increasingly dense and globalised cities and regions.



Workforce and Gender Equity

We recognise the need for greater equity in the workforce by advocating for increased parental leave for partners and secondary carers. Additionally, furthering affordable childcare and implementing an Equal Opportunity policy are pillars of the respected profession of landscape architecture.



First Nations Recognition

We endeavour to amplify First Nations individuals, professionals, collaborations, projects and practices within our work.

1. Climate & Biodiversity Positive Design

The United Nations declared that "Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment," and it is estimated that cities account for 60-70% of greenhouse gas (GHG emissions² and concrete for 5-7% GHG emissions³.

Australia is already experiencing the effects of climate change with catastrophic flooding, heat waves, bush fires and severe shifting weather patterns.

Climate change is a major driver of biodiversity loss, which in turn reduces the ability of the earth to adapt to climate change.

It is critical to tackle both challenges in a coordinated way, ensuring that both current and future human and wildlife communities are resilient to change.

Designing with best practice standards for biodiversity conservation through the built environment is imperative for a healthier and more secure Australia.

AILA advocates policymaking with evidence for Climate and Biodiversity Positive Design to sequester more GHG than is emitted by a project over its entire lifetime and to deliver biodiversity net gain.

² United Nations. Cities and Climate Change: Global Report on Human Settlements 2011 https://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/E_Hot_Cities.pdf

³ New Scientists - CO emissions from Cement. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2185217-the-future-with-lower-carbon-%20concrete/>

Image. Green Our City Action Plan: Strategic justification for regulatory requirements for sustainability by Arup, Oculus, HillDPA and Junglefy for City of Melbourne | Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung Country | Melbourne Quarter Sky Park by ASPECT | OCULUS | Photo by Alison Hoelzer



1.1 Develop a national climate resilience and recovery plan

AILA advocates for genuine cross-party collaboration on a nationwide climate policy, and climate and energy plan. We advocate for recognition of and action on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) in all policy, projects and investments.

To develop a national climate resilience and recovery plan there is a need to convene a national built environment Climate Resilience Summit including landscape architects, architects, planners, engineers, insurers, and financiers across the three levels of government, business and community to drive the development of a recovery and pro-active resilience design plan.

We call on the federal government to make all infrastructure projects climate positive with a 75% reduction in embodied and operational emissions with 25% sequestration draw down offsets by 2030. Long term solutions do not lie in offsetting therefore the plan should include 100% reduction in embodied and operational emissions without offsets by 2040.

Only when specific, time-bound emission targets with periodic reviews are laid out in Australia's Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan, will the nation stand at a globally competitive advantage in terms of realising the UNSDGs.

1.2 Strengthen legislation and standards related to the built and natural environment

By strengthening legislative standards, the government can tackle biodiversity extinction and support biodiversity positive cities and regions. The Federal Government must act on recent Senate Reports like "Australia's Fauna Extinction Crisis" that call for new legislation to limit the drivers of extinction like deforestation, environmental degradation, and climate change.

AILA supports the Senate Report's recommendations to establish an independent Environmental Protection Agency with sufficient powers and funding to oversee compliance with Australia's environmental laws.

Australia's current environmental laws are incapable of stopping the extinction crisis. Research has shown that an effective programme would require a 20-fold increase in nature spending to recover endangered wildlife⁴.

AILA urges the government to strengthen national rating and measuring tools, such as the National Construction Code, to fast-track the decarbonisation of construction and building operations and to implement planned climate mitigation measures as soon as practically possible.

A long-term national framework is critical to help guide private and public investment into sustainable cities and development. Federal leadership can further support state governments to implement sustainable planning reforms, and bring state Planning Schemes and legislation in line with National policy, goals and targets.

⁴ Wintle, BA, Cadenhead, NCR, Morgain, RA, et al. Spending to save: What will it cost to halt Australia's extinction crisis? Conservation Letters. 2019; 12:e12682. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12682>

1.3 Set national canopy cover and understorey targets

Australia's existing and future canopy cover provides a multitude of benefits to wildlife, communities and cities.

Establishing a national framework for urban and regional tree canopy, with clear, defined and measurable targets, will help cities and communities to increase tree canopy, open space and green cover (understorey) targets, whilst protecting existing canopy and habitat.

By ensuring that federally funded infrastructure and development projects deliver minimum mandatory open space, and canopy tree and understorey standards and targets, the government can help deliver greener and more climate-resilient future cities and settlements.

Federal funding should be provided to states and territories to measure and monitor annual changes in the tree canopy, vegetation and habitat characteristics. Vulnerable areas affected by a significant canopy and habitat loss require research and investment.

AILA urges the federal government to end broad-scale land clearing and deforestation, and to strengthen environmental laws to protect Australia's native habitat and forests. Further legislative change and investment will help to restore Australia's landscapes and enhance canopy cover and understorey.

National Greenhouse Accounts should be updated to accurately reflect the full impact of deforestation, habitat and land clearing. These figures should be published regularly and made freely accessible.

1.4 Protect and increase biodiversity

The primary legal instrument for environmental protection in Australia is the Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) (1999) Act, which lays out Ecologically Sustainable Development for biodiversity conservation.

AILA recommends recognising the role of built environment in protecting and enhancing ecosystems and responding to the EPBC Act for developing actionable outcomes.

Protecting existing ecosystems by rehabilitating areas affected by development and avoiding incremental habitat loss is critical to address.

We recommend legislating nest sites and constructed habitat to host a diversity of flora and fauna, so that net biodiversity gain is achieved through developments. To evaluate net gain, quantifying a biodiversity baseline and setting biodiversity goals in planning and design should be mandated for all federally funded infrastructure and development projects.

2. Dedicated Green Infrastructure Investment

'Green infrastructures (GI) are the strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas in urban and regional settlements that provide environmental, social and economic benefits to society... GI strategy aligns with an ecosystems management approach to provide ecosystem services that can be measured, evaluated and deployed at a landscape scale; transcending private and public land, geographic and municipal boundaries.'⁵

Green Infrastructure has been identified as one of the key factors that will contribute significantly towards social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits and outcomes.

AILA calls on the government to holistically invest in green infrastructure to create greener, healthier, and climate resilient places for all.

We recommend government takes a pro- active approach towards collaboration across federal, state and local agencies, and the private and academic sectors to drive significant change towards improving the liveability and sustainability of urban and regional settlements.

The incorporation of mandated green- infrastructure targets and standards at all levels of policy, and subsequent inclusion in projects, will provide critical uplift in maximising the benefits of a dedicated green infrastructure investment.

⁵ AILA, 2019 . Green Infrastructure. Position Statement.

Image. City of Melbourne's Green Factor tool | City of Melbourne | Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung Country | Image by City of Melbourne



2.1 Develop a National Urban Green Infrastructure Framework

AILA urges the government to develop a National Urban Green Infrastructure Policy Framework that provides a detailed cost-benefit analysis template / methodology / tool for calculating costs and benefits associated with green infrastructure, to support the commercial justification for new investment.

The proposed framework would provide guidance and endorsed valuation methods to monetise the costs and benefits of green infrastructure and public spaces.

A framework would support decision-making and economic evaluations with a coverage in areas including: urban cooling, biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, active transport, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, health and wellbeing values, recreational values, and stormwater management.

2.2 Green infrastructure recognised by Treasury as an asset class

AILA calls on the government to drive a change in accountancy, business case preparation and feasibility process standards to enable urban green infrastructure to be formally recognised by the Treasury as an asset class.

This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the inclusion of green infrastructure as a critical component of major federally funded projects, such as the Infrastructure Australia Priority list.

This would involve the development of a business case and value proposition, with agreed measurable outcomes for green infrastructure to be articulated and endorsed by the Treasury, akin to the proposed National Urban Green Infrastructure Framework.

To this end, low-budget infrastructure projects (<\$250 million) should be grouped together for an independent review by Infrastructure Australia, to maximise opportunities for sustainability case studies that have achieved green infrastructure targets.

2.3 Establish a Green Infrastructure Fund as part of the national climate resilience and recovery plan

The green bond market represents AU\$2.8 trillion of the global economy as of 2022⁶, and Australia contributes less than 1% to it. AILA urges further support by the federal government for the green bonds and green finance market.

AILA therefore calls on the government to establish a Green infrastructure Investment Fund, to support the implementation of green infrastructure projects across Australia.

This would involve a percentage of all federal government expenditure on grey infrastructure projects (e.g. roads, airports, rail, mining, and other infrastructure) to be placed in an investment fund for allocation to state and local government green infrastructure projects.

We cite the Clean Energy Finance Corporation as relevant precedent operated to leverage private sector funding to enhance public benefit outcomes through government investment.

2.4 Commit to long-term investment in the creation and maintenance of living infrastructure

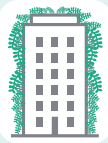
Australia is in need of a long term, collaborative approach towards investment, planning and designing for resilience in our urban and regional settings.

AILA advocates the need for the government to apply evidence-based decision making and to commit to enduring investment in green infrastructure that connects urban ecosystems within a unified National Urban Green Infrastructure Framework.

AILA urges the transformation of the current reactive National Emergency and National Disaster Recovery plan to a preventive model through improved understanding and investment in green infrastructure as a critical component in all significant projects.

⁶ ClimateBonds, 2022 <https://www.climatebonds.net/>

Benefits of Green Infrastructure



Green walls and roofs provide net economic benefit
Direct benefits include cleaner air and temperature reduction¹



\$1.086
Benefit for each additional Km walked⁶



GI has derived co-benefits of enhanced **economic capacity** and **educational opportunity**²



~\$183,000
Annual value of flood mitigation (Vermont, U.S.A.)⁷



\$3.4 billion p.a.
Physical and mental health benefits in the UK.³



~\$710 p.a./ha
Carbon sequestration effect of trees (Virginia, U.S.A.)⁸



~1.07 °C & <2.9 °C
Temperature reduction in Europe⁴



~\$4.4 billion
Gross Value Added by environmental benefits of GI (Northwest, U.K.)⁹



\$75,049
Physical exercise benefit of parks⁵



4% to 6%
Increase in property value with the provision of a green canopy¹⁰



-\$0.543
Benefit for each additional Km cycled⁶

Infographic

AILA, 2022. Benefits of Green Infrastructure (GI).

Note

Figures are approximate and converted at a USD:AUD and GBP:AUD rates as of 26 August 2022.

Citations

1. Collins, R., Schaafsma, M., & Hudson, M. D. (2017). The value of green walls to urban biodiversity. *Land Use Policy*, 64, 114–123.
2. Kim, D., & Song, S.-K. (2019). The Multifunctional Benefits of Green Infrastructure in Community Development: An Analytical Review Based on 447 Cases. *Sustainability*, 11(14), 3917.
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4. Marando, F. et al. (2022). Urban heat island mitigation by green infrastructure in European Functional Urban Areas. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 77, 103564.
5. Mekala, G. D., Jones, R. N., & MacDonald, D. H. (2015). Valuing the Benefits of Creek Rehabilitation: Building a Business Case for Public Investments in Urban Green Infrastructure. *Environmental Management*, 55(6), 1354–1365.
6. Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Government (2022). Interim Framework for Valuing Green Infrastructure and Public Spaces.
7. Watson, K. B. et al. (2016). Quantifying flood mitigation services: The economic value of Otter Creek wetlands and floodplains to Middlebury, VT. *Ecological Economics*, 130, 16–24.
8. Kim, G., Miller, P., & Nowak, D. (2016). The Value of Green Infrastructure on Vacant and Residential Land in Roanoke, Virginia. *Sustainability*, 8(4), 296.
9. Williams, W. (2008). *The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure*. Natural England.
10. Netusil, N. R., Levin, Z., Shandas, V., & Hart, T. (2014). Valuing green infrastructure in Portland, Oregon. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 124, 14–21.

3. Workforce & Gender Equity

The current gender pay gap for landscape architects is 10% for full time professionals which is likely attributable to fewer opportunities for part-time professionals, which may be further contributing to the skills shortage.

It is essential that female landscape architects are properly supported via equitable pay, flexible working arrangements, paid parental leave, affordable childcare and respectful workplaces so they can continue to participate in the industry, and we can avoid further skills shortages at a time when demand for landscape architects is high.

This is particularly important as landscape Architecture in Australia has a growing female participation rate with 47% of practitioners and 60% of graduates being female.

Built environment professionals are increasingly finding difficult to recruit qualified Landscape Architects, it is therefore recommended that the government needs to take proactive action to cultivate a future workforce.

Image. The Curtin University Indigenous Learning Circle (Yarning Circle | UDLA | Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation | Photo by Yvonne Doherty



3.1 Cultivate future workforce

We recommend the government develop partnerships with Australian universities to revitalise and cultivate the future workforce.

AILA recommends dedicating more commonwealth supported places to landscape architecture programs in Australian tertiary education for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses to reflect the current demand of skill shortages.

3.2 Paid parental leave

In the interests of gender equity, we urge the government to introduce greater opportunities for paid parental leave for partners and secondary carers. We also encourage the payment of superannuation as part of the paid parental leave scheme.

3.3 Affordable childcare

We welcome the government's policy to increase childcare subsidies which will assist in keeping female landscape architects in the workforce.

We urge the introduction of this policy as soon as possible to address current skills shortages. We also urge further increases to the subsidies in future budgets with the goal of providing universal childcare.

3.4 Respect at work

We urge the government to implement all the recommendations of the Jenkins Report Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Enquiry Report (2020) as promised, to ensure a safe and respectful workplace environment for all women working in landscape architecture and allied professions.

3.5 Minimum Gender Equity Standards in federally funded projects

We recommend the government sets minimum gender Equity standards for federally funded projects. At a minimum, consultants should be required to have or be working towards:

- Gender Equity or Equal Opportunity Policy
- Remuneration Policy addressing pay equity
- Paid Parental Leave
- Flexible Working Policy
- Harassment, discrimination, and bullying prevention policy with a formal grievance process
- Reporting to the Workplace Gender Equity Agency annually
- Project teams with a minimum 40% women.

4. First Nation Recognition

AILA recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the longest continuous living culture in the world. AILA acknowledges and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the oldest, continuous living culture on earth, extending back to over 65,000 years. AILA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians for their wisdom, insight, and connection to the land, seas and water – the same land which is also the central focus of our profession.

As landscape architects who engage with communities, cultures and histories, land, water and natural systems, places and built context; we recognise the unrivaled knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have as Traditional Custodians of the land, waters and seas.

We endeavour to amplify First Nations individuals, professionals, collaborations, projects and practices within our work, and whilst many Landscape Architects already include respectful consultative processes in their design and practice, this is just the beginning of a broader national journey.

More action is required by the government to ensure continued recognition of First Nations peoples' in the built environment. By connecting with the Traditional Custodians of the land, and integrating their age-old knowledge of land and waters, we can improve our understanding and care for the landscape. This will nurture the collaboration between the community, government and businesses.

As we face unprecedented environmental change in Australia, this has never been more important or urgent.

Image. Archerfield Park, Bushmead | PLAN E | Noongar Whadjuk Group | Photo by Joel Barbitta

4.1 First Nations enshrined in the Constitution

AILA supports the government's proposal to amend the Constitution in relation to the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous Australians are the longest continuous culture in the world and were denied basic rights to citizenship rights and human rights for the past 200 years. While Australia has made steps towards acknowledging sovereignty for Indigenous communities, we acknowledge the importance to enshrine First Nations people's rights in the constitution.

4.2 Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling

AILA supports the Uluru Statement and its proposed establishment of a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. Makarrata captures the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle, healing the divisions of the past, and AILA acknowledges the importance of a formally concluded and ratified agreement. This will help to amplify truth-telling and First Nations through the design and procurement of federally funded built environment projects.

4.3 Support greater employment pathways and opportunities

We recommend new pathways and targets for First Nations Landscape Architects to be employed to help shape better projects and advance reconciliation in all relevant design and built environment professions. This includes increasing awareness around available university degrees, scholarships, and supporting First Nations students throughout their studies.

4.4 Legislate a Cultural Heritage Act

AILA supports the idea that First Nations people are the cultural authority to manage cultural heritage and advocates for a need to develop a new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, with reference to recommendations of the recent Parliamentary Inquiry to be First Nations led.

With the increasing importance of First Nations recognition, there is a need to improve both policy and practice concerned with First Nations involvement in the management, recognition, protection and conservation of cultural heritage and values, and the knowledge and role of First Nations people.

4.5 Adoption of the Australian Indigenous Design Charter on all projects representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

AILA supports the Australian Indigenous Design Charter in its facilitation of accurate and respectful representation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in design and associated media. The Australian Government should mandate the use of the Australian Indigenous Design Charter on all federally-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects.

Federally funded projects must incorporate design processes that work with First Nations people and Aboriginal communities in ways which enable meaningful engagement and respect cultural. All landscape architectural projects within Australia work on Country. Therefore, recognition and acknowledgement of First Nations perspectives and culture, and supporting Aboriginal communities connection to Country is critical in ensuring successful natural and built form outcomes. Australian Indigenous Design Charter – IDC.



2022 Landscape Architecture Award Winner
Wesley Place
OCULUS
Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Country
Photo by Molly-Rose Coulter



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