



Australian Institute  
of Landscape Architects

June 2007  
amended 2009

# Guidelines for the Promotion & Conduct of Competitions



## Contents

Preamble to AILA's Competition Guidelines	1
Introducing the Guidelines	2
Types of Competitions	3
Competition Criteria—Professional Recognition	5
AILA's Recognised Professional Status	5
Selecting a Consultant	6
Brief preparation	7
Promoter's responsibilities	8
Intellectual property and copyright	9
Conduct of the competition	9
Submission requirements	10
Anonymity of submissions	10
Publicity	10
Assessment	10
Prizes	11
Non-Progress of Project	11
Procedure to Gain the AILA Endorsement	12

Cover Photo: Former BP Site, Waverton, Sydney  
Landscape Architect: McGregor and Partners in association with North Sydney Council.  
Masterplan: Clouston Associates  
Photo: Paul Costigan

© Copyright  
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects  
GPO BOX 646 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia  
Ph: (02) 6248 9970 Fax: (02) 6249 7337  
Email: [admin@aila.org.au](mailto:admin@aila.org.au) [www.aila.org.au](http://www.aila.org.au)

Designed by LG2 designers

## Preamble to AILA's Competition Guidelines

The AILA Guidelines are intended to assist promoters and organisers in the preparation of specific conditions and rules for a design competition, by providing a general framework of AILA preferences and recommendations.

The AILA wishes to work with agencies in order to endorse Design Competitions that are undertaken in accordance with these guidelines.

The AILA reserves the right to assess each competition on a case by case basis in order to allow for innovation by agencies in their provision of healthy and stimulating urban environments and public spaces.

While these guidelines will be used in that process, the AILA reserves the right to vary its decisions and guidelines in light of the proposals being assessed with a view to assuring that the AILA endorsement signals best practice and professionalism by the competition organisers.

The AILA reserves the right to inform members of its lack of support for competitions in instances where such competitions have not been supported by the AILA.

The AILA's endorsement of a competition does not offer any form of legal guarantee or provide any form of indemnity.

The AILA's endorsement provides a guide to entrants that, based on the documentation assessed by the AILA, the competition organisers have demonstrated a satisfactory level of professionalism in relation to their conduct of the proposed competition.



## Introducing the Guidelines

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) recommends Landscape Architecture Design Competitions as one of the means of selecting of the most appropriate design or landscape architect for projects with significant landscape content, especially those of national or regional importance and civic projects of benefit to the community.

Design competitions may be appropriate in a variety of situations, including those where:

- ↓ The ability to seriously compare several alternative design approaches is wanted before selecting a preferred design or designer.
- ↓ It is important to obtain a design that is innovative to a degree beyond that which might be expected from a conventional tendering, briefing and appointment process.
- ↓ The project offers opportunities to enrich the local culture by allowing for experimentation, the expression of alternative points of view, and discovery of 'new' ideas and talent.
- ↓ The quality of design consideration appropriate to the site is the pre-eminent concern in selecting a proposal, and clearly outweighs other competitive selection issues such as design fees or professional experience. or
- ↓ The profile generated by a competition supports aims for the project, such as changing public and developers' perceptions of a site.

While one of the virtues of design competitions is their openness to varied participants and ideas, it is equally important that competitions are carefully designed to attract skilled design professionals. Competitions can be costly to participate in, and poorly conceived competitions can deter participation by the majority of experienced professionals that maintain a practice through other channels, resulting in failure to attract a good range of entrants.

Competitions must be conducted with adequate safeguards for all involved, namely the promoters/clients, jury, competitors, winners and also the eventual users of the completed project.

Guidelines and rules are required to ensure fair treatment of all competitors, to assure competent impartial adjudication, and to obtain optimum benefits for the promoter/client.



## Types of Competitions

There are a number of acceptable types of Competitions. Invitations and advertisements should clearly state the type of competition.

### Design Competitions

Generally Design Competitions will be aimed at seeking both the best design concept with the intention that the winning design team carry out the full design and implementation construction of the project.

### Ideas Competitions

Ideas Competitions are those whereby the successful competition entry is not necessarily intended to be put directly into effect, or where by the successful competitor may not be appointed, but where the promoter may use some or all of the ideas generated by the competition. Such competitions are usually conducted in order to identify a range of design solutions and options for a site and to encourage thinking about the site in different ways that may, ultimately, lead to the establishment of a range of projects with briefs that are quite different from the competition guidelines.

Where the intent is to implement a project, Ideas Competitions must not be abused as a way to obtain design ideas without any commitment to the authors of those ideas. Such practices would be a likely breach of copyright and moral rights legislation and would be contested by the AILA where its members are affected.

Design Competitions and Ideas competitions may be Open or Limited to specific target groups. Both may be staged.

### Open Competitions

Open Competitions encourage participation by any professional who feels themselves capable and inspired to compete for the given project. Where it is expected that the winner carry through with its implementation then the participant is required to demonstrate that they have the ability to do this in an appropriate professional manner.

Participation in Open Competitions may be limited by the promoter in a variety of ways, including:

- ↓ The competition may be directed particularly towards Landscape Architects or another specific design profession that has a pivotal role in the project.
- ↓ The competition may be directed at multi-disciplinary teams where it is felt that this may be appropriate for more complex projects.
- ↓ The competition may be directed towards locally based professionals due to a need for a high degree of familiarity with local cultural issues, or other factors.
- ↓ The competition may be directed towards students. The AILA is keen to promote the involvement of landscape architecture students in design competitions. An AILA-endorsed Student Competition would normally be limited to students enrolled in university programs accredited by AILA (or internationally, by a similar association or institute). Winners of student competitions are usually awarded a scholarship, fellowship, travel prize, or an identified benefit for the faculty.
- ↓ The competition may be restricted and/or limited to the use of certain materials in the design. This may be where a competition is sponsored by trade sources. In this case all such restrictions, endorsements etc will be clearly stated in all publicity relating to the Competition, and the AILA will be required to be satisfied that the landscape architects' responsibilities towards the client, the eventual user and the environment will not be compromised by such restrictions.

Such limitations can be effected through means such as advertising (e.g. using local rather than national or international media), and may be explicit or implicit. However, it is important for all advertisements and guidelines to be frank and fair in setting out expectations for the competition.





## Limited Competitions

Limited Competitions or Invited Competitions are those whereby the promoter pre-selects a small number of landscape architects to compete based on knowledge of those landscape architects abilities, experience and expertise.

## Staged Competitions

Any of the above types of competitions may be undertaken in one or two stages:

- ↓ A Single-Stage Competition is one whereby all competitors make a single submission and the winners are selected after one stage. This form of competition is considered suitable for small projects only.
- ↓ A Two-Stage Competition is usually used for more complex projects. In the first stage, clearly defined submissions requiring relatively limited production work, for instance concept design solutions and/or ideas only, are submitted. This is usually followed by a short-listing of entrants from the initial first stage participants who are then invited to enter a second stage, usually involving a more detailed development of their concepts.



## Competition Criteria—Professional Recognition

### AILA's Recognised Professional Status

In relation to landscape architects, the AILA encourages agencies to regard AILA Professional membership as the key criteria for eligibility for professional competitions.

*AILA Professional Recognition—Registered Landscape Architect - AILA*

**A Registered Landscape Architect** is an AILA professionally recognised landscape architect.

As a minimum, that person has passed an entry examination after graduation from an accredited university landscape architecture program, has at least three and half years of experience and has made the commitment to remain professionally relevant by undertaking annual professional development.

All AILA members are bound to a Code of Professional Conduct.

The AILA has processes for examining complaints about landscape architects (members) it recognises.

Professional Membership of the AILA is far more than just being 'a member', it is a formal **public** endorsement or branding of professional practice—equivalent to being 'registered' or 'chartered' in other professions.

The AILA's professional recognition processes provide agencies with a service whereby they are able to identify current recognised professionals in the field of landscape **architecture**.

AILA's **professional** recognition is applied to individual landscape architects, not businesses/practices. There is no membership or registration available for the businesses, only to an individual.

On-going **renewal** of **registration** requires the submission of proof of continuing commitment to practice and CPD.





## Selecting a Consultant

Apart from Ideas Competitions, a competition normally implies an intention to implement the winning scheme for the project.

The ability of entrants to carry through with the design development and documentation of a winning design proposal is therefore likely to be a concern. This should be clearly stated in the advertisements and guidelines at the outset of a competition where relevant.

Any particular requirements for a winning entrant to be involved in the implementation process, such as a local office, a multidisciplinary design team, or appropriate professional insurances (any of which may, conceivably, be established upon winning the competition) should also be included in the instructions to competitors along with some indication of the timetable for implementation.

Where the intent is to implement the design, the competition should be designed and advertised to attract entrants from relevant building design professions that have the expertise to support this implementation process.

To this end, the AILA suggests that part of the criteria should be along these lines:

The competition is open individuals or consortia with the capability to carry out an appropriate professional role in the design development, documentation and construction of the project, in the event that their entry is selected as the winning scheme.

Professional capability is generally expected to be indicated through the recognition of the individual entrant or of the lead person in a team as a professional practitioner. In the context of this competition, 'recognised professional practitioners' are understood to be building design professionals who are currently full professional members of their relevant professional body in their country of practice. For example, in Australia, the practitioner would be a Registered Landscape Architect, a registered architect, a full member of the Planning Institute of Australia or of Engineers Australia etc.

Where an entry is made by a consortium or team of professionals, the leader of the team should meet the above requirements and that person must be indicated on the declaration form as the entrant.



## Brief preparation

A competition will normally apply to a particular site, and the basis for assessment will be the intellectual response, the design solutions and technical competence in meeting the site conditions and client requirements.

Careful preparation of a suitable brief to competitors is an essential and demanding step in the conduct of a successful competition, as the quality of entries will largely reflect the effectiveness of the brief. A comprehensive brief should be an unambiguous document which clearly indicates what is required of competitors, the design intent for the project, all relevant constraints and other supporting site information and data including appropriate plans, maps, services information, photographs and illustrations.

The above notwithstanding, it is also desirable for a brief to be as concise as possible, and to avoid setting artificial or unnecessary constraints upon the design solutions.

The brief should represent the promoters' requirements in full prior to release. Where there are subsequent changes these should be notified to all participants contemporaneously.

Competitions should not include fee proposals as a major criteria/determinant for selection. An exception to this rule may be the 'two envelope' system of tendering.

In general the competition brief must:

- ↓ Clearly state the requirements to be included in the design.
- ↓ Identify all design constraints.
- ↓ Contain clear and concise site information in electronic format
- ↓ Set out clear criteria and competition rules and eligibility requirements.
- ↓ Refer to realistic budget requirements.
- ↓ Contain a realistic timetable.

Where an organiser states that the winner will be commissioned to design a project, the timing and full extent of those intended services should be stated, i.e. concept refinement, design development, construction drawings, construction review etc. The methodology for agreeing fees should be clearly stated within the competition conditions and should either be a by establishing a fixed percentage applicable for any winner or the "two envelope" system.



## Promoter's responsibilities

The promoter is responsible to ensure that all competitors are made aware of any issues or sensitivities that may have regional, cultural or heritage significance.

The promoter should guarantee that the Competition is being conducted in good faith in that, if stated in the advertised materials, the project is to be completed and that relevant budgets have been allocated.

The promoter shall insure the documents and all other competition material submitted by competitors against theft, damage and loss. Return of submitted material should be made available at the entrants' cost.

The AILA encourages promoters to appoint an expert Competition Advisor to oversee the Competition; this person must have no vested interest in the project and should not serve on the competition jury.

It is the promoter's responsibility to issue advertisements and invitations to competitors, stating clearly the nature of the project, the use to which the promoter will put the winning entry, the names of the assessors, the latest date for applying for Competition conditions, the definitions of those eligible for entry, the amount of the deposit or registration fee required (returnable or non-returnable), the latest date for submission of questions, the latest time and date for submissions of entries, and the prizes offered.

Advertisements and invitations should be placed where they are likely to be seen by probable participants in sufficient time to allow them to apply.

The promoter must issue to each applicant a copy of the approved competition conditions and a copy of the AILA approval in writing, together with all relevant site information and base plans.

### *Competition Advisor:*

The Advisor should be an independent built environment design professional who has:

- ↓ Experience with similar competitions and therefore technical knowledge of the competition processes.
- ↓ Sensitivity to the client's goals and the ability to translate the client's objectives into appropriate competition procedures.

Generally, the Advisor should be paid for advice and service.



## Intellectual property and copyright

Apart from the winning entry, no submission may be used by the promoter for any purpose other than public display without the agreement of the competitor.

Normally the winning entry may be implemented only once without negotiating a new agreement with the designer for its repeated use. If it is planned to be used for repetitive projects, this should be clearly stated in the Competition conditions.

The promoter of the competitions must ensure that the competition and any subsequent actions allow for the competitors to retain the intellectual property and their moral rights over the designs as submitted in accordance with Australian Copyright and Moral Rights legislation.

Copyright should be retained by the designers/authors and a license granted to the organiser for use only on the project and only where the organiser has paid prize money.

Copyright for unawarded/unpaid entries should remain with the original authors.

Unsuccessful entries, and the ideas and concepts within, remain the property of the original author and as such are not to be used by the organisers.

The AILA discourages the practice of organisers awarding joint winners where the winning parties are expected to enter into any form of joint partnership on subsequent contracts, or where winning parties are expected to negotiate joint partnership agreements with others external or previously appointed to the project.

## Conduct of the competition

The Competition should be conducted in accordance with the advertised and endorsed conditions and criteria.

Competitors will be expected to meet their professional responsibilities of meeting the criteria and paying attention to other requirements such as budgets and the design brief and intent.

Competitors must comply with normal requirements for confidentiality and media restrictions that apply with Competitions.

Competitors must not make direct contact with Jury members and should avoid unnecessary communications with the promoter.

Applicants shall be given a period in which to ask questions and the promoter may then (with the approval of the jury) issue an explanatory memorandum to all competitors.



## Submission requirements

The form of the completed entry must be clearly stipulated in detail, including number and size of drawings and reports, scale, reproduction, use of colour, uniformity, cost estimates, etc.

All entries must be accompanied by a declaration by the competitor that the design is the competitor's sole or joint work, and that they are prepared to accept the assessors' verdict as final.

## Anonymity of submissions

The AILA prefers competition entries to be anonymous. Competitors should be disallowed if they use images or other logos within the submission that allow a jury to identify a competitor.

Submissions should be entered using cover pages, with the necessary entry and contact information, that are separated from the main documentation. The documentation being viewed by the jury should be numbered for later identification following decisions.

## Publicity

All press releases regarding the project, PR and media must acknowledge the full and correct name of the winning team as indicated by the entrant, especially but not only when using competitors' images for publication. Failure to acknowledge authorship may be a breach of Australian copyright and moral rights legislation.

## Assessment

The competition conditions should clearly state the criteria for assessment, as well as the situations which would lead to disqualification of an entry

In particular the extent to which graphic presentation is a requirement of the Competition should be clearly stated in the Competition conditions.

A jury must be established with membership appropriate to the competition but a minimum shall be

- ↓ A jury member, a registered landscape architect, endorsed by the AILA as representing AILA
- ↓ A jury chair who is independent of the promoter.
- ↓ A representative of the promoter.
- ↓ Others as appropriate.

The jury, excluding the chair, shall be an even number with a casting vote belonging to the chair.

The AILA accepts that the decision of the jury is final.



## Prizes

A competition will normally have 3 places (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), with each receiving a prize of value commensurate with the scale of the project and the competition.

Conditions should clearly indicate the basis for continuing involvement by the winner, where appropriate. Typically, the winner will be commissioned to commence work on the project, with further design development, documentation and contract administration. In the case of projects to be constructed by employees of the client, day labour or by voluntary effort, the winner should also have a role in documentation and supervision.

The Landscape Architect is expected to receive professional fees, in addition to the competition prize, for any ongoing professional services. The winning prize-money should be paid at the end of the Competition and not be 'rolled into' or paid as part of the project commission or fees.

The competition winner may be required to vary the winning entry to meet any reasonable requirements of the promoter within the original brief.

All prizes and prize-moneys should be awarded as advertised and on time.

Prize money should be held in a trust account and paid a maximum of 14 days following the award of prizes.

## Non-Progress of Project

If the client decides not to proceed with a project after running a competition where it was stated that a winner would design the project then an extra fee should be stated for the competitor as compensation in lieu of the project design. The amount of this fee should be stated within the design competitions guidelines and information available to potential entrants.



## Procedure to Gain the AILA Endorsement

The AILA encourages agencies to conduct competitions when it is appropriate and relevant.

Agencies should apply for the AILA endorsement in order that the competitions are viewed as being conducted on the basis of being fair and transparent.

Applications for the AILA endorsement are to be direct to the National Office addressed to the Executive Director who is authorised to conduct a process whereby the AILA endorsement can be assessed for each particular competition.

Where a promoter approaches the AILA for approval of a competition that involves other design professions, the AILA will request that other relevant Institutes be approached as a professional courtesy.

Approval of the competition by the AILA National Council requires the following procedure:

- ↓ The promoter of the proposed competition shall notify the National Office and shall submit in electronic form, the guidelines, conditions and other relevant documentation.
- ↓ The AILA Executive Director, on behalf of the National Council, will determine the significance of each proposed competition and will appoint an appropriate assessment mechanism.
- ↓ The AILA Executive Director will manage a review of the material submitted by the promoter and oversee recommendations.
- ↓ The AILA National Council grants approval (or not) of the competition.

**Prior to the above process being completed, no publicity or publication may imply that the Competition has the AILA's approval or that the approval is 'pending'.**

