

MAR10

LANDMARK



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A Publication of the
**Australian
 Institute of
 Landscape
 Architects**
www.aila.org.au

AILA State Presidents' Forum

Michael White, AILA National Councillor (Northern Territory)

It was great to have the rare opportunity to travel down from Darwin to Canberra to meet the AILA State Presidents as well as the familiar faces of National Council and National Office staff. There were probably twice as many Landscape Architects in the one room than there are in the entire Northern Territory. It was heartening to see so many dedicated people with the best intentions of the AILA entering into some robust debate about current issues and future directions for AILA. This forum also allowed the AILA State Presidents to gain an understanding of the current initiatives taking place throughout the AILA as well as share ideas with each other.

While we can communicate through emails and other mediums, the chance to meet each other and put faces to names is an opportunity that I personally am grateful for and I am sure the others in the room would agree. It was an extremely important day in the ongoing attempt to keep communications lines open, clear and transparent from the National Council to the State groups and subsequently to our members. Nothing beats hearing things first hand directly from the source. As you could imagine there were many things discussed throughout the day—so I am going to try and give a brief overview of some of the major items.

The first item of the day for discussion was an update on the progress on the Climate Change Projects being undertaken by Catherine Neilson, the National Project Manager and Paul Costigan, Executive Director, within the National Office. Catherine has been working on the CATSS (Climate Adaptation Tools for Sustainable Settlements) project which is to report in June this year. She has been working with a national and international reference group examining tools in use throughout Australia and internationally. The group was very receptive to the work that has been conducted to date and the general consensus was that it seems to be heading in the right direction. It was noted that there is a need to 'simplify' the sustainability messages as they relate to landscape and that individuals within the profession need to take a greater role in advocacy of the projects. We all look forward to seeing the results of the study and how the tools may be implemented in Government policy development and used generally within the profession.

Catherine and Paul also briefed us on the successful work being done by Jane Tarran, based in Sydney, on developing a framework for professional development in relation to Climate Change. Anyone who was lucky enough to attend the one day conference in Perth last year and listened to Jane's talk would attest to the wealth of knowledge and valuable experience Jane brings to the profession. Paul explained that the framework will provide an outline of units that State Groups should add to their CPD programs so that our members

can receive guidance on dealing with the issues of Climate Change in our day to day work. The challenge is now down to the State Groups to use the valuable work being done by Jane and deliver CPD programs in interesting and meaningful ways to their respective members. That includes the small groups such as Tasmania and my own Northern Territory (total 9 registered members).

Coming from Darwin where CPD opportunities are extremely limited, I was very interested to hear how individual states were looking at initiatives to ensure regional and remote members can access CPD programs. Qld spoke about a particular program that originated in Brisbane and travelled to the Gold Coast and Cairns. Vic spoke about including Ballarat in one of their programs. NSW are conscious of their regional members and have in the past held programs in Newcastle. Originally coming from a regional practice in NSW and now residing in Darwin, I have been in the past critical of the AILA for not doing enough for regional/remote members. I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the States to ensure their remote and regional members are not excluded. Please keep up the good work.

The next item had me a little worried right from the start! The National Office had arranged for an audit of the AILA's Corporate Governance Manual to be undertaken by the law firm Williams Love and Nicol. Mark Love, a corporate law specialist, gave a presentation and proceeded to inform us that in his opinion the AILA governance structure was very sound and that only few items could be 'tweaked' to ensure the manual is quite clear in terms of roles and responsibilities of the National Executive, National Council and State Groups. Mark stressed the importance that National Council under the Corporations Act essentially acts as a 'Board of Directors' and needs to be impartial at all times with the best interests of the AILA and its members to be the priority. Mark's presentation was very well received and a timely wake up call for all of us on National Council as well as the State Presidents. I urge all of you to pick up your 'up to date' handbook regularly and familiarise yourself with the roles and responsibilities of the National Council and State Groups to ensure we are doing our jobs to best of our abilities.

The Executive Director introduced Monica Vandenberg to the forum. Monica has been employed by the Executive Director to assist with government communications (lobbying) and advocacy in general and preparing a strategy for a whole of Institute approach to advocacy. At present the strategy is aimed at developing;

- concise messages that encapsulate the aims/principles of the AILA and the profession,
- target audiences for advocacy, and
- approaches to advocacy.

A working paper was presented and discussed around the room. It was agreed that key messages needs to be simple and concise to enable most effective use and understanding. There was a general consensus within the forum that the current key messages in the working paper focuses on the climate change program. Whilst the majority of people agree this is an important topic that needs attention; Sacha Coles, NSW State President, urged us to reinforce the message that what we all do well as landscape architects is '*as professionals we play a significant role in crafting places and their function in social sustainability, physical and mental health, and nurturing and elevating the spirit.*' (I hope I haven't misquoted you Sacha). This session was very engaging and fueled a complex debate about defining the key messages and the direction of advocacy efforts; something which was to be discussed at the National Council meeting the following day.

The Executive Director gave a brief overview on the status of the Education Policy. Historically this has always been a complex issue and one that is always attempting to find the best balance between what the accredited university programs and the general profession believes to be the best outcome for our graduates. I imagine every member has a view on what type of graduates the universities should be producing and the skills they should be possessing as a minimum, however it is very clear there is not a '*one type fits all*' solution. I know in my short time in National Council this has been a hotly debated topic. I firmly believe that we are making educated decisions with the best interests of the graduates, the AILA and the profession as a whole as a priority.

Many other items were discussed during the day such as recent work through the BEDP, overhaul of the AILA website, a major competition to be run by the NSW Group, urban design, registration, review of communication strategies, awards, the 2011 National Conference and even the possibility of a one day conference in Alice Springs in 2012 (that was my idea). I encourage you to contact your State representative if you would like further information on any of the topics mentioned.

I left the meeting feeling satisfied that we had achieved quite a lot in just one day. I would like to thank everyone for their positive contributions. I would also like to thank the National Office for coordinating the event. I believe we achieved what we set out to do—to brief the State Presidents on topics being discussed at National level and receive valuable feedback. I hope the State Presidents share my enthusiasm on the direction of the AILA and look forward to meeting and speaking to you all again sooner rather than later.



I can jump puddles—the Canberra Trip (with apologies to Alan Marshal)

Paul Harding, National Vice President

As I headed out of the office on Thursday afternoon I knew I was cutting it fine. As usual I had got caught tidying up some loose ends before heading to the airport to catch my flight to Canberra. I now had less than 90 minutes to make the journey to the airport, check my baggage and see if the dodgy print out of my boarding pass would cut the mustard at the check in counter. My printer at home had run out of ink the night before and in the rush I had forgotten to reprint it.

Driving down the Lonsdale Highway and over the range, as the city and ocean lay before me I recalled the time I missed the plane out of Perth a few years ago and the sickening feeling of entering the empty transit lounge. Resisting the temptation to risk a speeding fine and the wrath of boys in blue that would ensure a missed flight I convinced myself that, although I was cutting it fine, it would be OK. That feeling held until I approached the long term carpark at the same time the airport bus left the station, looked like I was going to have to leg it to the terminal!

Entering the terminal and sweating profusely, my relief was palpable to the desk clerk as I received my boarding pass. Once the bag was checked in I knew that I would be on the flight. Arriving in Canberra, I met up with Nick, vice president of the SA Group to share a taxi to our hotel. We had been on the same flight but in my relief to actually be on the plane I had been too focussed to recognise him in the crowd.

I always feel that staying at the *Pavilion* is a bit like being in time warp with its tropical courtyard, complete with palm trees. We shared a couple of beers catching up on the goss with some colleagues before retiring to our rooms for a good night's rest.

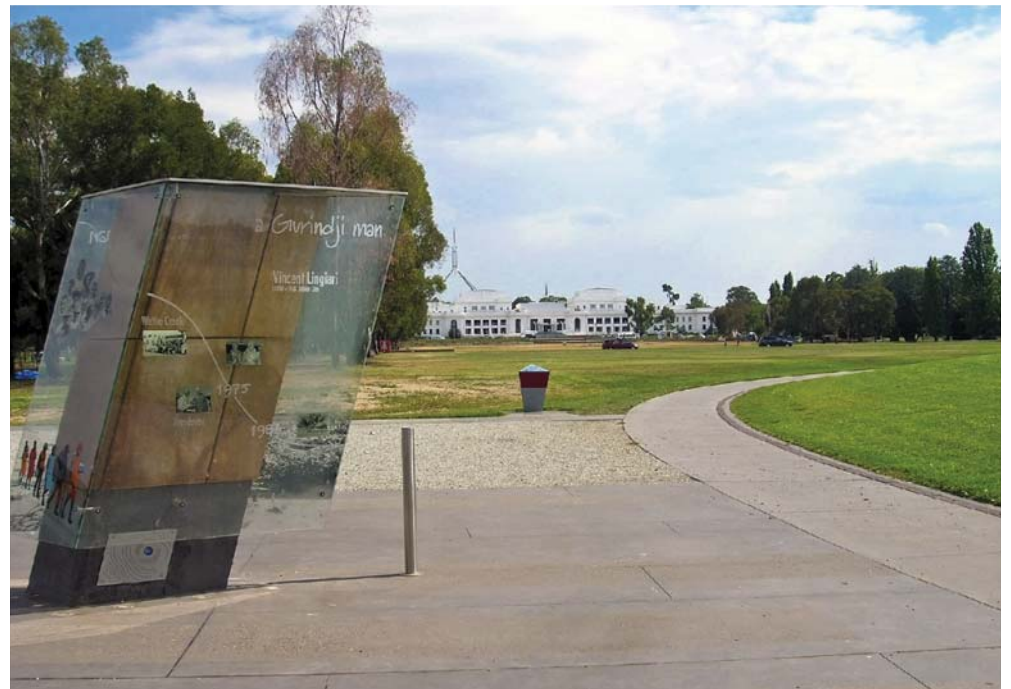
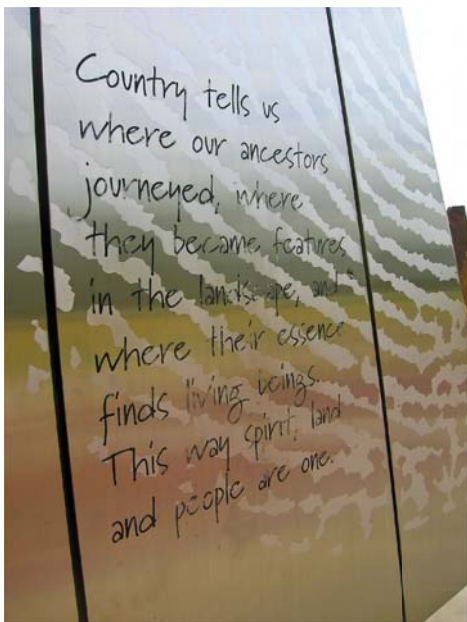
A busy day followed with a meeting of state president's and national councillors discussing a range of issues common to all, sharing positive experiences and putting names to faces. Notes of the meeting will be prepared for briefings to the membership by their respective state presidents. Highlights of the meeting were that the AILA is punching well above it's weight on national issues surrounding the natural and built environments.

Following a debrief over drinks, state presidents left for home and councillors remaining for Saturday's meeting adjourned to a nearby restaurant for dinner. The walk to Dickson was an interesting exercise in dodging puddles due to the rain and the unfenced, raging stormwater drain raised some comment. The puddles were bigger and the night was even darker on the way back. I reckon you can pick the landscape architects in a crowd by their interest in either, the pavement or the drainage system.

Another busy day followed, wading through the ambitious agenda proposed by our fearless executive director, but in the end we managed to address the essentials. It has been a busy few years for the AILA in conducting a number of policy reviews and addressing advocacy issues and it doesn't seem to be abating anytime soon. We had been hoping to finish in time to visit the National Gallery to check out the latest exhibition, but alas, as the day drew to a close the group scattered as individuals broke ranks to catch their flights home.

Sitting in the Qantas Lounge as the guest of a colleague while preparing notes from the previous day's events, I became aware that my flight to Adelaide via Melbourne had been delayed indefinitely due to severe thunderstorms in Victoria's capital. I was thankful that I wasn't marooned in the transit lounge downstairs. Strangers became friends in the frenzy to find out if we would be sleeping in Canberra, Melbourne or in our own beds that night. Several hours later I was rushing from one end of Tullamarine to the other in the company of other strangers to catch a connecting flight while wondering if my bag was going to be at the same place I was at the end of the trip.

On the plane home on the final leg of the journey, recently acquainted travelling companions swapped stories of their trials and tribulations at the hands of mother nature and as we parted company at the baggage carousel I marvelled at the way catastrophes (however minor) bring strangers together. My bag turned up on my doorstep the next day, courtesy of an airline courier, but I never did hear its story.



Climate Change Adaptation— What does it mean for Landscape Architects?

Dr Jane Tarran

AILA National Project, Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Landscape Architects

(Adapted from a presentation to the AILA NSW—President's Lunch—Friday 12 March 2010)

My professional work over the last 20 years in urban vegetation and tree management has intersected with landscape architecture in many ways. I've met many landscape architects, and know of some of your work, by way of reading Landscape Australia for the last 20 years or so (and back issues to 1979) and visiting your sites. I've also been to some of your conferences and seminars over the years. At the University of Technology Sydney, we held an International People-Plant Seminar in 1998 that many landscape architects attended, and Helen Armstrong was a keynote speaker at that conference. And I'd like to thank Bruce Mackenzie and Leonard Lynch, particularly, for inputs into my own professional development over those 20 years, even though they mightn't have realised it.

During 2009–2010, I have been employed by the AILA to work on a AILA National Project, funded by the Federal Government, on Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professionals i.e. Landscape Architects and how this will impact on landscape architectural education and practice.

Adapting to Climate Change is all about adjusting how we do things in systems that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, whether these are natural or human systems, in order to reduce expected harm from climate change, or to exploit any opportunities arising from climate change. A traditional approach to Climate Change Adaptation involves four stages and the AILA National project links to these:

- raising awareness amongst people and engaging stakeholders directly
- identifying climate change impacts and carrying out risk assessments
- planning by identifying adaptation options
- taking action to set up institutional mechanisms, modify policies and explicitly incorporate adaptation into projects

You are probably aware that initial responses to climate change involved mitigation i.e. reducing the sources of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted from burning fossil fuels, or enhancing sinks to absorb carbon dioxide, like locking it up (sequestration) in plants, soil etc. This was a logical response since it addressed the source of the problem. This approach, i.e. removing the cause of the problem, worked for dealing with the depletion of the ozone layer, but reducing CO₂ emissions (shifting to low carbon economies) has turned out to be much, much more difficult than reducing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Adaptation has more recently entered the thinking, since (1) it is widely believed that we are already seeing the impacts of climate change; (2) further impacts are already "locked in" because of past and current emissions; (3) mitigation will take several decades to work; (4) adaptation measures have a shorter lead time, can be implemented locally or regionally, and don't depend on what other people might or might not do.

Adaptation strategies are quite diverse, depending on the impact being addressed e.g. heat alert systems for heatwaves, engineering and other solutions to cope with increased flooding etc.

Some strategies, like increased tree canopy in urban areas or better building insulation, offer a double bonus in that they provide both mitigation and adaptation. In fact the increased provision of Green Infrastructure in cities, i.e. the real biological green that grows, is one of the most significant double bonus strategies around. (Other strategies, like increased use of air conditioning, can provide adaptation, but run counter to mitigation efforts.)

The AILA National Project fits into this process of adaptation. It arose when the Federal Government provided grants to assist professional groups to develop skills to incorporate Climate Change Adaptation into their practice and it addresses the first three stages of awareness raising and stakeholder engagement, identifying climate change impacts and carrying out risk assessments and planning. In addition to landscape architects, other professions targeted included architects, engineers, planners, natural resource managers and urban designers.

I took over from Catherine Neilson, who had carried out the first year of the project, leading to the Australian Landscape Principles, which underpin the development of adaptive capacity. My part of the project is to develop the framework and module outlines for a set of professional development modules to address Climate Change Adaptation and is due for completion by May 2010.

So far, I've researched Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation and how they intersect with landscape architecture, held Workshops in Melbourne and Sydney using the participant networks that Catherine established last year, to get feedback on draft modules and ideas for module delivery, and put two discussion papers up on the AILA National website in January this year for further member feedback.

I'm currently revising the modules, based on the latest feedback, and will prepare final outlines of modules, including recommendations on frameworks for design, delivery, evaluation and future implementation, and present these to stakeholders and State Groups

The final part of the project will be module delivery from 2010–2011, and beyond.

Addressing climate change is generally regarded as the most challenging problem of the 21st century in developed countries. I think landscape architects are well placed to contribute to solutions in a major way, if they actively engage with climate change and all its ramifications and take lead or coordinating roles, or a central position where possible, to develop the solutions.

There are at least seven reasons why I think this:

1. Landscape architects are most closely involved with ecosystems that provide the support systems for life on earth, including human life—Climate Change Adaptation is about maintaining these life support systems
2. Landscape architects have always been concerned with change, either as planners for change or as agents of change; landscapes change over time—change is an accepted part of your operation
3. Landscape architects are already addressing issues of sustainability, especially the sustainability of human settlements—addressing climate change is another aspect of this
4. Landscape architects deal with complex socio-economic and environmental systems in their entirety—Climate Change Adaptation is about recognising societal and ecological dimensions and accommodating both, working with people and natural systems to enhance human well-being
5. Landscape architects deal with local, site-specific projects and Climate Change Adaptation has a strong local emphasis, with a strong Local Government focus—impacts and vulnerabilities vary on a site by site basis, and so do required adaptation actions
6. Most importantly, landscape architects have special skills in design to arrive at innovative solutions to problems, considering both the needs of society and ecosystems
7. Additionally, for Climate Change Adaptation, landscape architects have special skills in visual communication—in helping people to see a different future

Roaming NZ sites with Niall Simpson FAILA— National Council Secretary

A series of images—with more online: www.aila.org.au/roamings

All images for New Zealand Roamings by Niall Simpson FAILA

www.aila.org.au/roamings



Routeburn Shelter:
This was incredibly well done or not done. A really good display of restraint and less is more. It was hard to pick the interventions. I believe the landscape architect truly understood not only the brief but also the landscape and the clients.



Parkhill: Probably the best lifestyle development I have seen. The Landscape Architect understood the simplicity of the system he was working within, there's not an awful lot of elements within a rural landscape even an intensive one such as a vineyard—it's all about pattern or placement of the introduced elements.

In addition to all these abilities, to expand what you do to incorporate climate change adaptation in your day-to-day work, I think there is an overwhelming case for a special role for landscape architects in helping the broader society address climate change. And that is in providing a visual and compelling view of a positive future, and a better future—what has sometimes been referred to as a “low carbon heaven”, which I prefer to call an *enjoyable, sustainable “low carbon heaven”*.

And the reason I emphasise this is that some climate change communicators (e.g. see futerra sustainability communications) have realised that, so far, the messages have all been about “climate change hell”. People have been bombarded with rising seas, scorched earth, wild weather and failing food supplies. They aren’t listening any more, they’re not buying the message, and they’re not changing attitudes or behaviours. Unfortunately, it seems that evidence and rational arguments don’t necessarily change behaviours, as we know from health campaigns dealing with smoking and excess alcohol consumption. However, there is a greater chance that people will respond to a positive message and a positive future, with the necessary change in attitudes and behaviour.

Perhaps that is why successful initiatives for change, and these are North American examples, start off with “I have a dream ...” or “Yes, we can ...”

In this sense, the Sea Change Design Competition (not Rising Tides), to be run by NSW AILA, may well turn out to be a vision of a positive, and better future—and an indication that adaptation to Climate Change is within our grasp. If this is promoted well, it can position landscape architecture at the forefront of providing positive solutions for the future.

Landscape architects have also been involved in other positive futures in the media lately; for example, Sacha Coles’s work with the Department of Housing on greening streets and communities, and Adrian McGregor’s work promoting urban food production and protection of Sydney’s food supply. The expansion of community gardens and the roll-out of school gardens are also positive future visions.

So, with a positive future as a reference point, it can become the preferred choice, rather than “climate change hell”, to deal with the impacts of climate change that are likely for Australia, given the projections of:

- significant warming, with more heatwaves and an increase in the intensity of droughts
- more rain in some areas, but less rain in southern and eastern areas of Australia
- more severe extreme events, with more intense and frequent heatwaves, fires, droughts, floods and storm surges
- rising sea levels, with effects on coastal and low-lying areas nearby

Once people have identified a positive future as their preferred choice, plans and specific actions over a short time frame (e.g. 5 years) can be set in train.

I have some hope that we will successfully adapt to climate change in Australia. (Though I recognise the appalling damage we have done to this continent over the last 200 years or so.) In Australia, we have experience in adapting to climate variability, via an earlier focus on sustainability e.g. water storage and irrigation to deal with erratic rainfall. We have also started adapting to what appear to be changes in this baseline range of variability e.g. moves towards increasing water use efficiency in both urban and rural areas, as a result of “prolonged droughts”.

However, people still tend to focus on short term weather (in the recent week, month or year) without understanding long term climate trends. People tend not to differentiate between weather and climate. As well, there is a tendency to see the recent snowstorms in the northern hemisphere as running counter to global warming, rather than as evidence of extreme events. In Australia, it is likely that the recent floods will be seen as “the breaking of the drought” (or reversal of the El Nino), rather than extreme events against the backdrop of a much longer period of increased dry conditions.

Without going into a lot of detail, the 10 modules dealing with Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation aim to cover areas that will form a basis for design solutions for a climate-changed future. They are not design modules in themselves, but form the basis on which design solutions can be built:

- Basic climate change information, as a foundation, and as a source of continually updated, credible information, processed for local or regional use—the science, the significance of the problem, projections (climate scenarios) for different places, and on a range of temporal and spatial scales, as well as concepts of mitigation and adaptation (Modules 1–2)—these could be delivered as common modules with other professions
- Communicating climate change information and advocacy (Module 3)—extending existing communication skills to climate change; a separate module because of its importance to landscape architects (via the roles described previously)
- Assessing impacts of climate change, adaptation needs, and adaptation options (Modules 4–5)
- Incorporating climate change adaptation into professional practice, via sub-modules dealing with landscape attributes e.g. provision of ecosystem services under changed climatic conditions; urban food production; designing for extreme events etc. (Modules 6–8)
- Project evaluation, including research components and documentation of “best practice” projects (Module 9)
- A final module dealing with business operations in a climate changed future i.e. ensuring that your practices adapt to climate change by identifying and offering new services and products and by minimising risks to your operations (Module 10)

Just a few final comments on human responses to climate change. Since you are dealing with people all the time (clients, public, other experts etc.), it’s worth understanding their responses. Some broad groups (with sub-groups) have been defined already (see futerra sustainability communications), with the two main ones being –

1. the Global Activists—the Climate Fighters (campaigners), the Carbon Realists (will take action eventually) and the Carbon Opportunists (want to make money out of climate action)
2. the Global Cynics—the Climate Change Deniers, the Carbon Protectionists (others can take action), the Industry Avoiders (making sure your industry doesn’t suffer), the Economic Worriers (its the wrong time to take action and the economic burden will be huge), the Climate Quitters (it’s too late anyway), and the Angry Antis (against the system that got us into the mess and can’t see that it will get us out of the mess).

Of course, the biggest group belongs to neither of these two, since they are Jo and Joanne Average. But they are influenced by the media and “commonly held views” (like talkback radio), and are getting messages from both the cynics and activists, who are lobbying them. They become engaged when they notice opportunities or threats to their personal or national interest.

Finally, as well as the Sea Change Design Competition, it would be good to see other projects documented, in which potential climate change impacts have been identified, and adaptation options explored and included in design solutions.

We need to see many more “good news” stories to engage people and help them look forward to the future and landscape architects are in an excellent position to lead the way.

The AILA’s Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professions Program is funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change

04



Perky Pukeko: Barry Curtis Park



Volcano Park: In this day and age you can still have fun, to me it had no pretenses, you didn’t need a doctorate to understand the layering, a good honest park with a solid design concept that still ticked all the good design boxes. I really liked this park.



Ferndene: This project was impressive because I felt it delivered a successful green message to the average subdivision. It says to me you don’t have to be all nuts and berries to partake in some green engineering and sustainability principles.

Celebrating members involvement in AILA education and accreditation

The National Council wishes to acknowledge the work being done by AILA Registered Landscape Architects in assisting with the accreditation and delivery of the accredited Landscape Architecture programs.

The National Council has appointed a panel of Registered members to undertake the national visits of the programs. With the University of Melbourne and the University of Adelaide due for visits this year, this will complete the full suite of seven visits over the four year period.

The current national panel members are: Peter Haack, Nell Rickard, Tony McCormack and Hilary Hamnett —assisted by the AILA Executive Director.

Locally each program is advised and guided through the work of a local education advisory committee, currently these are:

QUT Advisory Committee: Peter Boyle (about to step down), Wes Mortensen, Nev Connell, Rob Guthrie (Vacancy for one more).

UWA Advisory Committee: Tony Blackwell, Walter Van Der Loo, Devon Cunningham.

RMIT Advisory Committee: Sally Prideaux, Stephen Schutt, Dean Thornton

University of Canberra: Helen Cohen, Alan Pegg, David Moyle.

UNSW Advisory Committee: Mike Horne, Matthew Taylor, Uyen Bui, Elke Haege.

University of Melbourne: Andrew Partos, Craig Czarny, Caroline Martin.

University of Adelaide: Daniel Bennett, Brett Grimm, Keith Davis.

The National Council also recently viewed the 2009 annual reports from the seven programs and wish to acknowledge the large numbers of professional landscape architects that involve themselves with the delivery of the programs through volunteering for sessions as well as particular tutoring and other sessional roles.

Finally the National Council wish to thank all the members who responded to the several calls for comments and feedback to the various consultation papers during 2009 on developing the new Education Policy and Accreditation Procedures. The views were diverse as you would have expected some very strong opinions were expressed. All that work—including just a few debates—has resulted in some new look documents and some well defined education standards that will now guide the education and accreditation over the next few years.

www.aila.org.au/education
Thank you everyone.



LANDMARK exclusive— South Australia's *Integrated Design Commission* Paul Harding, National Vice President

The announcement of the establishment of an Integrated Design Commission by SA Premier Mike Rann on Proclamation Day, 2009 may have gone largely unnoticed by many, including myself, due to the timing of the announcement amidst the festive holiday season, however the news did not go unnoticed by the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA), who welcomed the initiative in a Media Release. I became aware of the announcement via a Communiqué from National Office and some frantic follow up and queries amongst colleagues revealed some of the details.

The establishment of an Integrated Design Commission was among the recommendations of *2009 Thinker in Residence*, Laura Lee¹ and was rumoured to receive some serious financial backing from the Federal Government. This was confirmed in a February Media Release from the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government announcing up to \$2.65 million in funding for urban projects in South Australia. In the meantime, I suspected that this was an opportunity for landscape architects that was not to be missed and arranged for a letter of support for the establishment of an Integrated Design Commission to be sent to the Premier from the AILA outlining why we needed to be part of this initiative and the myriad of skills that we could bring to the table.

A copy of this letter was also emailed to Laura Lee, who responded promptly, thanking the AILA for their offer of support.

Following this initial burst of activity I contacted Tim Horton, president of the AIA to inform him of the AILA support and a meeting was initiated by the AIA to brief Adelaide's major design professions of the series of

events that had led to that point. At that meeting, which included the Design Institute of Australia (DIA), Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and AILA, it was agreed that collaboration would ensure the best outcome for good design of the built environment in SA.

Collaboration amongst the design professions in Adelaide goes back a number of years, to the establishment of the *Collaborations Forum* in 2004. Members of this forum included the DIA, PIA, AILA, RAIA and arts organizations such as the Community Arts Network, Arts SA and Craft South and as I looked around the table it appeared that some of these alliances were about to deliver.

Subsequent dialogue ensued and a collaborative briefing was arranged by the AIA with Greg Mackie from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the person with the likely responsibility to manage delivery of the initiative, who informed us that although the final terms of reference or details of governance were yet to be determined, the establishment of a collaborative group with the multidisciplinary vision to develop a truly sustainable city and the powers to implement that vision would be vital to the success the Design Commission.

On the strength of this information I forwarded an email of support to Greg Mackie and Eva Les, Director of the Thinker in Residence Program who both responded, enthusiastically welcoming the inclusion of the AILA to the table. I believe that the enthusiasm with which the AILA's support for the formation of the Integrated Design Commission was received from the government, Laura Lee and the AIA as a major partner was due to the strength of our collaborative research programs with the CSIRO and the unique skills that our profession are currently promoting via the Landscape Principles. It seems as if our time has come.

A positive letter of acknowledgement has just been received from the SA Premier in response to AILA's earlier letter of support stating that "the Australian Institute of Landscape Architect's leadership on this issue will be critical if we are to engage in an inclusive and collaborative strategy to achieve a bold vision for South Australia". I don't reckon it gets much more positive for our profession than that!

However this recognition has not come about overnight and has been a result of persistent lobbying by a range of individuals for some time. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the political and professional networking efforts of *Hassell*, an original Adelaide collaborative design institution, now global, for their contribution to the current focus by the SA Government on integrated design of the built environment in this state. It appears those networks are beginning to yield returns.

It has felt like a frantic few weeks catching up with the state of play and now as the state government enters 'caretaker mode' preceding the state election we need to wait for the details of this exciting design initiative to unfold. Watch this space.

¹ refer <http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/lee.html>

National Policy

The Australian Council of Built Environment Design Professions

National Sustainable Settlement

"...we must establish new frameworks for how the different levels of government, along with businesses and the community, work together to build better cities and suburbs."

Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister 2009

The Australian Council of Built Environment Design Professions (BEDP) is calling on the federal and state governments to develop an overarching sustainable settlement policy as a matter of national priority.

In the face of international recognition of the emerging threats posed by abrupt and irreversible damage to the climate of our planet, governments around the world are increasingly adopting aggressive mitigation portfolios in their policy approaches to:

- current sustainability challenges relating to developments across the spectrum of metropolitan, suburban, coastal, regional and remote settlements,
- those settlements being planned for the future generations as cities expand, and
- those settlement areas requiring urgent retrofitting to deal with current climate change impacts.

Within Australia, significant leadership has been demonstrated across all levels of government in relation to sustainable settlement, through a wide range and scale of initiatives targeting carbon pollution reduction, energy efficiency, emissions trading, renewable energy, infrastructure and water.

The national Sustainable Settlement policy should build on such existing initiatives and provide support to them—by locating them within an integrated national framework.

The national Sustainable Settlement policy would provide:

- An overarching and integrated strategy by which Commonwealth, State and Local Government policy initiatives can operate within a national/state framework.
- The framework that links and integrates other urban related policies such as 'smart cities', urban design, sustainability charters, built environment policies and sustainable communities.

- Guidance in the development of capital city strategic planning systems, (currently under co-ordination and review by COAG), as well as decision-making support for other COAG initiatives, including focus on national climate adaptation response and housing supply and affordability.

Settlement (not settlements)

A national policy framework on sustainable settlement would be capable of addressing sustainability challenges not only in relation to urban and suburban development, but also within the context of the broader spectrum of impacts and expressions of human settlement across the nation.

In sustainability terms, human settlement is about activity and effect, not just about towns and people. The way we extract and manage natural resources, conduct business, agriculture and tourism, protect or damage carbon sinks, live with the bush, the desert and the forests—all of these and more are characteristics of human settlement which impact across local, national and international scales.

At the most fundamental level, a national policy on Sustainable Settlement should be designed to accommodate the complex interactions, complementarities and conflicts which occur between individual sustainability parameters (such as energy, water, population growth, transport, infrastructure, climate, natural resources etc.), and their subsequent impact on the patterns and effects of human settlement at local, regional and national scales—and to enable rigorous analysis and optimisation of necessary 'tradeoffs' in decision-making to support broader national sustainability goals.

The National Sustainable Settlement policy directions should leverage and build on existing policy development and delivery mechanisms—e.g. collaborative, co-operative and integrated

strategies between local, state and federal governments such as COAG, within a strong community and stakeholder consultation process.

Seeking integrated design solutions for national Sustainable Settlement

The BEDP strongly urge the Australia's federal and State governments to act rapidly through COAG to provide a central, integrated vision for a sustainable future and to implement a national Sustainable Settlement policy that will guide a consistency of approach in all settlement development across the nation.

For more information

The Australian Council of Built Environment Design Professions

telephone 02 6270 6563, email contact@bedp.asn.au
Copies of the policy are available online www.bedp.asn.au



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2011 AILA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Brisbane Convention Centre (in the new wing)
Thursday—Saturday, 11–13 August 2011
www.aila.org.au/2011

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TRANSFORM

CLIMATE CHANGE: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND URBAN DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Themes include:

- Green Infrastructure as a key design solution
- Climate Change and Urban Design
- Integrated Design Solutions for Sustainable Settlement
- Design Solutions for Adaptation and Mitigation
- Landscape Values and Landscape Principles
- The Language of Landscape

Key Policies: Landscape Principles | Green Infrastructure | Sustainable Settlement

www.aila.org.au/policies



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ISSN 1328-5181

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LG2 designers
Phone: 02 6286 3039
Web: www.lg2.com.au
Printed on recycled paper.