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LAND MARK



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AILA National Council Report

National Council meeting in Canberra, 19–20 May 2011

The introduction of alternate registration status

The AILA National Council has agreed to the following:

That the AILA Registration Scheme include an optional assessment processes whereby AILA Registered Landscape Architects may apply for the extra status to be recognised as a related Landscape Architectural Professional, such as AILA Registered Urban Designer.

A registration process is now being devised whereby Registered Landscape Architects may apply to be also classified as an AILA Registered Urban Designer. This process may not be ready till the end of 2011.

The change of title for the AILA

The AILA National Council has agreed that the AILA would change its title from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects to the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture. The actual implementation may be delayed till 2012 while changes are progressed through ASIC on their national management of business names.

The Public Sector Memberships

The National Council discussed the range of issues relevant to increasing the participation of Public Sector Landscape Architects within the Institute—including having more Public Sector LAs become Registered Landscape Architects. Several strategies were discussed including some form of survey and possibly an initiative for present Public Sector Registered members to oversee some communications between states.

The title of State Groups

The AILA National Council has agreed that the State Groups are now to be retitled as State Chapters.

CPD and a university Post Graduate Program

The AILA National Council has agreed that a Registered Landscape Architect who enrolls in post graduate study (Masters) should be granted advanced CPD points—given the financial and time commitment as well as professional commitment that such extra study requires of an employed Registered Landscape Architect.

The National Council agreed to amend the CPD requirements to allow for the allowance of two years CPD points to be granted for every year (or equivalent part time) of completed academic post graduate study undertaken by Registered Landscape Architects.

Membership—Changes to Affiliate

The use of Affiliate as a title is to be dropped. Instead a new affiliate members' title will be devised over the coming months.

Advocacy and Strategic Plan 2010–2013

Council agreed to the initiative to have the strategic and advocacy plans placed online through a new wiki to allow the State Presidents and National Councillors to discuss and report on actions.

Where applicable the State Chapters are to be encouraged by National Councillors to establish working committees to look for opportunities for advocacy.

Policy review

The Council discussed the development, mainly during the latter part of 2010, whereby the new suite of Policies was developed. The CEO is to continue with the development and publishing of National Policy Statements and Papers; including a National Policy Statements on Rating Tools; Community Engagement; Shared Zones.

Future projects

National Council is continuing to identify further options for project funding. Catherine Neilson is to continue as Senior Project Manager in the National Office.

National Council discussed feedback from the CCATS (Climate Adaptation Tools for Sustainable Settlements) project and the more recent AILA statement, based on the CCATS project, that outlined the case for a National Framework for Ratings Tools. This new statement is to be simplified to be a one page statement outlining the AILA view on the current suite and style of Rating Tools.

AILA is to commence work on a major project to have the American Sustainable Site Initiative tools and strategies adapted for an Australian context. The AILA should be the key driver for this, should seek partnerships and then seek Commonwealth support. Council agreed. The first step would be put together a project brief and outline some options to progress the project.

IFLA

John Easthope and Mandy Rounsefell updated the Council briefly on the progress on the NZILA managed IFLA Congress in Auckland in May 2013.

Refining the Project Awards Criteria

National Council has agreed that it is timely to simplify the awards criteria—that the five sets of criteria be collapsed into one precise set. The new criteria should place the same emphasis on Landscape Principles but be flexible enough to allow for the wide spectrum of practice and hopefully allow for even more diversity of submissions. This new set of award criteria is to be completed by mid year.

Student Awards

National Council discussed the issues relating to student participation and awards and recognised that state by state there has been an on-going commitment by the AILA to student awards but it has not yielded student awareness of the AILA or participation in AILA events. National Council agreed that the key to the issue was an unfortunate situation across many programs that results low levels of encouragement of student involvement with the AILA. National Council members to keep open the discussions through State Chapters on how to increase the links to the academics and students.

Gallery of Australian Design (GAD)

The National Council discussed the success of the current GAD Landscape Architecture exhibition whereby Andrew Green of Gamble MacKinnon and Green (Brisbane) curated an exhibition of Queensland work. The concept of having other practices stage such exhibitions was briefly discussed. The National Council agreed to support two new proposals:

2012—Bloom—Health and the Landscape—curated by Gweneth Leigh with funding assistance from the AILA—with other supports being sought.

2013—National Place Makers—a proposal from the CEO for a national exhibition.

The AILA now has an annual slot in the GAD calendar for an exhibition.

Future Leaders Awards

Council discussed the Future Leaders Award and agreed that actions were required to target more employers to have them nominate more of their graduate employees for Future Leaders Awards.

Alliances and Partnerships

Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA)—Community (Precinct) Framework: The CEO had tabled a report on the relationships with the GBCA. National Council is to continue to seek good relations with the GBCA but to monitor contacts to ensure that the AILA is not misrepresented in any reports of meetings and consultations.

BEDP: National Council discussed the complexities of the BEDP's current operation and agreed that leaving the BEDP may be unfortunate. However given how much time and energy it has already consumed that this should be an option. National Council resolved to leave it to the CEO to advise.

Parks Forum—Green flag

National Council briefly discussed the new partnership with Parks Forum on the pilot to introduce Green Flag into Australia (and NZ). The AILA has made an initial contribution. After the pilots there will be a need to assess its viability—including whether it can be financially self sustaining.

Katie Williams, senior landscape architect with the City of Boroondara had volunteered for the three day workshop. She was also briefed on the proposal that if the pilot was successful, that she would consider the role of being the AILA National Coordinator for the Green Flag program.

As previously discussed, Council agreed to continue the partnership with Parks Forum.

National Urban Policy and National Population Policy

The CEO briefed Council members on these two policies, released early in the week of the National Council meeting. The CEO expressed disappointment that Green Infrastructure and any mention of Landscape values in the urban context had been omitted. There are to be follow ups with Infrastructure Australia about future revisions to include the importance and relevance of Green Infrastructure.

Cultural Landscapes

The National Council discussed international work to increase the profile of Cultural Landscapes and that this work had not progressed much in Australia. Councillors identified that AILA has had involvement in Heritage Landscape work and in some programs that identify Significant Landscapes.

One option being to see if some work could be done to have an definition or at least descriptions and case studies for Australian Cultural Landscapes and how this may sit within the AILA's Significant Landscape program.

Education and accreditation

The new Education Policy and Accreditation Procedures have continued to be a success with programs working with the procedures and standards to achieve positive outcomes.

National Council agreed to remove the wording indicating a mandatory requirement for work placement—and to alter the Standards wording to reflect the requirement that programs are to actively encourage students to gain work experience through a placements in offices (private or public sector) and that programs are to provide guidance and to monitor these placements to ensure the experience is relevant to the program outcomes.

Membership—Study Guide

The CEO reported on the development of this first issue of the Registration Study Guide and that it had been well received already. It will be due for revisions and updates in the latter part of 2011.

Membership—Registration Documentation

The National Office has already commenced work to clean up and simplify the introductory sections of the Registration-Mentorship documentation. On the content discipline tables, the feedback was that this could be simplified. National Council agreed that these could be combined to form about three introductory criteria that would then have attached other criteria relevant to each of the discipline areas.

A Landmark

Paul Costigan, the AILA CEO, quietly marked ten years in his position this year—the anniversary being 4th June. It has been a busy ten years with many changes and a multitude of issues been worked through with National Council and the State Chapters. A big thanks to all the many who have contributed to the initiatives and programs over the years. But right now, it is on to year eleven!

BEMP Adelaide 2011

Paul Harding, AILA National Vice President

Built Environment Meets Parliament (BEMP) was held in Adelaide a couple of months ago, the first time the event has been held outside Canberra. I suspect the establishment of both the Integrated Design Commission (IDC) and the release of the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide last year had something to do with the event being held in SA. There was an impressive gathering of influential individuals from the public and private sectors, including a good representation of parliamentary individuals, although none stayed all day as Parliament was sitting, and as we all know, they are very busy people.

BEMP is initiated by the Property Council of Australia and aligns the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA), The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), Consult Australia (consulting engineers) and the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA). Key built environment design professional organizations, including the AILA have not been invited to host the event. This may not be a bad thing as the financial cost to participate as a partner is significant and this was apparent in the choice of venue and organisation which included a lavish lunch and wine.

The underlying theme was 'finding common ground not a battleground' but this did not prevent some controversial views and refreshingly honest comments being aired by some, particularly Mark Parnell, SA leader of the Greens.

Landscape architecture and open space were mentioned a number of times by a range of speakers, mainly planners, who spoke of the need for safe and inclusive places for individuals within communities that enable individuals to engage with others. An alarming understanding of community engagement was illustrated by a developer, whose name I forget, who believed that because only 500 people were at a public meeting to protest against a massive residential development on prime agricultural land in the Adelaide Hills, the majority of people condoned the proposal. Passive assent? Maybe it was because most people were disillusioned with the 'consultation' and engagement process!

Green infrastructure was raised during a workshop toward the end of day as an issue to be discussed and a conversation following the event indicated this concept not well understood by the GBCA.

A subsequent meeting was arranged with members of the SA Executive, other key SA landscape architects and the GBCA to 'unpack green infrastructure'. Unfortunately this did not clarify how the concept could be incorporated into the Greenstar rating tools currently under development. Those present, however, did get to hear quite a lot about the GBCA and its Greenstar rating tools program.

One item the meeting did highlight was the need for some leadership to produce effective evaluation processes for green infrastructure and eco systems services and the AILA has been active in seeking engagement of partners, in particular, the GBCA, to progress this development. Unfortunately these efforts have not yet been fulfilled as, although a horse may appear to be thirsty, it may not understand the need to come to the water trough.

Don't get me wrong, the energy and minds present at this event gave great encouragement to the fact the future of the built environment in Adelaide, at least, could be heading in the right direction. At times the banter was quite humorous with references to the purple suit worn by IDC Commissioner, Tim Horton, and the purple shirt of Professor Ian McDougall being the result of some last minute phone fashion coordination.

There were many good observations made and interesting points of view raised but it was difficult to imagine where it was all going to end up. Where to go from here or who would identify the next steps to take was, not surprisingly, unclear given the disparate interests that were present at the event and this was admitted during the 'wrap up' of proceedings.

The facilitator did a great job of wrapping up but lost most of the concentration of men in the audience when, picking up on the purple theme, mentioned she was wearing purple underwear! True or not, nobody but she knew, but I reckon it distracted around half the crowd.

What's more important?

Tony Bourke, Minister for Sustainable Population, outlined a triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social sustainability for housing in his address to the Inaugural Population Australia 2050 Summit back in June, 2010.

This seemed to me, to be a robust, simple matrix to describe, evaluate or assess issues that encompasses most of the areas of concern and/or influencing factors in the built environment debate. However, most of the discussion around how we live these days revolves around economics. Rising property values or the cost of development seem to dominate the media. Land with planning approval is worth more than virgin bushland although most of us would argue that bushland is more valuable.

An example of the dominance of economics in the triple bottom line is the current debate surrounding the Murray Darling Basin and the health of Australia's largest river system. As we speak, the social aspect, with economic undertones (viability of industry and businesses), is arguing for a reduction to base line environmental flows, regarded by experts, as necessary for survival of the rivers.

I believe that this illustrates the need for a more inclusive debate earlier in all engagement processes that addresses all aspects of the triple bottom line. In the instance of the Basin, an early engagement process that better addressed the issues of food production and survival of rural communities affected by the reallocation of precious water resources. The bottom line is, however, if the river dies, the communities along will suffer the same fate. How far can the health of our river systems be pushed? Chances are we won't know until it's too late.

There are many examples of failed civilisations around the world and all that's left of most of them are the buildings. Is this what we really want?

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Postcard from Cambodia

Adam Hunter, AILA National Vice President

In January 2010 and again in 2011, my wife, children and I travelled to Cambodia with an aid programme called See Beyond Borders.

My wife Priscilla, became interested in See Beyond Borders (SBB) an Australian NGO which has been on the ground in Cambodia for 3 years. Exploring a range of projects from building of school facilities, housing, nutrition programmes, and other capacity building work, SBB's main focus today is in the area of access to and quality of Education. The 'teach the teachers' programme comprises of workshops of three days each, run in two cities. The Khmer teachers who participate come from rural and remote areas and to attend this residential programme. Here, pairs of Australian teachers, each assisted by a local interpreter, take the Khmer teachers through a variety of activities which demonstrate techniques and methods of teaching aimed at increasing the quality of education in Cambodian rural schools.

Our trip begins in Phnom Penh, where we arrive a day or so after the rest of the group who have been spending time sight seeing and getting to know each other. There's a day to look around the capital along with the opportunity to visit facilities that the SBB programme supports. Banteay Prieb is a training center and home for young people with disabilities. The centre provides vocational skills development for amputees, and while doing so builds custom designed equipment like the amazing hand pedaled wheelchair—cycles.

The next day it's a bus to Battambang, 6 hours to the north, for the first of the three-day workshops. Battambang City is the second largest in Cambodia, but has the feel of a big country town with a slower pace than Phnom Penh, dusty streets, and lots of smiling faces. The workshops are hosted at Pety Chea, the home of a Spanish Jesuit group which provides a school that caters for children who have suffered land mine accidents (mainly boys) and polio victims (the majority girls). Pety Chea is like an Oasis with its leafy avenue and courtyards and shaded verandahs. It is here that we meet for the first time the Khmer teachers, the interpreters and the Khmer children, it is a humbling experience.

It is mainly teachers from remote and rural schools who are attending the workshops. In 2009 the Government did not pay many of the rural teachers for 6 months—the majority still kept their schools open despite the hardship. Many of these teachers are not formally trained, having only to have graduated from the next level of schooling to be able to teach that below—this is compounded by the statistic that the number of trained teachers in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge were driven out by the Vietnamese army is believe to be no more than 50.

The interpreters are amazing—mostly in their twenties, they make the workshops possible with perception, intelligence and wit. And the children steal everyone's hearts. For our young girls its a challenging experience—and a huge dose of perspective, meeting kids that have so little, that are often so physically damaged, but are so stunningly positive and courageous. They meet Amin a 21 year old (who looks 12), who lost both his legs and an arm in a landmine accident—Amin throws himself into his studies and dances like a star—nothing is going to stop him.

The running of Pety Chea is largely done by young Spaniards—generally in their twenties who have started their careers but are doing a year or two as volunteers in Cambodia. They include Lawyers, Dentists, Graphic Designers, and add to the growing group of inspiring people that are on the ground doing their bit.

We visit an experimental farm that has been set up by the Spanish Jesuit group. This farm is trialing a number of technologies that may help provide more efficient and sustainable farming. The farm provides some resources to the adjoining villages as well as employment for one local family. It is farm is run by Hernando, a Phillipino, who with an entrepreneurial flair has gathered equipment from far and wide and commits to monitoring its performance, relaying measurements and statistics in return. The farm aims to reach a point in the future where the adjoining villages are self sufficient in food staples such as rice, beef, and fruit and vegetables.

On our last night in Battambang, we attend a circus developed by a French supported Cambodian NGO called Phare Ponleu Selpak which conceived an arts school in Battambang 17 years ago. The school teaches performing arts, graphic arts and music and we see the circus under a big top. With backing by a live band the circus is as good as you would hope to see with acrobatics, juggling, comedy, and a narrative with a kick. In 2010, the group toured to France. The Khmer teachers we go with have never been to a circus before and tell us that they can't believe that their countrymen could be so talented.

From Battambang we take the 3 hour bus ride to Siem Reap—the location of Angkor Wat. The format is the same for the workshops, and the partners who are on the trip once again help with logistics, filling resource packs of dice, blocks, numbers and cards which have been sourced from Khmer businesses over the last year. Rather than bring these things from Australia, buying in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap puts money into the local economy (and saves us having to bring egg timers with suspicious looking white sand through customs).

Once the workshops are underway the partners and other travelling companions of the teachers get to travel out of the city to the location of the various other projects under way. The group might help with some concrete work or bricklaying on a construction project or chopping veggies for the nutrition programme which provides a chicken soup one day every week at one of the village schools. Despite no lack of enthusiasm its likely that the efforts of the 'B team' have probably set back those construction sites a couple of days.

At the location of the next workshops, I'm asked to help out with the building of a display wall in the garden to house a number of large earthen pots. My workmates are a farmer from Darfur in the Sudan and an Iranian shop owner taking asylum in Cambodia while their refugee claims are processed. The boys work in their dress shoes, shirts and pants which they've been given, and when we take a rest they tell me some of their stories of their families and their escapes, which as you would imagine are horrific and are beyond our understanding from the mainstream press.



Each night we have a beer on the balcony with Sister Denise Coughlan, the director of the Reflection Centre where the workshop is being held. Sr. Denise is from Brisbane and has been in Cambodia for 30+ years. She started working in the Thai/Cambodia border camps repatriating refugees back into the country. Since then she has been a frontline campaigner for the banning of land mines and cluster bombs. We find out (through others of course) that she won a Nobel Peace Prize for this work—a pretty amazing lady.

The 12 days pass quickly. Like the first trip in 2010 our experiences in Cambodia are certainly a roller coaster. The Khmer people as well as those of many nationalities that on the ground helping to build capacity and resilience certainly are a highlight. However meeting the Khmers and understanding their situation better, puts our lives and problems in pretty stark perspective. Experiencing, place and a culture in this way, there are many things that are to think about.

The Khmer interpreters are an amazing bunch, but whether their education and talents will deliver them a career as it would in Australia is not certain. For those who do complete their studies at tertiary level, even the best students, jobs are hard to come by. We were told it's common for the better Government and Private sector jobs to go the highest bribe which can often be over \$30k US.

On the second trip to Cambodia in 2011, we learn that things have not panned out so well for my wall building friends. Ali from Iran had his refugee application accepted. But despite this, he was looking at his immediate future still being in Limbo in Cambodia because of the bureaucratic maze that surrounds permanent residency. In contradiction of the seemingly gentle intelligent person we had briefly got to know, things have gone slightly off the rails for him and the future may not be in his hands. Ibrahim from the Sudan has had his claim rejected and his future is also uncertain.

Tourism to Cambodia is growing as a factor in the economy with a large number of jobs being created as tourists from all over the world travel to the temples of Angkor Wat. However evidence to date is that a

large number of the tourism and leisure facilities and businesses are owned offshore with the profits increasingly heading in that direction. Most of the jobs for Khmers are very poorly paid and often with poor conditions. There is also an awkward and unattractive contradiction in tourist boats plying the waters of the 'floating villages'. These places are by far the poorest and most depressing of the communities we've experienced and the sight of boats full of westerners, Japanese, and Koreans pointing camera lenses at the poverty in a two minute float past leaves you feeling a bit hollow. Maybe the potential growth of 'immersion travel' and 'ethical tourism' as buzz words in the travel sector offer some hope for a better balance of not only experiencing a place but putting something back.

In Phnom Penh and coastal destinations, and of course in Siem Reap a property boom is underway—and tourism related construction is growing at a frantic pace. Planning and development controls are not effective (if present at all). Corruption is no doubt prevalent, and environmental and visual controls of low priority while the investment money is flooding in.

And in a reality common to the third world where human survival is the core drive, infrastructure is poor, environmental management seen as a western luxury, and animal cruelty common place. I am hopeful that landscape architectural input can supplement the fundamental work of SBB and maybe other NGOs at a micro level to help on the environmental front. We're well placed to demonstrate how simple steps can be made to link infrastructure, food production, water and air quality improvement along with better village amenity, without additional cost and more sustainability. The opportunity is there to start affecting these issues at a small scale, as another dimension to existing projects.

Our office has had the opportunity to pursue some of these goals in some work we have been doing for an Australian NGO in i-india. We became aware of i-india project and their wonderful work through our travel there for several projects. i-india has built a residential school on the outskirts of Jaipur where street children who would otherwise be homeless

and without schooling are taken in. To date the basic buildings are in progress, but the next steps in terms of a greater level of energy and food sufficiency, and the creation of a special setting and grounds for the school are yet to be made possible. We have helped i-india develop concepts for the grounds that hopefully can be implemented through basic labour and equipment and found or donated materials—many of these principles can translate to schools in Cambodia.

Having thought after our first trip in 2010 that we might get back some time to Cambodia, now after the second trip it's impossible to imagine not going back. Talking to people back in Australia including Landscape Architects who are involved in other social justice programmes in many different places, its clear that there is a lot of energy and good will flowing with some great work going on. I hope our contributions can have an influence on these places like the amazing educational work happening with the rural teachers that I've been lucky enough to see first hand. Like our family I'm sure that those involved get more out of that experience than they can ever put in.

See also:
www.seebeyondborders.org
www.i-indiaproject.org.au
www.phareps.org

More online www.aiaa.org.au/LApapers

04



Postcard from Cambodia (continued)



Landscape Architects tackle climate change Daniel Bennett, AILA SA State Chapter

Climate Change is real: recent environmental catastrophes around the world are stark and deathly reminders of our planet demonstrating signs of stress and irreversible change. Many believe this is a direct result of our scant disregard of Earth's precious, natural, and finite resources as well as our westernised, highly consumable way of living.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects AILA, in partnership with the CSIRO, recently completed a research study of Australian and International climate change tools and strategies for responding to the impacts of climate change.

As part of preparing a more informed approach on the design of the future, AILA SA hosted a recent forum at Adelaide Zoo, March 22, to hear Graeme Hopkins of Fifth Creek Studio present *Landscape Strategies to Adapt to a Changing Climate*.

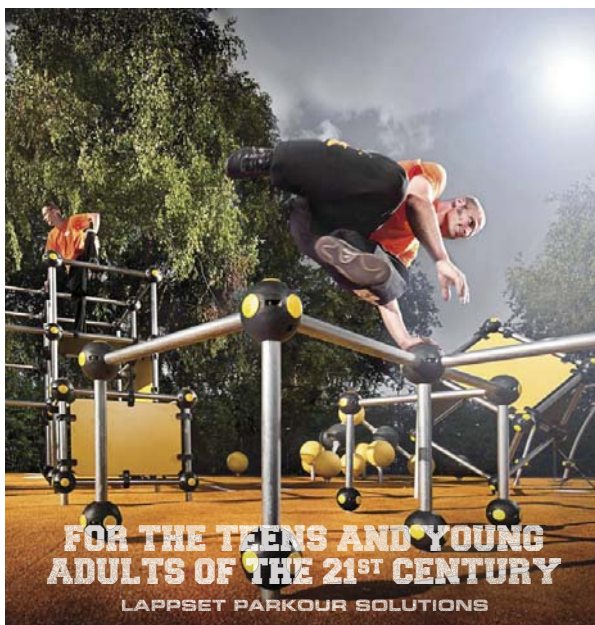
The talk explored various aspects of cities and environmental effects, including 'Cities are Urban Ecosystems', 'Cities are Water Catchment and Storage Areas', 'Physical Comfort and Climate', 'Climate Change Urban Mitigation and Adaptation Tools' and 'Living Architecture Adaptation Tools'. Graeme concluded the presentation with an informed critique of some case studies from Australia and overseas.

The thinking and examples demonstrated during the talk are a result of some lateral thought underpinned by sound research—a simple question pondered by Graeme—'where does Adelaide's CBD cleanse its stormwater' left many asking the same question with not too many answers. Graeme also observed that although many solutions are known from experience overseas there appears to be a lack of drive or will to explore the application of such solutions in a (broad) Australian context.

The audience included predominantly Landscape Architects, mostly from suburban regional councils and private practice. It became clear to me that the next session will need to expand to include architects, engineers, planners, city officials, government and allied professionals.

If, as Graeme suggested, the solutions to the crisis of climate change reside in our major cities, then representatives from all levels of Government need to get on board. Quickly.

The conversation has now started—it was a great opportunity for the profession to network and discuss this critical issue—and continue the discussion.



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06

Darwin Densification Debate

Michael White, AILA National Councillor

Recently Darwin was fortunate to have Professor Richard Weller speak at an open forum on the topic of urban densification. Richard was invited by Darwin City Council to instigate a discussion amongst the general community about what densification means to the local, regional and global populations. To the credit of Darwin City Council, Mayor Graham Sawyer opened the proceedings by stating that Council does not hold a position or an opinion of whether densification was the right direction to be taking for Darwin and the purpose of the forum was to begin entering into dialogue with concerned members of the community.

It is not often we are blessed to have highly recognised people within our profession visit Darwin and present a talk and a personal point of view. When an invitation to attend landed in my inbox I jumped at the chance. I must admit I am only vaguely aware Richard's research work and I have not read his book *Boomtown 2050*. I often read his articles in *Landscape Australia* and am impressed with the intellectual arguments put forward. I wanted to meet the man and hear what he had to say.

Surprisingly this was Richard's first visit to Darwin and he started the conversation stating firmly that he was not here to preach or tell Darwin what we should be doing. Nothing riles up a Darwin audience by having someone from *down south* telling them what they should be doing (especially when they are dressed in a suit). Richard was able to eloquently put together very clear graphical information and statistics to highlight debateable topics such as population growth, ecological footprints, urban planning, food production and the like.

I genuinely feel that landscape architects and other closely aligned professionals have a strong understanding of the impacts and associated challenges of working in an environment that has to deal with topics such as climate change, rapid growth, migrating populations, social equity and the like. The purpose of this article is not to simply regurgitate the messages that Richard Weller had to say and repeat what most of you already know, but to describe the impact the forum had on me, my colleagues and the audience.

There were approximately 80 people from varying backgrounds and interest groups. It is rare to have this amount of people attend a discussion forum in Darwin and Richard was able to keep the audience engaged throughout. He enticed the audience to speak up by throwing out lines such as *cities can't be undone when you get it wrong*, *Darwin will increase to 334,000 by 2056*, *Darwin is the hotspot in the Asia Pacific realm and sometimes you just have to take one for the team* (in response to a very typical NIMBY statement from the audience).

Darwin is very familiar with issues associated with fluctuating populations and short bursts of rapid growth. The history of social and economical growth in Darwin is entwined with significant historical events such as World War II and the bombing of Darwin, Cyclone Tracey and the soon to be arriving new liquid natural gas plant touted as the biggest single investment in Australia's history from a foreign investor. Richard was enthusiastic in saying that Darwin should embrace the inevitable growth and see it as an opportunity rather than a problem. Darwin is a young city and has an amazing opportunity right now to

learn from the mistakes and achievements from other cities to help shape its future.

One way of inciting an old-time Darwin local is to suggest that densifying the city and the surrounding suburbs can be positive and if done well will not negatively impact on 'Top End lifestyle'. Long term residents are accustomed to large lots, big backyards and no traffic and the thought of medium density or multi story development often leaves a sour taste. Not surprisingly there were a number of people referencing what they believed were poor examples of densification in the suburbs and making their position very clear; don't change the character of our suburbs and city. What was evident was that the majority of the negative comments were self-serving and they refused to look at it from the perspective of *taking one for the team* as Richard so eloquently put it.

I left the forum more enlightened about the extent of the challenges we face in dealing with population growth and the shaping of our urban settlements. Richard was able to instil a sense of hope and enthusiasm that it is not all doom and gloom and that we have the tools to meet the challenges and address them in practical and innovative ways. As the NT representative on the AILA National Council I am well aware of the dedicated work being done to prepare policies, guidelines and frameworks to aid landscape architects tackle the challenges we face in our everyday work. I commend Darwin City Council for showing the maturity and leadership to instigate a conversation on a very touchy topic in Darwin.

transform

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AILA National Council Elections

Call for nominations for the AILA National Council 2011—2013

Nominations are now open for all the positions on the AILA National Council for the period 2011–2013.

Nominations to be received by COB Friday 22 July 2011.

Nominations to be mailed or emailed (as pdf) to the AILA National Office.

Nominations Forms available:
www.aila.org.au/agm

Please discuss any nominations with your state chapter executive.

BLOOM

Call for Projects for a Landscape and Health Exhibition

In May 2012, the Gallery of Australian Design will be launching BLOOM, an exhibition curated by Gweneth Leigh in partnership with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

BLOOM will present landscapes which demonstrate how our built environment impacts our health and well being.

- Have you projects relating to the theme that we could feature in the exhibition?
- Do you want exposure to a national and international audience?
- Then read go online and read more: www.aila.org.au/bloom

Closing date: 1st August

Project material will be selected on the basis of relevance to the theme of the exhibition and quality of images.

07



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