

sustainable settlement green infrastructure

Place & Placemaking



Australian Institute
of Landscape Architects

National Policy Statement

The places where we live, work and go about our daily lives have a powerful impact on our quality of life. A place is a location with real meaning – it connects us to our history and provides a link to future aspirations.

Building long-term, sustainable urban centres of the future is dependent upon creating an effective relationship between private and public spaces. Such places must provide for uses and activities that foster the physical, mental, social, cultural and economic happiness and wellbeing of people – as an individual and within a community.

Creating such a place involves much more than constructing a landmark building, designing a public square or implementing a street-planting scheme. It's about a long-term commitment towards achieving a successful balance between the physical attributes, the social and economic vitality, and spiritual qualities of a place.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Placemaking should be guided by a vision – a 'framework of possibilities' informed by the history, values, experience and aspirations of the local community. It should clearly identify and articulate a sense of place which is specific, dynamic, relevant and unique.
- The vision should also encompass a concise set of key performance indicators by which to measure the development, growth and success of a place – & which people across community and ages can own and pursue.
- Sustainability objectives should be drivers of decision-making, and apply across social, economic and environmental domains.
- Placemaking strategies should aim to work 'with the grain' of the existing physical, social and economic fabric - to respect, reflect and build upon existing positive values identified on site.
- Landscape character, quality and function should be articulated as an underpinning framework for all placemaking approaches.
- Integrated design, planning, governance and management approaches should be employed as key mechanisms for implementation and delivery of the above principles in practice.

The Three Key Components of Placemaking

In order to create successful places which both respond to and enhance their particular landscape and cultural context, place makers must artfully integrate three key components -physical form, cultural activation and effective governance.

1. Physical Form

The making of a place is about the form, texture, function, and interrelationships between the physical attributes of a development – the buildings, the spaces, the materials, the details on the ground, the level and mix of urban grain. This is the foundation upon which a place can become activated and evolve over time.

2. Cultural Activation

The physical attributes of a development are enriched and made meaningful by its uses, activities and culture. These things start to fulfil the potential of the place and what it could be – i.e. a place that is attractive, interesting, fun, popular and activated with people. Successful places are those which support a broad range of physical and social human needs and aspirations.

3. Effective Governance

The long-term success and sustainability of a development depends upon effective stewardship & governance – by the authorities that govern it and also by the community. Effective management delivers a ‘closed-loop’ cycle to Place Making, as community ownership and government leadership grows and adapts with its place over time.

A Strategic Approach To Placemaking

Specifically, initiating an effective strategic place making process will require broad and detailed initiatives – nurtured in its delivery and governance to establish both its local identity and regional connectivity for a new community. For a ‘Place Making Strategy’ to be successful it must contain a number of ingredients including:

Framework

A Place Making Strategy should be located within - and responsive to - a broader regional and urban sustainability framework. This framework should be used to guide and inform the development and application of local sustainability strategies for a broad range of developments, including place making projects.

Sustainability

A Place Making Strategy must ensure the sustainability (environmental, social and economic) of a development. It should align goals and targets for sustainability with regional objectives, and apply measurements and indicators that are relevant to the specifics of a place - taking into account factors relating to local context, capacity and aspirations.

Relevance

A Place Making Strategy must be relevant to its context. It must be specific to the site and the people who use it. It must address their past and present condition and their future aspirations. While there are certain elements that will contribute to creating a successful place (the physical place, activation and management), how these elements will be articulated will vary according to context.

Liveability

A Place Making Strategy must enhance the ‘liveability’ of a place. Place Making is more than just delivering visual amenity and applying social programming. Much of successful place making rests in the ‘hidden’ values of a place - in particular, the health and well-being of its natural and built environments and its community.

Design Guidelines

A Place Making Strategy should operate at a local level and be driven by a set of locally-derived design guidelines, aimed at supporting local needs and aspirations. These should be collaboratively developed and implemented by a range of professions including designers, engineers, artists, developers, planners and marketeers to create, activate, and manage the development – to transform spaces into place.

This Policy statement is part of the AILA's Sustainable Settlement suite of Policy Statements on Australian Landscape Architecture, the profession committed to the creation of meaningful and enjoyable outdoor places and to the sustainable management of our built and natural environment.

More details on AILA National Policy Statements: www.aila.org.au/policies

All queries on National Policy should be directed to the AILA's CEO.

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