

sustainable settlement green infrastructure

CITIES ARE EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

AILA joins with other partners to promote the future of our cities

The critical issues of urban design and development are historically often framed by the Australian media in terms of partisan politics and old social stereotypes. Typically, it is reported that one side 'supports' suburban sprawl and the other density.

At a time when our cities face the challenges of rapid growth and environmental limits, such reporting sells short the complexity of our cities and the diversity of our communities. This denies our cities their great potential to change for the better.

Our cities are our greatest resource. They are not just short-term political game-boards. They are complex social, economic and ecological systems facing huge challenges. With creative thinking, careful planning and good design the cities of our future can promote the health and wellbeing of all Australians. They can enhance our quality of life and support a renewed economic prosperity centred on innovation.

Over time, people's lifestyles change and this requires different forms of housing. Our cities should respond to the diversity of the community. City size is not a function of land area - it is a function of environmental, social, economic and infrastructural capacities.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) believes - as do urban planners and urban designers the world over - that in certain well-defined areas, a more compact urban form will deliver positive cultural, environmental and economic benefits. AILA also holds that where it is necessary to develop new land on the edges of our existing cities and regional centres, we have an obligation to ensure this is done in the most socially and environmentally responsible manner, with a new respect for our landscape and biodiversity.

Most critically, AILA believes that achieving genuinely liveable and sustainable cities - including a diversity of housing choices - demands well-informed political leadership and a bi-partisan approach to urban policy across all tiers of government.

AILA supports the development of a National Urban Policy to inform a long-term strategic vision for Australia's urban centres. We also support a broad public conversation around the future of Australia's cities and what decisions may be necessary to achieve urban development for current and future generations which creatively balances understanding and expression of natural and cultural processes to support a higher quality of life for all Australians

This statement draws on the text used by a coalition of built environment professional organisations, agencies and individuals for a statement in a national paper in December 2010.

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

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

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National Statement