



Speech Transcript: Shaun Walsh addressing the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Better Cities

28 November 2018

Good evening, my name is Shaun Walsh and I am proudly the National President of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

I would like to firstly acknowledge the Ngunnawal people who are the traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting and pay respect to the Elders of the Ngunnawal Nation both past and present. I extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in attendance today.'

It is my pleasure to welcome the co-conveners of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Better Cities, all other representatives of government, special guests and of course, all of our colleagues who are working on making cities and towns across the country better places for the communities who occupy them.

I am very pleased in a few minutes to introduce Roderick Simpson, who is the inaugural Environment Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission to provide our key address, but firstly wanted to talk about green infrastructure,

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects is calling for the development of a National Green Infrastructure Strategy to be led by the Federal Government and we are willing to be a key collaborator in that process.

Our society and settlements are facing considerable issues including dealing with climate change, public health and settlement patterns,

As an example the Australian Institute released research this week that indicated that extreme heat will have profound impacts on people, industries and ecosystems in Western Sydney. CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology projections estimate that the average number of days over 35 could increase by up to five times without strong climate policies from a historical average of 11 up to 52 days by 2090. Some parts of Western Sydney will experience even more extreme heat days.

In my role in Brisbane managing South Bank Parklands in Brisbane we have seen increase in swimmer numbers at the popular beach from 450,000 to 850,000 over the last 5 years due the increasing length of our hot summers and people seeking temperature relief in the evening, which has significant impacts on our operating budget.

In regard to public health, the Australian Medical Association consider that obesity is the biggest public health challenge facing the Australian population, and called on the Federal Government to take national leadership in implementing a multi-faceted strategy to address the serious health threat that obesity poses to individuals, families, and communities across the nation.

Recent media statements from the federal government seek migrant settlements in our regional areas to reduce congestion in our cities and assist in liveability.



The solution to all of this is green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure can:

- Protect ecological processes to mitigate against climate change
- Provide settlement patterns that can better respond to increasing temperatures and resilient to climate variability
- Provide settlement patterns that are attractive and energy efficient, and promote settlement outside of cities by having high amenity
- encourage outdoor activity and recreation to improve our public health

Around the world we can see how cities that have incorporated green infrastructure strategies into planning and development have greatly improved their social, economic and environmental performance.

In Australia, the challenges of growing our cities while reducing our carbon footprint will demand new forms of infrastructure development and land management in our metropolitan regions. The development of a national green infrastructure strategy will provide guidance towards legislative frameworks and collaborative approaches between different level of government to help address these challenges in a cost effective and socially responsible manner.

A national Green Infrastructure strategy will recognise the economic and social value of protecting and enhancing high value urban and peri-urban landscapes for water management, fresh food production, biodiversity conservation and healthy active living.

AILA calls on the government to provide leadership through the department of infrastructure to bring together key stakeholders, state and local governments, industry bodies and community representatives to develop a national green infrastructure strategy to secure the future of our settlement and societies.

AILA would like to look forward to continuing this conversation with all of you in 2019 and wishes to be a key collaborator in this process with other agencies and bodies for an integrated approach.

I would now like to introduce Roderick Simpson. Rod is the inaugural Environment Commission of Greater Sydney Commission and he will present on how and why starting with a consideration of landscape is both a necessity and an aspiration for the remaking, improvement and planning of cities.

Please joining me in welcoming Rod to the microphone.

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