



Australian Institute
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AILA: Yarra River's health represents the health of our city

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) urges the Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) to be brave in its protection of the Yarra, and consider the careful management of the river - from its source to the sea. AILA commends the Minister for Planning on committing to implement stronger and consistent planning policy and controls along the Yarra, but proposes further investment and streamlined governance is needed to improve its overall environmental quality and secure its amenity.

In the first major 'city conversation' event to celebrate AILA's 50th anniversary year, over 80 senior landscape architects and allied built environment professionals joined the Yarra Riverkeeper, Andrew Kelly, on a river tour to see first hand the pressures facing Melbourne's principal waterway. Experts from agencies who manage the Yarra system and landscape, city designers, planners, and cultural historians discussed the importance of the river in our city's culture, its history and its future.

Dr Meredith Dobbie, Chair of the AILA's Environment Committee stated that *'the health of the river represents the health of the city as a whole. If the river habitat is ailing, or is eroded by poor quality development which disrupts natural systems and the public's enjoyment of the Yarra, it will impact on the future health and well-being of our city and its growing population.'* *'A depleted Yarra demonstrates a lack of value we place on the natural systems that sustain us'.*

AILA states:

- The Yarra should be secured as a public asset, and not privatised or eroded by poor quality and over-scaled development.
- The story of the Yarra in the culture of our city, and how it connects towns, places and people should be reclaimed, elevated and celebrated in public consciousness, through campaigns and media.
- Indigenous cultural land history is the basis of this story and should inform our approach to future management and understanding of the Yarra.
- An integrated management plan, with clear roles and responsibilities of public agencies, is essential to sustain the health of the Yarra and its tributaries, including the water quality, and its riparian landscape. The plan should extend from the Yarra's source to the sea.
- Public access to the river should be carefully and creatively designed to 'touch the earth lightly', and not erode the natural beauty of the Yarra.

AILA will prepare a formal submission to the Yarra River Protection MAC in March 2016.

About AILA

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak body for the landscape architecture profession in Australia. Representing over 2,500 members, we champion a landscape of liveability and quality design for our streetscapes, public open spaces, stronger communities and greater environmental stewardship. Our members include both Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, who are experienced designers of apartment developments from small to large scale.

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