



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

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Penrith City Council  
601 High Street  
PENRITH NSW 2750  
citystrategy@penrith.city

**Recommendations in Response to the Draft Employment Lands Strategy and the Penrith Green Grid Strategy by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) NSW.**

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members with training, recognition, and a community of practice, to share knowledge, ideas and action. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design and planning of the natural and built environment.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 1,600 members and promotes excellence in planning, design and management for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability through a unique approach to planning issues via innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, landscape architects contribute towards better environmental, social and economic outcomes for all Australians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft **Employment Lands Strategy and the Penrith Green Grid Strategy**. AILA is a strong supporter of, Premiers Priorities of Greening Our Cities and Greener Canopy, and the draft Design and Place SEPP which aims to strengthen the value of planning tools such as the Green Grid when planning increased open space. AILA supports this strategy as demonstrating to other Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in NSW a clear road map toward achieving the NSW government goals above. The strategy is a positive and a possibly innovative step forward that other LGAs in NSW could follow when realising the state government's priorities.

AILA prepared the following high-level comments highlighting some of the strategy's strong points and opportunities where the strategy could possibly be strengthened:

#### STRENGTHS

*Quality of the Document and Breadth of the Analysis.* The AILA commends Council and the authors on a well-considered strategy and document with high quality graphics that clearly present a large amount of detailed analysis in a relatively compact form.

We understand and support the strategy as a method for prioritising funding across what is a very large Local Government Area, at varying stages of development.

AILA see the design of green infrastructure (open space, urban tree canopy and blue and green grid elements) as fundamental to the definition of place. The prioritising of links to future opportunities such as Penrith Lakes and the Nepean River which could become a primary recreational open space for the district. Coupled with a focus on cooling whilst restoring and expanding the green and blue natural systems is an essential feature of this strategy and we applaud this focus.

Highlights the opportunity to elevate the seriousness that all levels of government should be placing on achieving and sustaining Green Infrastructure.

The strategy aligns with AILA's core values and initiatives such as *Living Streets Paper* for established suburbs.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN FURTHER

*The strategy should make clearer the ecological values underpinning it.* While the Strategy notes that the Green Grid is intended to "... enhance biodiversity and ensure ecological resilience", the emphasis in identifying priority works focuses on connectivity and recreational open space values.

Further, the description of the category rating score in Section 6.1 notes that it ranged from 0-2 for each value. "The higher score of 2 was allocated to recreational, transport and active transport links as the Green Grid is primarily to connect open space networks to the population." This indicates that ecological values were given a lower score, but it is not clear how the various values were weighted relative to each other.

The Strategy would be significantly strengthened if there was an ecological section that provided an explanation of how the protection, restoration and management of ecological values have been incorporated in the Strategy and how they have been balanced with the connectivity and recreational values of the Green Grid.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment on this important and potentially industry leading document and we welcome any further discussion.

Yours sincerely,



TANYA WOOD - AILA NSW PRESIDENT

Letter prepared by: Sophie Zaccone, with comments from Noel Corkery and Lee Andrews