



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

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Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Recommendations in Response to the Draft Bays West Place Strategy by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) NSW Chapter Advocacy Committee

PREFACE

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for the 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 Bays West Place Strategy and have prepared this document to highlight the themes, principals and moves within the plan that we believe are important to deliver and prioritise. As such we outline the following recommendations.

THEMES AND DIRECTIONS

Design of places and spaces.

As Landscape Architects we are committed to designing and creating better places in Australia. The way that Bays West is experienced for all people who live, work and/or visit the precinct is of utmost importance. We stress the significance of prioritising quality design and sustainability in the overall urban structure and the supporting green and social infrastructure. This infrastructure strives to integrate quality of life outcomes as well as the natural, industrial, maritime and cultural heritage. This place is an opportunity for the DPIE to promote high quality sustainable, design and diversity in spatial and built form outcomes.

There is concern that the structure plan is targeted on maximum commercial yield possibly at the expense of the creation of liveable communities. There is no specific information to accompany Direction 2 in which dwelling numbers, typology and maximum heights are defined. Structure plan illustrates 5 zones of taller buildings with no height specified, which is a substantial shift from the dwelling typology of Balmain that infers a closer relationship to the Pyrmont typology.

Direction 5 promises a people focussed approach, but no reference is made in the document as to anticipated population intended to be accommodated in the Bays West Precinct or their likely makeup to underpin decisions on design outcomes and required social and green infrastructure.

The AILA see the design of green infrastructure (open space, urban tree canopy and blue and green grid elements) along with the revealing of connecting with country knowledge as fundamental to the definition of place. As identified by the DPIE in Direction 6 and 7, the promotion of diversity and the improving of water quality whilst restoring and expanding the green and blue natural systems is an essential feature of this development as well as ensuring the precinct's carbon neutrality and management of waste and energy.

Green Infrastructure Network needs to be developed parallel and integrated with both traditional infrastructure and respond to place. Further it needs to directly respond to the social fabric of the place which is not clearly described in the draft Place Strategy.

Transport and Movement.

Moving of people, into, across and through the site is a fundamental factor in determining its ongoing success. Improving its contextual connectivity as well as intuitive and easy active transport linkages, including urban layout connections back into Balmain, Lilyfield & Annandale is integral. As is a focus on the continuum of foreshore path connections and the removal of existing barriers inhibiting the flow of access to the site.

There is limited information as to road network proposed and how the active transport system is integrated and complements this network.

Heritage and culture.

Revealing history and culture through the spatial layout and design of green infrastructure including public spaces is a method of integrating understandings of place - a way to ensure there is a voice for all in the places we share. AILA highlights the importance of both directions gathered by this theme. There is a real potential for this site to vibrate with diversity of use, commanding rich layers of creativity, heritage and culture and we support this direction, sharing these visions for the place.

Further to this, AILA draws attention to the importance of high-quality design of green infrastructure that honours both First Nations history of the place whilst also ensuring an inclusive, collaborative process. AILA highlights the need for community-defined protocol for culturally safe engagement with Local First Nations knowledge holders and communities, ensuring reciprocal benefits for collaboration and involvement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our input and we welcome any further discussion as the strategy develops.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Andrews', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

LEE ANDREWS - AILA NSW PRESIDENT

Submission Team

This submission has been prepared by a working group of AILA NSW members, co-ordinated by Sophie Zaccone and comprising Julie Lee and Ingrid Mather.