



8 September 2022

University of Adelaide
Professor Katrina Falkner
Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology
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Australian Institute of Landscape Architects feedback on the Draft Change Proposal

Dear Professor Katrina Falkner,

We thank the University for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 'SET School Alignment – Draft Change Proposal' (the Proposal) dated August 2022.

This letter outlines our request to seek specific clarity on the future of the Landscape Architecture program, which is not mentioned in the Draft Change Proposal in any detail. We are concerned that the Draft Change Proposal is silent on the Landscape Architecture program, its structure and operation.

About AILA and the University of Adelaide

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) leads a dynamic and respected profession, creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet.

AILA is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture in Australia, championing quality design for public spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. Incorporated in 1966, AILA represents over 2,500 members across Australia and promotes excellence in planning and designing for life outdoors.

AILA is the accrediting body for all Landscape Architecture programs in Australia.

AILA's strategic plan guides everything we do, and is underpinned by three core values:

1. Climate Positive Design
2. Gender Equity
3. Reconciliation and Connection to Country

Our strategic plan can be found [here](#).

AILA's South Australian Chapter and the University of Adelaide have a long, well-established, and productive relationship, which has been honed and refined since the *Masters of Landscape Architecture* was established over 25 years ago.

There is a proud cohort of AILA members in South Australia who have successfully completed their studies in Landscape Architecture at the University of Adelaide, and many more have taken their careers interstate and overseas.

In February this year AILA wrote to the University to plan our second annual University/Industry 'Roundtable' following its establishment and the first Roundtable in 2021.

The key discussion points and agreed outcomes from the 2021 Roundtable were:

- innovating locally with private practice and trialling research
- understanding and strengthening of local cultural values
- working together on cross cultural competencies within curriculum
- strengthening connections to biodiversity and science



- exploring opportunities for more alignment with students in engineering in relation to Green Infrastructure
- connecting to high school students in collaborative ways with University and AILA SA to promote career pathways for Landscape Architects at The University of Adelaide.

AILA is committed to working with the University of Adelaide collaboratively to promote the career pathway for Landscape Architecture with local students, particularly following the pandemic and closure of Australia's international borders.

We have also been in recent contact to highlight the chronic shortage of Landscape Architects across Australia which remains a critical issue, and how the University and AILA can grow the profession, sustain and grow the Landscape Architecture program, and provide a link between industry and the University.

Review of the Draft Change Proposal

We have reviewed the Draft Change Proposal.

AILA supports:

- improving the collaboration and synergies across learning, teaching and research
- cross-school affiliations in the context of climate change
- interdisciplinary teaching and common projects within courses
- improved promotion and visibility of disciplines within the structure
- recognition of expertise and academic excellence
- improved transparency

AILA's principal concern is that the Proposal does not outline the Landscape Architecture program anywhere which has led to speculation about the future of the program entirely.

As a result, we have been in contact with the Interim Head of School, who confirmed that the University has no intention of closing the Landscape Architecture program and suggested the Landscape Architecture program will sit under the Architecture discipline in the proposed School of Architecture and Civil Engineering (ACE).

Therein lies our concern: whilst we have had verbal assurances that the Landscape Architecture program is not directly under threat of closure, there is no detail in the Proposal anywhere that outlines its future nor where it will reside.

Our concerns are:

- **Confirmation of Landscape Architecture program**
 - We remain concerned that future of the Landscape Architecture program is not assured. We seek urgent assurances that the program is not being closed.
- **Confirmation of the location and structure of the Landscape Architecture program**
 - The Landscape Architecture program is not mentioned anywhere in the Proposal, there is no detail of the new structure and how the Landscape Architecture program will operate and function.
 - The promotion and visibility of Landscape Architecture is not evident. This impacts the ability of optimise engagement with the Landscape Architecture industry and other external partners.
 - This also impacts school students as they explore career options and reduces or potentially eliminates Landscape Architecture as a career.
- **Accreditation**



- The Landscape Architecture course naming, positioning, structure and AQF all have a direct impact on accreditation by AILA and remains a major concern and needs to be considered in any proposed restructure.
- **Loss of agency**
 - The loss of the Landscape Architecture program identity within the SET is a major concern. We are unclear where the program will reside and this has impacts to staffing, program budgets and promotion.
- **Potential loss of Industry/University connection**
 - There is no evidence in the Proposal how the restructure genuinely improves the delivery of services, nor how this strengthens the relationship between the industry and the University at a time where research and industry partnerships and demonstration of societal impacts are key.

We remain concerned that there has been no formal request from the University to AILA on the proposed restructure despite our strong relationship over 20 years, and we seek:

- formal confirmation that the Landscape Architecture program is not facing closure
- clarity on where the Landscape Architecture program resides in the proposed restructure
- clarity on the name and structure of the Landscape Architecture program in the proposed restructure as this impacts accreditation of the program

Finally, we reinforce the demand for Landscape Architects across Australia remains a major issue and opportunity, and that further investment into and recognition of the pathways to becoming a Landscape Architect is one of AILA's most important strategies in our current strategic plan.

We look forward to hearing more on our concerns and once again take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of our relationship with the University of Adelaide and the Landscape Architecture program, its staff, and its students.

Yours sincerely

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CC

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