



AILA 2026
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE
AWARDS

awards
policy

Landscape Architecture Awards Policy



1. Introduction

The AILA Awards program has been a strong element of AILA's annual activities for over 40 years. The program underwent a review in 2015, resulting in a new program termed the AILA National Landscape Architecture Awards.

This policy aims to provide guidance to entrants, jurors, staff, and executives on the agreed rules that govern the awards program.

2. Objectives

The AILA National Landscape Architecture Awards has the following objectives;

- To recognise achievements that display excellence in thinking, leadership, and results;
- To recognise achievements across the spectrum of practice and across all scales and contexts;
- To use these achievements to effectively advocate for the landscape architecture profession;
- To provide a vehicle for profiling the profession with the community and stakeholders via the media;
- To use the program to build relationships with client groups, allied professions, and the community.

3. Overview

The National Landscape Architecture Awards are an integrated, hierarchical program resulting in annual awards at national level.

- Chapters may elect to run their Chapter program every second year if it is not deemed feasible to run annually.
- Chapters will conduct their Awards programs to assign a category in alignment with each of the National Awards categories.
- Chapters wishing to acknowledge excellence outside of this structure may create additional categories, but winners in such categories will not be eligible for consideration at any higher level.
- Entries in all categories are made through a common entry system.
- Only projects awarded by Chapters will be considered for a National Award in the same year.
- Projects can not be withdrawn by the entrant after they have progressed to the National Award level.
- Projects that have received an award at either the Chapter or National level are ineligible for submission to future Awards programs. Only projects that have not received an award may be resubmitted.
- Entries may be judged at the National Awards level only once.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Eligible Entrants

Entry into the AILA National Landscape Architecture Awards is limited to a person, or a team where the landscape architectural component is under the substantive control or direction of a person, who is:

- Full AILA Member - must be registered and a current financial member at the time of judging for both Chapter Awards and National Awards, including where judging occurs in a new financial year. Membership must also be current at the time of accepting any Award.
- If the Entrant is practice-based, the Principal of the practice, is an owner or formal licensee of the copyright in the work being entered.
- AILA Affiliate (LA) financial members are eligible to enter into the Research, Policy and Communications Category only. Additional supporting material to qualify entry is required. See 2.2F in Entry Guide.

Where the entrant does not own the copyright, the entry must be accompanied by a written agreement from the copyright holder stating that the work may be entered for an award.

4.2 Eligible Projects

To be eligible for entry into the AILA Landscape Architecture Awards, projects (where applicable) must have at least reached practical completion and be in all other respects complete to the point of enabling a proper assessment by the Jury, no later than 31 December in the year preceding the year of judging.

Projects that are not complete may not be considered for an award.

Projects commissioned by AILA through an organisation or committee may not be considered for an award.

4.3 Conditions of Entry

Before an entry can be considered for an award the entrant must have, by the required date:

- Submitted all required entry information, materials and images
- Provided all required consents and declarations in relation to the entry
- Paid all required entry fees.

4.4 Entry Guide

Detailed conditions of entry and instructions for entering the AILA National Landscape Architecture Awards are set out in the Entry Guide.

4.5 Authorship and Attribution

Entrants must provide accurate Entry information and correctly attribute all individuals and organisations that contributed to the project. This includes ensuring that all Landscape Architect Practices involved in the project are fully and correctly listed in the Entrant practice/company name/s for publication field, whether the entry is submitted by a Landscape Architecture practice or by a Client.

Accurate attribution ensures the Awards properly celebrate the collaborative nature of landscape architecture and recognises the professionals responsible for delivering design excellence. Any entry containing inaccurate information or incorrect attribution may be disqualified.

Specifically, entries must provide the following:

- Collaborating Landscape Architect individual(s) or practice
- Client details and client contact
- Consultants or previous design teams when a project had earlier stages of work
- Cultural collaborators or partners (this may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners as corporation, organisation or individuals)
- Collaborators
- Project team members; and
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country where the project is located.

4.6 Location

Except with the written approval of the National President, entries will be considered in the Chapter in which the project is located, regardless of the business address of the entrant.

Any project located outside Australia will only be eligible for an award in the International category and cannot submit their project into any other category.

4.7 Entry eligibility

Entrants are responsible for ensuring their entry meets the eligibility requirements outlined in the Awards Policy and the Awards Entry Guide.

Chapters are responsible for checking the current membership status of the entrant(s) and the eligibility of the entry according to Policy and the Entry Guide.

Chapters are responsible for supplying entry material to the AILA National office for the National Jury.

5. Structure of the program

The AILA National Landscape Architecture Awards has two stages, both occurring annually, where applicable. The first is a Chapter program and the second is the National program.

5.1 Conduct and Timing of Annual Programs

The following critical annual dates apply:

31 March | Project completion.

1 June | Entries open. (For a minimum of 5 weeks)

September | Announcement/presentation of Chapter winners.

1 September | Final date for Chapter winners and content to be supplied to National Jury. (TBC)

Mid October | Final date for National Jury decisions. (TBC)

1 November | Final date for National Jury citations. (TBC)

November | Announcement of National winners (TBC)

5.2 Award Structure

Awards in each Category are based on a two-tier system, in decreasing order of merit and are judged in accordance with the Core Criteria, 'leadership, thinking, results' in accordance with Section 8 of this policy and the corresponding criteria and indicators within the Jury Guide. If there are two (2) or more entries submitted into a category, then the Jury must award either an Award of Excellence or Landscape Architecture Award.

Note: if a Chapter Jury strongly feels no entry in a category should receive an award, they may apply in writing to the National Jury Chair for an exception, providing clear feedback as to their reasons. An award must be granted at a National level where there are two (2) or more entries in a category. If the National Jury strongly feels no entry in a category should receive an award, they may apply in writing to the Chair of the AILA Board for an exception, providing clear feedback as to their reasons.

The tiers are as follows:

a. Award of Excellence

- The first and highest award in each category
- The award is given to the work judged to be the most significant for the advancement of landscape architecture in each category.
- There is only one winner of the Award in each category in any year.
- The Jury is not obligated to award an Award of Excellence in any category.

b. Landscape Architecture Award

- This award is the second tier from an Award of Excellence.
- Demonstrating a high level of consummate skill that contributes to the advancement of landscape architecture.
- Projects given an Award are the best projects in each category that have not won an Award of Excellence.
- More than one Award may be given in a category.

c. People's Choice Award

- Chapters can decide if they want to hold a People's Choice Award and the way in which they run the process.

d. Regional Achievement Award

- This is a cross category award given in recognition of landscape architecture that has made a significant difference to improving the healthy communities and/or built and natural environments of regional Australia.
- Chapter Executives in collaboration with the Chapter Jury will determine the eligible key regions for their Chapter program.
- The Regional Achievement Award progresses through to the National Awards and is assessed against other regional achievement awards.
- This award can be given in combination with another award and in this case it would be elevated to the National Awards as both categories the project was awarded in.
- More than one Regional Achievement Award may be given in any chapter.
- Chapter and National Juries may choose not to award a Regional Achievement Award.

e. Climate Positive Design Award

- This is a cross category award given in recognition of landscape architecture projects that have shown significant contribution to climate positive design.
- The project must show a strong effort toward climate mitigation (emission reduction), climate adaptation (such as consideration for urban heat, climate resilient cities, adapting to sea level rise and long-term bioclimatic shifts) while also contributing to social, environmental, and / or economic benefits. Refer to AILA's Climate Positive Design Action Plan for Australian landscape architects.
- The Climate Positive Design Award progresses through to the National Awards and is assessed against other Climate Positive Design Award entries.
- This award can be given in combination with another award and in this case it would be elevated to the National Awards as both categories the project was awarded in.
- More than one Climate Positive Design Award may be given in any chapter. Chapter and National Juries may choose not to award a Climate Positive Design Award.

6. Juries

6.1 National and Chapter Jury Selection

The National Jury is appointed by the AILA Board at the earliest possible convenience following the conclusion of the preceding National Awards ceremony. This reduces the likelihood of conflict of interest with Jury members at the Chapter level (and subsequently the National) and provides a longer lead time to profile the National Jury.

To facilitate openness and transparency, members, Chapters and the AILA Board will be encouraged to nominate prospective jurors through a call for expressions

of interest for Chapter and National Juries.

Landscape architects on the National and Chapter Juries will be AILA members.

National Jurors will not serve more than two (2) years consecutively. Chapter Jurors shall not serve on a Chapter Jury for more than three (3) years consecutively.

The National Jury Chair will meet with the Chapter Jury Chairs at the commencement of the process to ensure clarity and alignment in the process and judging criteria.

6.2 National Jury Composition

The AILA Board will appoint a National Jury Chair.

If the immediate past President can serve on the Jury, they shall be the Chair. If the Immediate Past President cannot serve on the Jury, then the President will appoint a Chair.

The composition of the Jury will be determined by the National Jury Chair with the approval of the National President. The AILA Board will endorse the National Jury prior to entries opening.

The Jury composition is to demonstrate diversity and equitable representation in age, gender, cultural background, location and professional experience.

The National Jury will comprise of a minimum of four (4) and maximum of seven (7) members and include:

- minimum of three (3) landscape architects who could be:
 - an AILA Board member (at the time of final judging)
 - the Chair of the previous National Jury
 - a LA from a firm who has previously won an Award of Excellence
 - a regional representative
 - a public sector representative
 - a small practice representative
 - an academic
 - a graduate or emerging landscape architect
- minimum one (1) allied professional, government or media representative
- minimum one (1) Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative
- additional members can be added at the discretion of the Chair and by resolution of the Board.

6.3 National Jury Process

The process of judging nominees in each category is determined by the National Jury, but will generally be by consensus and include as a minimum:

- consideration of all entry material for each entry against the Evaluation Criteria;
- determination of an agreed shortlist in each category, based on the submitted entry material;
- preparation of a written citation for each awarded project, agreed by a majority of National Jury members.

Information on Chapter Award winners will be made available confidentially to the National Jury as soon as Chapter decisions are confirmed, and National Jury shortlisting will occur as soon as possible after all Chapter Award winners are determined. Site visits will not occur for the National Awards.

The National Jury may obtain expert technical advice to assist judging of entries in specialist areas.

All decisions and outputs of the National Jury will be kept strictly confidential until announced at the National Awards presentation event.

All decisions made by the National Jury throughout the judging process will remain confidential. Any questions raised by members contrary to this must be facilitated through the Jury Chair and guided by the National President/Board.

All entries should be displayed to the public where possible and utilise digital social media resources to promote the projects.

Winners will have a citation prepared by the Jury, but no other feedback written, or verbal will be provided to entrants.

6.4 Chapter Jury Composition

A Chapter Jury Chair will be appointed by the Chapter President in consultation with the Profile Committee (if applicable). The composition of the Jury will be determined by the Chapter President in consultation with the Chapter Jury Chair.

The Chapter Executive will endorse the Chapter Jury prior to calling for entries.

The Jury composition is to demonstrate diversity and equitable representation in age, gender, cultural background, location and professional experience. Chapter Juries should include (where available) an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander designer or representative on their jury.

The Chapter jury will comprise of a minimum of four (4) and maximum of seven (7) members including:

- i. minimum three (3) landscape architects who could be:
 - a. the Chapter President (at the time of judging)
 - b. the chair of the previous jury
 - c. LA from a firm who has previously won an Award of Excellence
 - d. a public sector representative
 - e. an interstate representative
 - f. an academic
 - g. a graduate or emerging landscape architect
- ii. minimum one (1) - where available - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative
- iii. minimum one (1) allied professional, government or media representative.

6.5 Chapter Jury Process

- The judging process adopted by Chapter juries will reflect the process required of the National jury, except that shortlisting of entries is not mandatory.

- All entries in a category may be required to present or submit to interview (either publicly or to the jury alone) and all entries in a category may be visited (however site visits are not mandatory).
- All entries should be displayed to the public where possible and utilise digital social media resources to promote the projects.
- The jury processes adopted in a Chapter should be consistent from year to year. Chapter Awards winners list to be endorsed by National Jury Chair.
- Smaller Chapters may share a jury with a larger Chapter if the time and costs are prohibitive.
- All decisions made by the Chapter Jury throughout the judging process will remain confidential. Any questions raised by members contrary to this must be facilitated through the Jury Chair and guided by the National Jury Chair and AILA President.
- Winners will have a citation prepared by the jury, but no other feedback written, or verbal will be provided to entrants.

6.6 National and Chapter Jury Conflict of Interest

- Jurors must declare any perceived conflict of interest regarding an entry.
- In the event a conflict is identified, the juror must be removed from deliberations of that category, and not participate or have any knowledge of the deliberations or awarded projects during jury discussions.
- Should a jury member have conflicts across more than four (4) categories they may be required to be removed from the jury.
- If a National Jury Chair is conflicted for a category their conflicts will be presented to the rest of the jury to review and discussed with the AILA President and CEO.
- If a conflict is declared the Jury Chair will nominate a chairperson from the jury to coordinate discussion for that category.
- Chapter Jury Conflicts will be reviewed by the Chapter Jury Chair and National Jury Chair.
- If a Chapter Jury Chair is conflicted for a category their conflicts will be presented to the rest of the Chapter Jury for review and discussed with the National Jury Chair.
- If a conflict is declared the Chapter Jury Chair will nominate a Chairperson from the Jury to coordinate discussion for that category.

6.7 Jury Guide

Detailed responsibilities, guidance and instructions for juries appointed at all levels of the AILA Landscape Architecture Awards are set out in the Jury Guide and should be read concurrently to this policy document.

7. Categories

7.1 Award Categories

Chapter and National Awards will be considered in the following categories:

Category 1 | HEALTH and EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Projects in this category are constructed landscape projects in and surrounding institutional spaces including educational, health or aged care facilities. Projects in this category demonstrate how the design contributes to the usability and operation of the facility and the wellbeing of the user.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/ Chapter Award of Excellence for Health and Education Landscape
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Health and Education Landscape

Category 2 | CIVIC LANDSCAPE

Projects in this category are constructed urban landscape projects that are public in nature and capture and contribute to the culture and amenity of the urban environment around them. Projects will demonstrate how the landscape architecture has contributed to the overall outcomes.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Civic Landscape
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Civic Landscape

Category 3 | PARKS and OPEN SPACE

Projects in this category are constructed public parks and open space, or strategic open space projects that balance the demand for recreation, culture and the environment.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Parks and Open Space
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Parks and Open Space

Category 4 | PLAY SPACES

Projects in this category are constructed play spaces or strategies which promote the notion of active play and embraces the temporal elements of the active play space.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Play Spaces
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Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Play Spaces
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Category 5 | INFRASTRUCTURE

Projects in this category are constructed landscape infrastructure projects, landscape strategies or works associated with civil infrastructure that demonstrates the successful integration of landscape values and which contribute to future sustainability.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Infrastructure
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Infrastructure

Category 6 | CULTURAL HERITAGE

Projects in this category are constructed projects or strategies that demonstrate the restoration, conservation, enhancement, maintenance, or adaptive reuse of culturally significant sites.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Cultural Heritage
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Cultural Heritage

Category 7 | LAND MANAGEMENT

Projects in this category are constructed projects or strategies for the restoration, conservation or management of significant landscapes that demonstrate a tangible physical outcome. The project may recognise and reconcile the natural and cultural values of communities and the landscape in which they are placed.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Land Management
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Land Management

Category 8 | TOURISM

Projects in this category are constructed or strategic projects that demonstrate excellence in landscape design and demonstrate a tangible contribution to tourism, either nationally or in the local region that significantly enhances the profile of the area.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Tourism
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Tourism

Category 9 | URBAN DESIGN

Projects in this category are constructed or strategic projects that demonstrate how the design, construction management and built outcome of the landscape, contributes to the wellbeing of the urban setting through the improvement of social interaction, economic activity, liveability, accessibility and safety. Projects will have a specific focus on how landscape architecture has contributed to the urban design outcome.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Urban Design
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Urban Design

Category 10 | LANDSCAPE PLANNING

Projects in this category are constructed or strategic projects and include strategic design and guiding policy documents and visual assessments for urban development, residential and planned communities, local community and rural or regional planning.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Landscape Planning
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Landscape Planning

Category 11 | RESEARCH, POLICY and COMMUNICATIONS

Projects in this category may include published works, or unpublished Doctoral or higher degree manuscripts or reports in research and or practice that extend the knowledge base and advocacy of landscape architecture.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Research, Policy and Communications
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Research, Policy and Communications

Category 12 | COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Projects in this category include constructed projects or strategies delivered either:

As a pro bono service (or significantly reduced fee) to the community;

OR

Projects that have positively impacted a client or community group who would not normally have access to design expertise.

Entrants should clearly demonstrate the benefit provided by the project to the community, cultural group and/or neighbourhood in which it is located or which it serves (e.g. through client letters of support explicitly referring to

benefits gained).

Projects will demonstrate sound principles and values of landscape architecture, and must be sufficiently focused on the role of the landscape architect as opposed to contributing to a wider community development.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Community Contribution
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Community Contribution

Category 13 | SMALL PROJECTS

Projects in this category include those considered to be 'small' in terms of size or budget. Projects are recognised that have been constrained by size or budget restrictions, but have achieved a level of invention and creativity beyond these constraints.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Small Projects
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Small Projects

Category 14 | GARDENS

Projects in this category include constructed private and public gardens that contribute to the role and understanding of the garden in contemporary society and culture.

Excellence Award year	AILA National/Chapter Award of Excellence for Gardens
Awards year	AILA National/Chapter Landscape Architecture Award for Gardens

Category 15 | INTERNATIONAL

Projects in this category include constructed or strategic projects that demonstrate a contribution to landscape architecture internationally.

Excellence Award year	AILA International Award of Excellence
Awards year	AILA National Landscape Architecture Award for International

7.2 Other Award Categories

From time to time the AILA Board may, by resolution, include one or more special categories in the National Awards program. Any additional categories will be publicised at the time of call for entries and is entirely at the discretion of the AILA Board.

7.3 Moving Projects Between Categories

If an entrant would like a project to be considered in more than one category, the project will need to be entered in multiple categories.

During the Judging process, jury members may propose entries be considered in categories other than the entered category. Jurors will submit any proposed category changes for discussion by the jury. All proposed category changes must be submitted prior to Jury Day. All proposed category changes should be identified to the National or Chapter Jury Chair before Jury Day.

Juries may choose to consider projects in categories other than the category the project was originally entered in, subject to the following:

- the entrant must not have opted-out of category changes
- the project must meet the entry requirements of the other category
- where the project is deemed not to meet the entry requirements for a category in which it is entered, it may be removed from that category and considered in one other category, for which it does meet the entry requirements
- the project must not be considered in more categories than it was originally entered in, unless one or more of the other categories has 5 or less eligible entries.

8. Criteria

Judging of entries is based on three core qualities:

- Thinking
- Leadership
- Results

These fundamentally underpin the achievement of excellence in landscape architectural endeavour.

The core qualities will be applied to judging of all entries across all categories. A guiding matrix is available within the Jury Guide and provides criteria and indicators to assist entrants and juries in applying the Thinking, Leadership and Results framework.

9. Review

A review will take place at the end of the annual Award season.

The review will include a member feedback and a survey to entrants and jurors to comment on the Awards process and make recommendations for future Awards programs.

10. Related Policies

- People Recognition Award Policy
- Gender Equity Policy
- President Award Policy
- Code of Professional Conduct