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Via email: Shahana.mckenzie@aila.org.au

Dear Ms McKenzie

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions of concern to the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and its members. Below is an outline of Labor's commitment to urban policy and a response to each of your proposals.

Labor and urban policy

Labor as a strong track record in federal involvement in urban policy.

This began with Gough Whitlam who in 1972, while launching the Labor election campaign, said "A national government which has nothing to say about cities has nothing relevant or enduring to say about the nation or the nation's future".

Labor has backed federal involvement in cities policy under the Whitlam, Hawke, Keating, Rudd and Gillard Labor governments.

Between 2007 and 2013, Labor developed a modern urban agenda, working with the States and Territories and local government, including:

- Creation of a Major Cities Unit in the Department of Infrastructure.
- Release of the National Urban Policy *Our Cities, Our Future* – a long term blueprint for Australia's 18 biggest cities and regional centres.
- Development of *Creating Places for People: an urban design protocol for Australian cities*; a tool to improve the quality and useability of our public spaces and city buildings.
- Infrastructure Australia's work on developing an Urban Transport Strategy, which was released in late 2013.
- Establishment of a \$20 million Liveable Cities program to support high-quality demonstration urban design projects and better urban plans.
- Encouraging state and territory governments to have strategic planning systems in place for their capital cities.
- Publishing a regular *State of Australian Cities* report to monitor the performance of our 18 biggest cities over time so policy makers can measure and assess progress towards more productive, sustainable and liveable cities.
- Consulting with experts from across all levels of government, as well as industry and academia, through the sector and the Urban Policy Forum.

Underpinning all of this was Labor's record investment in public transport. Between 2007 and 2013 Labor provided more in funding for public transport projects than all previous federal governments since Federation combined, a total of \$13.6 billion.

BILL SHORTEN AND LABOR. WE'LL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Labor in opposition has continued to show our commitment to cities. Labor's Shadow Minister for Cities is Anthony Albanese, a member of the Shadow Cabinet. In opposition, Labor has established the National Urban Policy Dialogue, designed to assist with the development of new polices for productive, sustainable and liveable cities in collaboration with key stakeholders from other levels of government, business, industry, and academia.

The National Urban Policy Dialogue and the appointment of a Shadow Minister for Cities ensure that urban policy is accorded the highest priority for Labor.

In Opposition, Labor has recognised the practical difference green infrastructure makes.

In 2014 we announced our ten point plan for cities:

1. Investing in properly integrated transport systems involving public transport and roads
2. Investing in active transport solutions which connect up with public transport, education and employment hubs;
3. Addressing housing affordability through the use of urban planning, land supply and use of incentives;
4. Aligning greater housing density with public transport corridors;
5. Promoting jobs growth in outer suburbs. This could be through direct investment such as Badgerys Creek Airport and Moorebank Intermodal project, or by giving consideration to incentives for location of business;
6. Promoting jobs growth in middle rings around cities by investing in research precincts around universities and hospitals;
7. Supporting connectivity and productivity through fibre-to-the-premise National Broadband Network;
8. Supporting renewable energy including buildings and precincts that produce their own power in new developments;
9. Enhancing sustainability and resilience of household and industrial water supply and rehabilitating our urban waterways which for too long were used for industrial waste;
10. Cooperation between Governments to promote the development of second or third CBD's to decentralize jobs growth.

Labor believes best practice and sustainable urban design should be considered for any development that bears upon liveability.

Labor also knows that heatwaves are Australia's biggest natural killer. The Heat Island Effect means city residents, particularly the very young and the elderly, are more susceptible. In the western suburbs of cities, this is even more pronounced as a consequence of poorly considered urban design. With co-operation from all levels of government, as well as the development and urban design industries, we can reduce the heat in our cities, improving our levels of personal comfort and making them safer for all.

It is for these reasons that a Shorten Labor Government will broaden Infrastructure Australia's role in two ways. As well as looking at the economic benefits of proposals through cost-benefit analyses, the Government will require that projects address two new criteria. Firstly, proponents will need to show what provision for smart infrastructure has been included to ensure maximum benefit is achieved from any investment. Secondly, projects will be required to include in their design measures that improve their sustainability, including provision for active transport where appropriate.

In stark contrast, under the Liberals, for two years from September 2013 there was no dedicated Federal Government work on cities, nor a minister holding a portfolio for cities.

In September 2015, two years after they were elected, the Liberals appointed a junior minister for Cities and the Built Environment, Jamie Briggs, then demoted the position in a later reshuffle when responsibility was allocated to a parliamentary secretary, Angus Taylor.

The Department of the Environment was tasked with cities policy in September 2015. Three months later, responsibility moved to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Under the Liberals, Australia has effectively lost three years on cities policy.

1. The Federal Government support the creation of a National Living Cities Fund

Establishment of an investment fund, for the implementation of green infrastructure projects across Australia. This would involve a percentage of all federal government expenditure on 'grey infrastructure' projects (eg. roads) to be placed in an investment fund for allocation to state and local government green infrastructure projects. This fund could be operated similar to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which seeks to leverage private sector funding to enhance public benefit outcomes through government investment.

Outcome: Sustained level of national funding for green infrastructure implementation.

Examples and case studies: Scottish Government creates a Green Infrastructure Fund and blueprint <https://www.greeninfrastructurescotland.org.uk/guidance>

Labor knows that living cities are more resilient cities and understands that we need to invest in our urban centres to ensure their productivity, sustainability and liveability. Green urban design is at the core of tackling these issues.

There are a number of key issues facing cities today such as rapidly growing population, traffic congestion, the increasing Heat Island Effect, heatwaves and other effects of climate change.

Labor has recognised the importance of world-class urban design and architecture; health; liveability; community; matters of national environmental significance; and climate change mitigation and adaptation by its inclusion in the *Australian Urban Design Protocol –Creating Places for People* developed by Labor when last in government and in collaboration with a range of stakeholders including the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

The purpose of the Urban Design Protocol is to encourage the highest standard of urban design. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to undertake reforms in capital city strategic planning systems “to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth”. The Urban Design Protocol responds to the nine criteria listed in the COAG agreement by providing a framework to identify, implement, measure and improve best practice in urban design.

Accordingly, the Urban Design Protocol recognises an element of urban design is “Streetscape + landscape - the design of public spaces such as streets, open spaces and pathways, and includes landscaping, microclimate, shading and planting.”

In terms of *establishing an investment fund for the implementation of green infrastructure projects across Australia* a Shorten Labor Government has committed to broadening the role of Infrastructure Australia so that projects consider smart, sustainable infrastructure. Therefore, in addition to looking at the economic benefits of proposals through cost-benefit analyses, the

Government will require that projects address two new criteria. Proponents will need to show what provision for smart infrastructure has been included to ensure maximum benefit is achieved from any investment. Secondly, projects will be required to include in their design measures that improve their sustainability. Green infrastructure projects will by definition support sustainability.

2. The Federal Government drive a change in accountancy, business case preparation and feasibility process standards to enable living Infrastructure to be considered an Asset Class (or equivalent)

Aimed at having green infrastructure formally recognized by Treasury as an asset class, to be valued during business case development for major federally funding projects. This would involve the development of a business case and value proposition for green infrastructure to be articulated and endorsed by Treasury, followed by the development and use of a set of evidence-based green infrastructure criteria used in business case approvals and value capture via Treasury.

Outcome: *Green infrastructure supported and recognised by Treasury as an asset class, with agreed measurable outcomes.*

Project financing instruments will be determined on a case-by-case basis to preserve value for money. Federal Labor will work as appropriate with the States and Territories, local government and the private sector, to finance priority projects.

Labor supports innovative approaches to financing projects, including public private partnerships, tax incentives, concessional finance, government guarantees, transport oriented development, value capture and seed funding via grants or availability payments. Labor will investigate and remove any unnecessary impediments to these. Labor will ensure maintaining infrastructure quality, the public interest and labour standards are relevant criteria in choosing financing methods.

Labor supports superannuation funds investing in infrastructure projects when this aligns with the best interest of superannuation fund members. Labor will investigate, and remove, any unnecessary impediments to appropriate investment of this kind, whilst ensuring high standards of accountability and governance.

The private sector should play an important role in increasing the scope of infrastructure project delivery, including through the involvement of superannuation funds.

Labor will work with the superannuation industry to identify innovative investment and procurement models that increase the attraction of superannuation investment in the Australian economy, and better shares risk, so as to facilitate capital raisings from superannuation funds that can be invested in the productive sectors of the economy to generate responsible economic activity and decent jobs.

As we did in 2007, a Shorten Labor Government will take the politics out of infrastructure and put the nation's interest at the heart of nation building again. We will empower Infrastructure Australia to become an active participant in the infrastructure market, working with State Governments and brokering deals to bring nation building projects to fruition. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects are encouraged to put this proposal to Infrastructure Australia for consideration in their broader infrastructure assessments.

Infrastructure Australia will develop a long term pipeline for projects for the Commonwealth Government and ensure that projects move through the assessment, development and financing phases.

Just as the Reserve Bank of Australia is the independent authority at the centre of monetary policy, Infrastructure Australia will be at the centre of capital investment, driving results that are in the national interest.

It will operate in a similar way to the Reserve Bank of Australia and a Shorten Labor Government will properly consult the Opposition on all board appointments.

Under Labor, Infrastructure Australia will deliver:

- **Independent assessments and scrutiny** - we will ensure that Infrastructure Australia independently assesses all major infrastructure projects on the basis of the benefits they provide to the economy and society as whole, their commercial viability, and their capacity to enhance national productivity.
- **Transparency** - we will strengthen the transparency in infrastructure decision making through publishing the business case for projects and proper engagement with the community. It is critical the public has confidence in infrastructure development.
- **Brokering** - Under Labor, Infrastructure Australia will be given new authority to structure deals, engage private sector partners, and work closely with the state governments to take projects from the drawing board to construction. Infrastructure Australia will work with the States, long term investors, the private sector, financiers and constructors, to address the market failure in bringing new infrastructure projects to the market.
- Our plan to empower Infrastructure Australia to make decisions in the national interest and pursue projects with major economic gains will kick-start a new phase of infrastructure investment and help unblock the bottlenecks that are holding productivity back across our cities and regions.

In addition, Labor in Government will broaden the role of Infrastructure Australia so that projects consider smart, sustainable infrastructure. Proponents will need to show what provision for smart infrastructure has been included to ensure maximum benefit is achieved from any investment, and projects will be required to include in their design measures that improve their sustainability.

3. Federal Government support Local Government to deliver Living Infrastructure outcomes through the creation of a Local Government Green Infrastructure Package

A national incentives package would be created and delivered through local government to elevate the priority of green infrastructure strategies. A specific condition of an incentives package would be the active removal of barriers (eg. policy, codes etc) and the introduction of positive policies and frameworks to accelerate the deployment of green infrastructure investments. The package would provide funding to Local Government to accelerate projects that embed green infrastructure strategies such as green roofs, greener streets, re-establishing networks of public open space and increasing urban tree canopy coverage. This program would also be used to encourage creative green infrastructure funding and implementation strategies, such as density bonuses for greater open space, and stormwater retention credit trading systems.

Outcome: *Removal of barriers to green infrastructure investment and accelerated implementation of new projects and policies.*

Case Studies/Background: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/321331>

Labor recognises that cities are not just centres of economic activity, where the workforce, businesses and the institutions that support their activity are concentrated but our cities are also centres for living, education, recreation and entertainment. Liveable cities offer a high quality of life

and are socially inclusive, affordable, accessible, healthy, safe, and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

When last in government Labor developed the National Urban Policy which outlined how the Australian Government can facilitate better outcomes in our cities through both direct investment and by influencing the actions of others. It set a vision for our cities to deliver future prosperity and wellbeing for our communities and reinforced COAG's national objective to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable, socially inclusive and well placed to meet future challenges and growth.

The then-Labor Government demonstrated its commitment to better outcomes for Australian cities through simplified regulatory environments and its significant and unprecedented funding of public transport projects across most of Australia's capital cities.

Labor also committed \$20 million to the *Sustainable Communities— Liveable Cities Program* aimed at promoting better planning and design of our cities, their infrastructure, buildings and public spaces. It also encouraged projects which reduce car dependency and congestion by offering practical solutions for better public transport, cycling and pedestrian access. The program funded a range of projects, including:

- Solar panels for the Bayside City Council's Corporate Centre roof, construction of a bicycle path between Head Street and Bay Street in Sandringham and water tanks at five sporting ovals to harvest water from the sports pavilion roofs.
- Major improvements underway along the river foreshore in Parramatta are part of Parramatta's 'River City' vision.
- Australia's first large-scale, low-carbon trigeneration network at Green Square in the City of Sydney.
- An affordable housing project in Queensland's Logan City to cater for the area's growing number of low-income retirees and local hospital staff.
- In Melbourne and Geelong, four projects that encourage walking between local destinations by making safer and more appealing pedestrian routes.

Lastly, the Urban Design Protocol provides a framework to identify, implement, measure and improve best practice in urban design. Many jurisdictions already have in place guidelines and protocols relating to urban design.

If re-elected, A Shorten Labor Government will continue its approach to green infrastructure and is committed to working with all levels of government to support green infrastructure through measures that boost sustainability and liveability of our cities.

4. The Federal Government invest in pilot programs to drive innovation and community engagement in green infrastructure

National Green Streets and 'Grey to Green' Pilot Program – seeking to redefine the role and design of road corridors that express the full potential of environmental, social and economic benefits from green infrastructure strategies, as well as the active retrofit of grey infrastructure to green infrastructure. This would involve a proof of concept pilot study across urban and suburban areas to test the design and implementation of green streets designs and the subsequent production of a National Green Streets guide for application by government and private sector on road projects.

Outcome: National pilot program launched and National Green Streets Guide produced.

Case Studies/Background: <http://bostoncompletestreets.org/>

Labor has a track record when it comes to investing in pilot programs that drive innovation and community engagement in green infrastructure, for example the *Sustainable Communities—Liveable Cities Program*

A Shorten Labor Government will re-establish the Major Cities Unit, re-convene the National Urban Policy Forum, and publish annual State of Australian Cities reports.

5. The Federal Government use the leverage of Infrastructure funding to mandate compliance with best practice tools

Minimum SITES Ratings for Federally Funded Projects – building a culture of comprehensive landscape assessment and strategy development in all federally funded infrastructure projects. By applying the SITES rating tool and having projects certified, confirms a commitment to best practice sustainable landscape management on major projects. Having these projects independently verified as meeting best practice standards promotes healthy functioning landscapes and maximum public benefit.

Case Studies/Background:

SITES information: <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>

US Federal Government adopts SITES for all major projects

<http://www.sustainablesites.org/us-general-services-administration-adopts-sites-gbci%E2%80%99s-land-development-and-management-rating-system>

Both in Government and Opposition Labor has argued that best practice must be at the heart of infrastructure investment. This has been a core part of Labor's National Urban Policy and Labor's more recent policy announcement that we will broaden the role of Infrastructure Australia so proponents will need to show what provision for smart infrastructure has been included and will be required to include in design measures that improve sustainability.

In 2012 Labor provided \$500,000 for the development of the National Rating Tool for Infrastructure Sustainability. The tool applies to everything from railways to ports and harbours, sewers, drains and cycleways.

It helps assess the quality of management systems, the process of procurement and purchasing, how a piece of infrastructure can adapt to climate change and what it will discharge into land, air and water. It also helps rate its contribution to urban and landscape design, and our well-being and safety. It helps create better, more sustainable ways of designing, building and operating infrastructure which can then be marked with a rating level. Site context and planning, urban design and landscape, and ongoing management are assessed. The tool provides a common language to rank the sustainability of our infrastructure and a common benchmark for monitoring, reporting and improvement.

While the scheme is voluntary, it represents the first time that such a tool had been developed with the support and cooperation of industry and government agencies right across Australia. Indeed, the Urban Design Protocol which has been adopted by many stakeholders and levels of government, was incorporated into the new rating tool.

Under Labor's National Urban Policy, funding for future road and rail projects must be consistent with its key objectives of productivity, sustainability and liveability.

All these initiatives contribute to better decision making – smarter, greener decisions about our infrastructure, urban spaces and buildings.

As done previously, Labor will continue to work with all levels of government and with stakeholders so that best practice design and tools are adopted in their planning and urban design strategies.

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions of concern to the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and its members.

Yours sincerely

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