



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

*15 October 2018*

## *Managing Our Landscapes - Discussion Paper | July 2018*

### *Conversations for Change*

***Australian Institute of Landscape Architects - SA Chapter (AILA SA)***

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects SA Chapter (AILA SA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed natural resources management reform process. We have reviewed the Managing Our Landscapes Discussion Paper, the Summary of the Discussion Paper and the Frequently Asked Questions documents and offer the following comments and advice.

#### **About AILA**

AILA SA is the local chapter representing the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the growing national advocacy body representing just under 4,000 active and engaged landscape architects across the country. We are committed to creating a better Australia that acknowledges the benefits that natural systems can provide for our physical and mental health.

Landscape architects have the skills and expertise to resolve a diverse range of complex issues with innovative, integrated solutions demonstrated in many award-winning projects across Australia.

We can contribute leadership, creativity and innovation as landscape architects collaborate with many varied disciplines and stakeholders striving to achieve better, healthier environmental, social and economic outcomes for the built environment. Projects include varying scales from citywide strategies to the redesign of local parks. Landscape architects within government and in private practice work alongside other government and allied professionals in building stronger communities through making places and spaces more sustainable, productive and enjoyable for all.

#### **Introduction**

AILA SA offers our support for the reform of the Natural Resources Management (NRM) structure and the introduction of a new Landscape South Australia Bill into Parliament in the first quarter of 2019. We acknowledge the great work that the NRM Boards have done in the past and see this reform process as a chance to consolidate and reset the direction for natural resource management in South Australia. In addition, the reform offers the opportunity to reduce red tape in administrative functions, whilst preserving the core values and services established by the NRM Act.

In particular we acknowledge the NRM's broader advocacy and educational role in natural resource management to the broader community and to schools. We anticipate this function will not be lost in this reform process.

AILA SA strongly supports putting communities and people central to managing the natural resources of their region.

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS – SA CHAPTER**

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We understand the legislative reform will focus on establishing nine Landscape Boards across the State plus Green Adelaide to deliver metropolitan functions, and that practical programs and on ground works are envisaged to be delivered within the existing NRM resources structure. We support this and acknowledge the need for a state-wide strategic plan to sit above these practical programs to ensure the works are coordinated under an overall vision with direction and targets over time.

## **DETAILED RESPONSE**

### **Whole of Landscape Approach**

We support the acknowledgement that natural systems are not limited by arbitrary local government jurisdictions and use the example of the River Torrens for which cohesive approach is required across local government boundaries for its ongoing management and enhancement in the future. This “whole of landscape” approach is something that landscape architects understand and apply in their day to day projects balancing the capabilities of a site against how people use it or intend to use it and the greater context in which the site sits. Landscape architects are uniquely placed to operate across the built and natural landscape and hold positions in Local and State Government as well as in private practice.

### **Aims of reform**

We support the 3 aims of this reform:

- Vibrant biodiversity
- Sustainable Economy
- Resilient communities

AILA SA is particularly excited by the prospect of Green Adelaide working towards Adelaide being ***“the most ecologically vibrant city in the world”*** but want to understand the assumptions and metrics which sit behind this statement. We believe this needs evidencing with data, a baseline and with targets to be delivered on over time.

We see aspirational parallels with SA Health in relation to resilient communities and believe a cross government approach should be taken to meeting this aim. There is increased focus too on the health and wellbeing of people in the planning reform process, in particular a focus on wellbeing of people in our communities and a connection to green open space. AILA advocates that Government policy must quantify and qualify the development of green open space that focuses on the health of our communities. Landscape architects are uniquely positioned to provide essential input into planning and design of quality open spaces. Whether it be early input into broad scale planning or the detail of specific sites, landscape architects can provide an integrated, holistic approach to the planning, design and development of successful, healthy communities.



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For your information, AILA SA has been pleased to co-sponsor (along with DPTI and ODASA) the [Healthy Parks Healthy People \(HPPH\) - Public Open Space Action Plan](#) as part of the HPPH Framework. A collaboration between Department of Health and Ageing and Department of Environment and Water. More on this will be announced in the coming months and we welcome the opportunity to share this information with the Department at an appropriate time.

AILA SA looks forward to continuing to work with the State Government to develop appropriate policy change and new program directions that relate to the natural resources management reform.

### **Importance of Climate Change**

AILA SA notes that Climate change is inferred but not strongly referenced in these aims and we believe this is an oversight which needs amending. Climate change mitigation / adaptation techniques should be considered in the objectives of this document and should be targets.

We see parallels with the current DPTI Planning Reform process and the targets set in the State Planning Policies (SPP) - particularly SPP 4: Biodiversity and SPP 5: Climate Change. We recommend meeting with the DPTI Planning Reform team to leverage opportunities for both agencies to the benefit of the community.

More people are choosing to live in cities and built up areas for employment, education and lifestyle opportunities. Increasingly, Landscape Architects are taking leading roles locally and nationally in the planning and redevelopment of urban and regional areas as well as major infrastructure projects. The liveability of cities, towns and suburbs will determine their long term economic success and resilience. Landscape Architects are champions for liveable cities, in particular through the professional respect of place and increasingly the integration of green infrastructure in advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation.

AILA recommends that Climate Change mitigation / adaptation is given greater recognition as a critical element to the sustainability of cities, towns and suburbs and managing our landscapes.

### **Green Adelaide**

AILA SA is particularly interested in Green Adelaide's 7 key priorities and note the work of landscape architects in designing and delivering projects directly related to the priorities, including urban rivers and wetlands, water sensitive urban design and green streets. We look forward to seeing the separate discussion paper on Green Adelaide when it is developed and providing feedback.

### **Landscape Boards**

We suggest that landscape architects be included as participants on the Boards that are to be created. We have a strong understanding of natural systems and indigenous vegetation. We apply a tailored approach to development in sensitive areas balancing environment, culture and economics.

Landscape Architects conceive, reimagine and transform the outside world from streetscapes to parks and playgrounds, transport solutions to tourism strategies, new suburbs and even cities.

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Landscape architects shape project outcomes in a variety of ways by bringing a critical eye to the potential opportunities and constraints of a place, site, or landscape. Landscape Architects bring together other disciplines, in an integrated way to generate improved confidence in decision making relating to the built environment and planning. Landscape Architects lead design for the environment and people of all ages and cultures.

Finally, AILA SA supports the 5 year landscape plans for 9 boards. We recommend these need to be aligned with 30 Year Plan for Adelaide. They should also be aligned with a broader strategy, refer to the Green Infrastructure strategy below for more detail.

### **Green Infrastructure Strategy**

Green Infrastructure is defined by AILA as “the network of natural landscape assets, which underpin and provide for the economic, socio-cultural and environmental functionality of our cities and towns.” Green Infrastructure, when planned well and integrated into the public realm can contribute to improving the comfort, quality and health of the city and its residents.

Urban heat is increasing during the days and nights as we lose local tree canopy cover and replace open green space with urban infill and increased paved surfaces. Rising urban heat directly impacts on the annual cost of living for local communities and at times of extreme heat can have fatal effects on the youngest, eldest and sickest in our society.

Green Infrastructure initiatives can include green roofs and walls, street trees and tree planting, greener open-space design and rain gardens, and can protect the community against the potentially life-threatening effects of flooding, excessive heat (urban heat island impact) and other climatic variables. It supports biodiversity and provides the critical connections within and between ecosystems. It is also considered a more efficient and effective means of managing stormwater, when compared with traditional grey infrastructure solutions.

We call for the Department for Environment and Water to prepare a green infrastructure strategy in collaboration with Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. The green infrastructure strategy should set the direction for broader regional landscape management and restoration in SA. Additionally, the green infrastructure strategy should inform the strategic landscape scale projects and the 5-year landscape plans being contemplated for each of the 9 Boards. From a land use perspective, it should articulate how and where green public open space should be provided in the future – building on the former Metropolitan Open Space System and documenting existing assets and planning status. The green infrastructure strategy should direct investment in development, infrastructure and open space and align the upgrade of existing public open space with targeted areas of infill development in our suburbs. It should also serve as a baseline for understanding our tree canopy asset and how resources can be best spent to meet our tree canopy targets to mitigate climate change. We refer to the NSW Draft Green Infrastructure Policy (Greener Places: Establishing an Urban Green Infrastructure Policy for NSW) which has been led by the NSW Government Architect as a benchmark document.



### **Indigenous Recognition**

AILA SA believes it is critical that Aboriginal people take a leading role in managing natural resources in our State. AILA has recently launched a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan demonstrating our commitment to creating an inclusive and diverse profession by encouraging and supporting our members to expand their cultural awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. [Click Here to read](#). AILA strongly supports indigenous people being recognised in the governance and planning processes, given their extensive history and connection to the land and their sustainable management practices honed over thousands of years.

Indigenous knowledge and ongoing cultural practice has much to offer other policies in development of mutually respectful and evolving processes for assessment and development of policy interpretation and outcomes. Cultural understanding will benefit our entire community and have a positive impact on the liveability of our city.

We note boundaries may shift in recognition of Aboriginal country boundaries which is great step forward towards reconciliation. An approach likely to be complimentary could be simultaneously considered and mapped based on natural systems, climate, topography, rainfall, landscape character and land use / industry.

### **AILA SA offers some other commentary based on our review:**

1. We acknowledge the grassroots approach as desirable but it still requires a strategic lens for consistency, efficiencies and sharing of knowledge. We support the Grassroots Grants program as a means of delivering ready to go initiatives of environmental significance – revegetation, WSUD projects, urban heat island mitigation
2. We support the notion of levies being spent in the region from which they are collected except where other urgent priorities may be needed.
3. More could be done to support nature-based tourism and the economic opportunities this presents. We note that this needs to be developed and maintained in a sensitive manner.
4. Are there other opportunities to open up more green open spaces to the public for recreation and increased health and wellbeing outcomes?
5. Generally, the recreational use of landscapes / national parks for hiking, walking, riding and the physical (and mental) health connections need reinforcing in the discussion paper.

We look forward to ongoing involvement in the development of the Landscape South Australia Act and all the related work as part of this new direction. We are also very interested to learn more about Green Adelaide as this is developed.

Please contact me if you have any questions by email - [sally.bolton@aila.org.au](mailto:sally.bolton@aila.org.au) if you require any additional information.

Yours Sincerely,

Sally Bolton

**AILA SA Chapter Manager on behalf AILA SA Executive**