



## Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects – South Australian Group (AILA SA) is pleased to provide comment towards developing a new Climate Change Strategy for South Australia. AILA SA was represented at the Climate Change workshop held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and remains willing to engage collaboratively with the State Government and its agencies to promote a more prosperous and sustainable future for South Australia.

### **Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)**

AILA SA is part of AILA, the growing national advocacy body representing 2,500 active and engaged landscape architects. Committed to designing and creating a better Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to solve macro issues with innovative integrated solutions. Landscape architects contribute leadership, creativity and innovation as they strive to collaborate to achieve better health, environmental, social and economic outcomes. From citywide strategies to the redesign of local parks, landscape architects are making places and spaces more sustainable and productive.

### **Climate Change Strategy for South Australia**

AILA SA commends the Minister for the commitment to developing a far reaching strategy and it is recognised that the consultation papers and workshops are the first steps in this journey. We hope our comments will assist in the development of informed content and targets. AILA supports the identification of Climate Change as a driver to unlock the next generation of technology, development and infrastructure contributing to a more liveable and resilient South Australia.

The Strategy Papers illustrates South Australia's current leadership and commitment to renewable energy and a low carbon future. The future aspirations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a multitude of efficiency measures such as energy, transport and industry related activities set targets and recommendations that can be directly applied to the planning and design of the built environment. The protection of South Australia's natural assets through governance structures and collaboration responds to issues at a regional and state-wide scale. Capturing future opportunities to innovate in energy production, 'clean tech' industries and boosting research and knowledge could become major economic growth areas for the state.

AILA SA strongly feels there is a greater opportunity to represent design, liveable cities and the role of green infrastructure in leading, reducing, adapting and innovating in the response to Climate Change.

### **Liveability of Cities**

***"The liveability of Australia's cities will be affected by how their sustainability is managed."*** (Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development, *State of Australian Cities* 2013)

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 adaption and mitigation.

The Climate Change Strategy must address the need for greater direction towards planning, design and management of the built environment, in particular against:

- Poor site planning (orientation), leading to design of buildings that consume increased energy for mechanical heating and cooling
- Over-development of the site, including loss of existing green space and undervalued importance of existing trees

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- Building design and construction using darker, heat absorbent materials and surfaces
- Reduction in communal and private open spaces in redeveloped sites, including reduction in amount of planting compared to paving
- Limited requirement to address Climate Change issues such as urban heat island effect through design standards, materials selection or green initiatives (green walls or roofs)

Greater leadership is required to drive reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission by a more responsive design and more sustainable approach to the built environment.

Across neighbourhoods, the changing character of local streets and public spaces has also seen the decline in many of the elements that would help mitigate against climate change, including:

- Increase in extent of hard paved areas, predominately with darker, heat absorbent materials
- Loss of trees and tree canopy cover, through age, maintenance or as a result of local redevelopments
- Loss of green open spaces, grassed areas and planted areas, including redevelopment of vacant lots
- Decline of maintenance standards required to support greener streets and public spaces

The decline of the above, results in people less likely to walk or cycle and more likely to drive, contributing to emissions. People are also less likely to spend time outside undertaking sport or recreation, affecting the health of the community.

The proposition of Adelaide to be a Carbon-neutral City is applauded, however AILA strongly urges the Minister to embed the planning and design of our cities, towns and suburbs into the development of the Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy should inspire innovation in the planning, design and development of the built environment, creating a stringer greener city brand.

### **Green Infrastructure**

***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. Green Infrastructure initiatives can include green roofs and walls, street trees and tree planting, greener open-space design and rain gardens.

Green Infrastructure helps protect life against 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.

Green Infrastructure aligns with the vision and guiding policy principles of the Climate Change Strategy. AILA recommends that Green Infrastructure is given greater recognition within the Strategy as a critical element to the sustainability of cities, towns and suburbs.

### **Strategic Alignment**

AILA SA is currently involved in consultation with the Minister for Planning’s *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Bill 2015*. AILA recommends that the current Bill be strengthened to embed climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the development of the Planning and Design Code, and the Design Standards. AILA urges the Minister for Planning, and the Minister for Climate Change to maximise the opportunities for shared leadership to drive a more innovative, sustainable and prosperous built environment.



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**Conclusion**

AILA SA appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the formation of South Australia's response to Climate Change. The Minister and his Department are to be lauded for this exhaustive consultation process to inform the development of a rigorous and wide reaching strategy.

The design of the built environment; the buildings, public spaces and streetscapes, have a central role in the long term sustainability of South Australia. The Climate Change Strategy must be developed to better recognise the vital role design can play in effectively tackling energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in our cities, towns and suburbs.

AILA SA is available to the Minister and his department to further clarify any matters or to assist in the next stages of the Climate Change Strategy for South Australia.

Ben Willsmore  
**AILA SA President**