



**Australian Institute
of Landscape Architects**

30 November 2015

Ms Meredith Sussex AM
Chair, Fishermans Bend Advisory Committee
C/- Metropolitan Planning Authority
Level 25, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Submission by:

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

ACN 008 531 851 ABN 84 008 531 851
122 Cremorne Street, Cremorne VIC 3121
AILA Victoria email: vic@aila.org.au
T 0401 811 976
www.aila.org.au

Dear Ms Sussex,

RE: AILA Letter to Fishermans Bend Ministerial Advisory Committee

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victorian Chapter is seeking a further conversation regarding Fishermans Bend and the issues outlined in our submission prepared in July 2014 in response to the Places Victoria's Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area Draft Vision (September 2013). With the establishment of the Ministerial Advisory Committee for the project, we would like to reiterate some key issues from our original submission for full consideration as the development moves forward.

AILA is the growing national advocacy body representing 2,500 active and engaged landscape architects, and promoting their crucial role in shaping the world around us. Our membership covers a diverse range of professional services including strategic planning, urban design, building settings, open space design and natural resource management working across all levels of government and within the private sector. Our profession is at the forefront of the planning, design, construction and management of quality open spaces and the public realm.

The Fishermans Bend Advisory Committee (FBAC) report dated 1 October 2015 recommends a refresh of the vision and rationale of Fishermans Bend, the reestablishment of governance and financial arrangements, and the securing of decisions regarding transport for the area. AILA supports these key actions and believes that it is essential that a neighbourhood level planning approach is adopted; and that connected public open space and infrastructure is implemented early and where needed. A broader neighbourhood level planning approach would also encourage diversity within each precinct and ensure that streetscape activation and integration of high quality green space is a high priority within areas of medium and high density development.

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The FBAC notes that the number of permit applications received to date has the potential for 17,600 residential apartments between 20 and 64 storeys, with a large proportion of these within the Montague Precinct. These dramatic increases in both population and high density living will place enormous pressure on the precinct's urban green spaces. The provision of high quality open space and public realm is crucial to the success and long-term liveability of Fishermans Bend.

As outlined in our response to the State Government's Better Apartments – A Discussion Paper (attached), AILA supports cleverly planned medium to high density developments that are sustainable in the long term. As design practitioners focused on the 'long view' we are concerned with ensuring our city retains its image and its well-recognised standards of liveability. With this in mind, we believe that our transition toward a medium to high density future needs to be fully supported by sustained and deliberate investment in 'green infrastructure'¹ assets at every scale, including large parks, recreation spaces, natural landscapes, public streets, urban spaces, communal rooftops, shaded high-amenity green links for walking and cycling, and private open spaces. The previous framework did not have sufficient quantity of space in the right locations, the appropriate diversity of public space typologies or any indication of quality. We advocate for rectification of this in the neighbourhood planning process.

Transport and reducing car-dependency is a key issue which will be central to the success of the precinct. As the FBAC report notes the viability of Fishermans Bend as a residential and employment hub depends on the area being accessible through a variety of transport options, and not relying on transport which will contribute to congestion of the existing limited road links. With the estimated increases in population density it is critical that there is a focus on early investment in public transport and the creation of very generous, high-amenity bicycle and pedestrian networks that will provide connectivity with Melbourne's CBD and surrounding areas. This should be explicit in future plans. If well located, this will drive value and different and improved development outcomes.

The original submission by AILA in response to the Draft Vision provided our position on the project and identified a number of key strategies that will be critical to the realisation of the precinct which are summarised following.

- Develop a more extensive and clearly structured street network through the urban renewal area, and ensure public commitment to and control of the delivery of the highest-order streets within that network.
- Clarify functional and qualitative outcomes for streets to ensure that development is able to appropriately respond to its context.
- Plan ground level uses and streetscape activation independently from building heights, and public facilities such as schools and encouraging private development to support activity clusters in appropriate locations.
- Use public space projects to integrate and remediate existing infrastructure, including projects to bridge the Westgate Freeway and improve the northern edge of Montague Precinct.
- Make fewer larger parks, prioritising the enlargement of existing parks to maximise flexibility of recreational use over the long term, while encouraging the provision of integrated smaller-

¹ Green Infrastructure is the network of natural landscape assets which underpin the economic, socio-cultural and environmental functionality of our cities and towns—i.e. the green spaces and water systems which intersperse, connect and provide vital life support for humans and other species within our urban environments - Adapting to Climate Change 'Green Infrastructure' AILA

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scale open spaces and recreational facilities in response to specific needs of developments as they occur.

- Establish simple, equitable and defensible height controls.
- Make more and better connections to surrounding areas via street, walking and cycling links to existing activity centres, recreational resources and amenities in surrounding areas
- Invest early in multiple fixed-route public transport services to ensure that redevelopment supports and is supported by sustainable transport options.
- Limit car parking and promote sustainable transport options, to limit the adverse impacts of car parking on built form, building costs, and overall building density.
- Create tools to direct orderly development so that new infrastructure and community services can be provided when and where they are needed without causing undue strain on public authorities.
- Plan and design new infrastructure and activity hubs to aid integration of the wider area, not simply to support development within the renewal area.

We also strongly advocate for increased investment and prioritisation by MPA, City of Port Phillip and City of Melbourne in the developing a clear vision for transforming existing new and existing streets, to inform development partners of public expectations regarding the future public realm throughout Fishermans Bend. This should be supported by technical standards and a process for delivery that does not rely on development contributions, but instead defines an innovative process for funding and delivering great streets which contribute to the amenity and value of this significant area. Dutch models such as those used in IJburg provide examples of other proven strategies for the early delivery of infrastructure. Docklands Public Realm Strategy is a good benchmark document for a strategic approach to public streets and spaces.

We also recommend developing a more strategic and less site-specific response to future water levels throughout Fishermans Bend. At present, the response in many areas is to elevate the ground floor of each development to a defined height above the predicted future water levels – in some areas up to 1.5 metres. We are concerned that this will detrimentally effect the streetscape environment throughout Fishermans Bend. In the transformation of streets, consideration of levels to achieve a positive street level interface is essential.

There are significant Australian and international case studies and research into urban design, planning and community infrastructure which should inform the next stage of planning and design.. There have also been several case studies conducted throughout the Melbourne CBD on the existing urban environment, such as the Places for People study undertaken by City of Melbourne in collaboration with GEHL Architects in both 1994 and 2004. These resources would prove valuable tools to help inform the development of Fisherman's Bend. Several design studies based on the planning and redevelopment of Fishermans Bend were included in the original submission by AILA in response to the Draft Vision, and these can be provided if required.

We also note the recent Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C262, and suggest that the concerns addressed by this amendment must apply with even greater force in an area of radical redevelopment such as Fishermans Bend, in comparison to urban areas where relatively smaller proportions of the urban fabric are likely to be rebuilt in the foreseeable future. We therefore strongly encourage an equivalent, rigorous, review of plans and planning controls for Fishermans Bend.

The AILA National Policy Statements advocate the urgent prioritisation of integrated and innovative design, planning and development for urban spaces as key pathways to more liveable urban environments. We emphasise the importance of creating a sense of place, promoting a sense of community as well as integrating the new precinct with the surrounding existing environment.

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The success of this project will be based upon strong collaboration and highly inclusive and transparent decision-making processes as well as considered stewardship and planning.

We acknowledge that some progress has already been made which will help guide the next phases of the Fishermans Bend project. AILA urges the Ministerial Advisory Committee to be bold, ambitious and innovative in developing a strategic framework to assist in shaping the future of Fisherman's Bend. There is an opportunity for Fisherman's Bend to become a world-class, high quality urban environment in which Melbournians of the future will be proud.

We look forward to your favourable consideration and response to this letter. Should you wish to discuss or would like to arrange a time to meet please contact Felicity McGahan AILA Victorian State Manager on 0401 811 976.

Yours sincerely

Felicity McGahan
AILA Victorian State Manager

Attachments The Australian Landscape Principles – Integrated Design, Urban Design, Place and Place Making

cc Hon Richard Wynne Minister for Planning
cc Larry Parsons, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
 Jane Monk, Metropolitan Planning Authority
 Ben Rimmer, CEO City of Melbourne
 Tracey Slatter, CEO, City of Port Phillip

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