



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

# Terms of Reference

## AILA Future Festival Working Group

### Strategic Linkage

#### Sustainable AILA

- AILA has a financially stable base from which to develop and meet our strategic objectives.

#### Membership

- AILA understands and is responsive to the needs of its members.

#### Advocacy

- The role of landscape architecture is understood and respected by all levels of government.

#### Membership

- The role of landscape architecture is understood and respected by built environment professionals and the communities in which we live.

### Background

(Information courtesy of *Building a professional culture: A decade of AILA Festivals* Jillian Walliss and Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard and [LandscapeAustralia.com](http://LandscapeAustralia.com))

Since its inaugural program in 2014, the AILA Festival of Landscape Architecture has brought together members of the profession and related disciplines to share knowledge, challenge disciplinary conventions, forge new relationships and extend community.

The idea to start an International Festival of Landscape Architecture emerged in 2013, following a particularly tumultuous period for AILA. The festival was conceived with two purposes. First, it was intentionally planned to reengage and connect members across the country, aiming to create a positive experience in order to shift what had by then, become an organisation with a disengaged membership. Second, the festival aimed to raise the profile of landscape architecture, one of the four pillars of AILA's Strategic Plan. As a small profession, the organisation recognised the unique opportunity to build media awareness around the festival, the conversations it created and the AILA national awards program, which moved to coincide with this significant gathering of members.

The "International" branding (which was dropped in 2020) was a recognition of the broader influence that AILA members have within the Asia-Pacific region and the international reach that landscape practice and research broaches.

Review of past Festivals of Landscape Architecture thematic may mistakenly lead to the assumption that they operate as conferences, sharing similarities to the concerns of other built environment conferences, for example, publicness, climate change, urbanism, and the embedding of First Nations knowledge. But it is the festival's relationship to the community that makes it distinctive, a relationship that is largely driven by the creative directors. Through imagination, expertise, vision and energy, the creative directors shape an initial thematic (proposed through an EOI process) into a more complex program aimed at the landscape architecture community and beyond. Explore and reflect – the festivals have been a place for advancing the ideas and potential of landscape architecture influence.

- 2014 - *Forecast (Meanjin/Brisbane)*
- 2015 - *This Public Life (Naarm/Melbourne)*
- 2016 - *Not In My Backyard (Canberra)*
- 2017 - *The 3rd City (Warrane/Sydney)*
- 2018 - *The Expanding Field (Gold Coast)*
- 2019 - *The Square and the Park (Naarm/Melbourne)*
- 2020 - *Land-E-Scape: Reset - towards healing (Online)*
- 2021 - *Spectacle and Collapse (Boorloo/Perth/Online)*
- 2022 - *COUNTRY (Meanjin/Brisbane)*
- 2023 – *UN/EARTH (Tarndanya/Adelaide)*<sup>1</sup>

As the festival has progressed and the demands of AILA as a professional and registration body have increased in line

<sup>1</sup> <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/building-a-professional-culture-a-decade-of-aila-festivals/>



with member expectations, management of the creative directorate and festival has presented a range of operational challenges.

These include, but are not limited to;

- Balancing the creativity and risk appetite of the creative directorate with timelines and budget.
- Lack of alignment with AILA's strategic directions and the proposed themes of creative directorate
- Decline in nominations for creative directorate.
- The role of the festival in financially sustaining AILA.
  - At present the festival makes a minor profit, however if staffing costs are included in the budget, it is a major loss leader.
- The operational demands on AILA in planning and working with the creative directorate and festival as a whole.
  - It occupies the majority of 2-3 staff members time for 9 months of the year.

AILA Board and management are committed to maintaining a festival as a signature event for the profession, but in a way that is efficient, effective, and fit for the future, financially and thematically. We look forward to collaborating with the working group to maintain and grow the festival as the show piece of the profession, and to have a festival that is distinctly landscape architecture in nature.

### Purpose of the Working Group

To provide support, guidance, and advice to the AILA Board and Management in relation to a sustainable model for the AILA Festival in 2025 and beyond.

### Objectives of the Working Group

- The objective of the working group is to prepare for board review a comprehensive proposal for the future model of the AILA festival, rather than an evaluation of the status quo.
- A clear statement of the purpose and intended primary audience for the festival.
- Maximising financial return to AILA, commensurate with the status of the event.
- How the event will provide a major contribution to the AILA membership value proposition, reflective of the breadth of AILA members (public / private / education practice).
- How the event will provide a major incentive for others in the built environment profession to become AILA members.
- The timing and frequency of the festival

- The structure and role of the creative directorate, including EOI process, appointment, scope, and responsibilities.
- Relationship between creative directorate and AILA Board, and AILA management, including clear delineation of some roles as a risk mitigation strategy.
- How can Festivals create short term digital content to raise the profile of the profession, and long term digital resources that support CPD and ongoing learning.

### Timeline

A report and presentation from this working group is to be tabled to AILA Board, within a sufficient timeframe to provide appropriate lead in for an EOI for the 2025 festival to be finalised.

### Working Group Membership

AILA Board will endorse working group members following a member expression of interest process. The working group will comprise;

- Up to seven (7) appointed AILA members
- An AILA Board member
- AILA CEO
- AILA National Events & Partners Manager

The Board will appoint the working group based on experience, skills, interest and broad AILA membership representation.

In the event of large member interest in the working group, a series of small task based groups may be appointed at the discretion of the board to act as a specialist consultancy group to the working group to provide research, seek feedback or to develop ideas as the working group progresses against the stated objectives.

### Research and Examination of other Models-Australia and Overseas

It is an expectation that the working group will utilise the AILA network and beyond to support and evidence based and data driven approach to recommendations, and therefore the working group will be empowered by the board to make representations on behalf of AILA, in consultation with the AILA CEO.

The Working group will also liaise with national committees and state-based chapter executives. AILA will provide a secretariat and other support as required.

The working group shall maintain an action list to record progress against objectives.