

# Greener, Liveable & Healthier Cities



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

Australia's natural and living infrastructure assets are key to tackling the major issues facing Australia's cities, towns and regions including; an ageing population, climbing obesity, diabetes rates and skin cancer, and the economic impact this has, reduced fitness particularly in young children, social exclusion and the increasing importance of positive mental health, major population, transport and liveability challenges, a changing climate with increases in energy costs and heat related deaths. The world is undergoing significant change due to the increase of carbon in the earth's atmosphere. These changes will have unprecedented consequences world-wide during this century.

## 1.0 Living Cities are a priority

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) has welcomed a greater focus in the development and planning of cities and regions in recent years including the appointment of a Federal Minister for Cities, the implementation of City Deals, the ongoing work of Infrastructure Australia to understand the issues impacting our cities and the recent House of Representatives Standing Committee report Building Up and Moving Out.

We believe the timing is right for a greater focus on the living and green infrastructure policy to support making cities greener, more liveable and healthier for the citizens that inhabit them.

## 2.0 AILA propositions

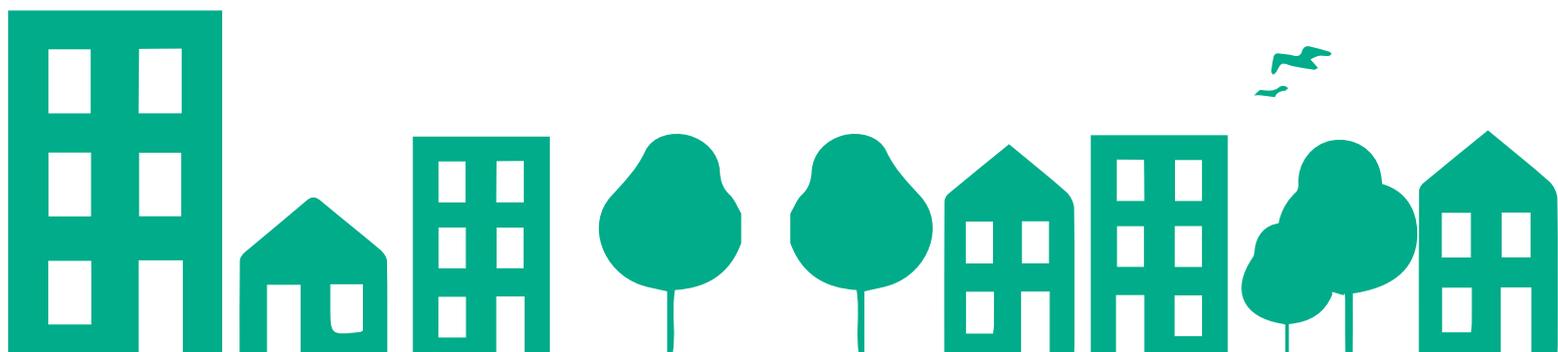
AILA calls on the federal elected representatives to commit to:

1. Investing the development of a Living Infrastructure Strategy.
2. Supporting the creation of a National Living Infrastructure Fund
3. Drive a change in accountancy, business case preparation and feasibility process standards to enable living Infrastructure to be considered an Asset Class (or equivalent)
4. Adopt key recommendations of Building Up and Moving Out

### 2.1 Invest in the Development Living Infrastructure Strategy

AILA is calling for the development of a National Living Infrastructure Strategy (the Strategy) to be led by the federal government (through Infrastructure Australia). The Strategy seeks to advance the significant contribution that ecological and biological systems can contribute to the development of city, regional and rural infrastructure.

The Strategy will acknowledge that nature itself operates as an enabler of more effective systems, providing important ecosystem benefits to our city, regional and rural communities.



Together, a strong and effective national policy will enable our cities, regions and rural areas to realise their potential, build better and healthier places, and create more sustainable communities.

AILA strongly advocates for the Strategy to be developed by Infrastructure Australia and to be supported by leading experts and peak industry bodies.

A Living Infrastructure Strategy provides a framework to protect and enhance urban and peri-urban ecological and biological systems. This will assist government to meet international obligations in relation to biodiversity conservation as set out in the Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation ACT (1999). Australia's urban footprint is growing at more than double the average rate for developed countries and is concentrated in areas of highest species diversity. Half of Australia's nationally threatened animal species occur in areas planned for urban development.

Therefore, a Living Infrastructure Strategy represents an opportunity for biodiversity conservation and protection of urban ecological systems through integrating Living Infrastructure principles into urban development and renewal.

A Living Infrastructure Strategy can improve the sustainability of the built environment through the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. As cities grow in population and increase in density, protecting and managing urban ecosystem services such as water and air quality, biodiversity and ecological communities will require a far more integrated approach.

A Living Infrastructure Strategy can assist government to address the current climate emergency and collaborate to reduce carbon emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C as envisaged by the 2015 Paris Agreement. Climate change is already evident in Australia with a rise of 1.0°C, so it is in our interest to reduce carbon emissions in all areas of our society and economy as quickly as possible to ensure the viability of the planet for future generations. Transport, energy, agriculture, waste and the planning, development and management of cities are all critical areas for carbon reduction and building resilience to the effects of climate change.

Overall, a Living Infrastructure Strategy would provide a framework for federal infrastructure investment to catalyse the restoration of the nation's urban landscape, which AILA considers to play a significant role in promoting prosperity, productivity and health and well-being for Australia's cities and towns.

AILA called on the Federal Government to Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy in November 2018 – the terminology between 'Living' and 'Green' is sometimes used interchangeably. AILA's call for a Green Infrastructure Strategy is now replaced with the call for a Living Infrastructure Strategy. The core elements of the strategy is the same, regardless of title. More detail available here.

### Examples and case studies

Tools to support green infrastructure planning and ecosystem restoration

European Environment Agency

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/green-infrastructure/tools-to-support-green-infrastructure>

### 2.2 Support the creation of a National Living Infrastructure 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.

### Examples and case studies

Scottish Government creates a Green Infrastructure Fund and blueprint

<https://www.greeninfrastructurescotland.org.uk/guidance>



### 2.3 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 recognised 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.

#### Background and examples

Found [here](#)

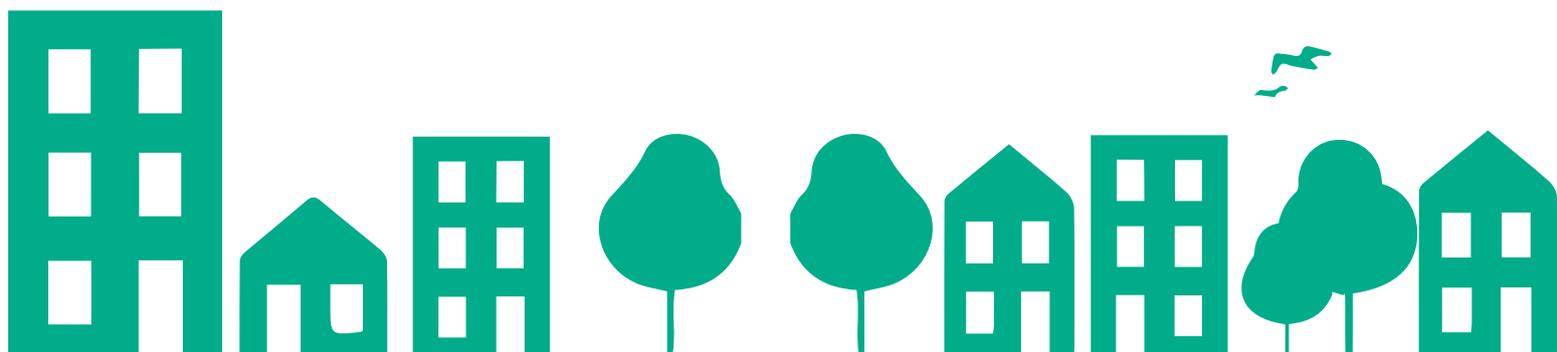
### 2.4 Adopt key recommendations of Building Up and Moving Out

The House of Representatives Inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities provided a wealth of insights into how better outcomes for cities and their citizens might be achieved. The inquiry was bolstered by the high level of multi-partisan support of the members involved, demonstrating that good urban policy is a priority across all shades of politics.

The Building up and Moving Out report, outlining the findings of the inquiry, brings value both in the strategic approach that it embraces as well as the many and detailed recommendations supporting better outcomes and value for money at a project level. AILA was very pleased to see many of our priorities reflected in this report.

AILA supports the recommendations listed in Building Up and Moving Out and highlights the following in particular actions for the Australian Government:

- [Recommendation 1] In conjunction with State and Territory governments... develop a national plan of settlement, providing a national vision for our cities and regions across the next fifty years.
- [Recommendation 3] In conjunction with State and Territory Governments, pursues a system of urban planning which promotes: accessibility and liveability, promoting health and quality of life; economic, social and environmental sustainability; high quality natural and built environments; access to employment; a more compact urban form; and the concept of the 30-minute city.
- [Recommendation 7] As part of the system of master planning under the national plan of settlement, aligns existing regional infrastructure programs to the objectives of these plans to support investment in: communities experiencing rapid and sustained population growth; and regional centres which are strategically placed to expand with catalytic investment in community infrastructure.
- [Recommendation 10] Work with the States and Territories to establish nationally consistent guidelines for urban green space and establish a clear trajectory to continued carbon emission reductions.
- [Recommendation 19] Continue to expand the performance indicators and cities assessed under the National Cities Performance Framework including: enhancing indicators for environmental sustainability and innovation; and incorporating smaller regional capitals into the framework.
- [Recommendation 22] The Committee recommends that the Australian Government maintain the CRC research agenda's previous focus on urban issues until the nation's cities have achieved an environmentally and socially sustainable urban form.
- [Recommendation 24] Re-endorse Creating Places for People: An Urban Design Protocol for Australian Cities and provide financial support for the purposes of maintaining and promoting these design principles.



- [Recommendation 25] Support the broader application of rating systems, such as the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star program, to urban regeneration.
- [Recommendation 36] Adopt an approach to infrastructure project appraisal that includes assessment of:
  - Wider economic, social and environmental benefits;
  - Costs and returns over the life of the infrastructure; and
  - Cost of the project using a discount rate of 4 per cent.

In addition to advancing the recommendations in Building Up and Moving Out, there should be a commitment from agencies with responsibility for implementing recommendations to publicly reporting annually on progress and actions taken.

#### Reference

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities Building up and Moving Out

### 3.0 Starting with Landscape – leadership from Landscape Architects to support Elected Representatives

There is an unprecedented cross-party consensus, supported by evidence, industry and the Parliament, on the priority of a national focus on cities.

AILA and Registered Landscape Architects are equipped with the knowledge and skills to advise government on how Living Infrastructure can support the federal governments work on enhancing our cities to make them green, more liveable and healthier.

We are available to discuss the above in more detail and support the development of election policy platforms.

### 4.0 About AILA

AILA is the growing national advocacy body representing over 3,000 active and engaged landscape architects, promoting the importance of the profession today and for the future. Committed to designing and creating a better Australia, landscape architects shape the world around us. 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.

Landscape architects shape project outcomes in a variety of ways. We bring a critical eye to the potential opportunities and constraints of a place, site, or landscape. The vegetation, soils, watercourses often navigated by infrastructure projects are but some of the technical issues we bring expertise to. We create conditions for nature to function and thrive, ensuring that infrastructure puts back as much as it takes from Australia's ancient landscape. We bring together other disciplines, in an integrated way to generate better outcomes. We are active on infrastructure development teams of all types, often leading, connecting, facilitating and navigating to help achieve shared outcomes. Landscape Architects lead design for the environment and people of all ages and cultures. Landscape architects represent a profession increasingly dominating the debates to lead policy making to deliver exemplary outcomes for our cities, towns, regions and their inhabitants. The work of Australian landscape architects is increasingly being recognised worldwide for our unique skills in creating liveable cities, healthy active spaces and sustainable design outcomes.

#### For more information contact

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