



To: Design WA team  
Attn: Dan Bromley  
Project Manager Design WA  
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

Dear Dan,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) to comment on the State Planning Policy 7.2: Precinct Design Guidelines. The interests of Landscape Architects range across the full gamut of the design elements in the Precinct Guide, in particular concerning quality of life, the design of the built form, private and public realm and the natural environment. Please find below our primary thoughts and concerns, while the attached matrix provides more detailed comments.

In general, AILA sees the Draft Precinct Guide as a very positive step forward. The document is well organised, clearly set out and easy to read, without an overload of text.

AILA commends the emphasis on a holistic approach for precinct designs. However, we also notice that this is the most vulnerable aspect of the Guide. Chapter 3.0 'Design', with 7 design elements can easily be interpreted as 7 distinct layers, each to be worked out by a separate discipline, overshadowing all the good advice in Chapter 2.0 'Prepare'.

A multi-disciplinary approach should be supported by several important connections between design elements that are missing in the Draft Guide. For instance, weather protection and CPTED are solemnly mentioned as public realm considerations, omitting the fact that these elements cannot be sufficiently addressed without the Urban Structure, Movement, Built Form and Land Use. Table 1 - 'How precinct design outcomes relate to the design elements' - fails to indicate several of these crucial relationships, while the box-ticking list of outputs in Appendix 4 supports the separation of disciplines.

Another concern is that the Guidelines seem to be Metro-centric. If this policy is to address the entire State, it should give advice per region that allows for flexibility in addressing the Objectives.

We would promote at least two things to address this vulnerability:

- Include graphics that visualise an holistic approach and let these come back to every design element, emphasising every element is only a part of the collaborative design. For your inspiration, we have included an example of such graphics.
- State in Table 3 - 'Potential precinct team disciplines' - a core design team (including Landscape Architect, Planner, Architect and Urban Designer) and emphasise that this team needs to work collaboratively on the design throughout all aspects. The other disciplines



can feed information into the core team, or added when necessary, depending on the project requirements. Regarding Landscape Architect, we advocate for adding 'Registered', stressing the intent of overarching quality and expertise.

Other important general considerations we would like to bring to your attention:

- Time is missing as an essential element in the Precinct Guide and will need to be considered as a structural Design Element. The Guide seems to focus on end-goal plans and process, while the reality of urban precincts is that they constantly change and never reach an end situation. Transformation, which is ongoing, is not the same as staging (a way to achieve the end goal).
- We applaud the inclusion of stakeholder and community participation in the Guide. Listing the four minimum criteria to measure community benefits is also vastly important, and should be highlighted along with whole-of-life costs, and maintenance and operational costs of the community benefits.
- More pictures and diagrams in the Precinct Guide would help further illustrate and clarify the intent and the content. The attached matrix provides a range of detailed comments on possibilities to improve the visuals in the Draft Guide.

Regarding the Design Elements, we ask specific for attention for the following:

- The Urban Ecology mentions 'vegetation' but should also discuss topography, water systems and hydrology, soils, ecological networks, etc. These aspects are core to 'vegetation' and the urban structure built on the surface of the land.
- Ensuring an agreeable urban climate for humans is not mentioned as an important objective. The Urban Ecology and the Urban Structure (street widths, solar and wind orientation, etc.) together set the stage for the urban climate, while built form (shade, awnings, etc) and public realm (trees, planting, water elements, etc.) are also important.
- Movement sets the base for all the streetscapes, and thus for an important percentage of the Public Realm. However, 'trees' are not mentioned in the Movement section. Nor is the importance of the vehicular design speeds that are applied and whether they are appropriate to the context of the urban space under consideration. Protection of vulnerable pedestrians should be the prime driver behind design of the movement network.



- The Built Form design element in the Guide includes not only the buildings, but also the outdoor private realm and street interfaces. However, the objectives do not focus on these. They only address 'set backs'. We commend incorporating the private realm and the ground floor as separate objectives, including entrances, awnings, tree canopy on private land and a differentiation between visually private and visually public areas, all of which contribute to the streetscape.
- In relation to the previous, Appendix 3 - 'Guidance on built form envelopes' – currently omits two important urban design tools: plot ratio and site coverage, the latter being essential in dealing with tree canopy on private land.
- Adaptation and change over time is addressed as a Land Use issue, but has strong, and more importantly, connections with other design elements, such as urban structure and built form. These elements lock in what land uses can be enabled, and thus, should be the considered as the basis for adaptability. From a sustainability point of view, built form that is adaptable to more than one type of use is preferable.
- In Services & Utilities element we ask that the Objectives explicitly mention prioritizing underground power to promote street trees.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, I can be contacted via [wa@aila.org.au](mailto:wa@aila.org.au) or 0417 181 214.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Thomas  
AILA WA President