



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

3 March 2017

Attn: Melinda Pavey, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight  
NSW Government

**RE: Re-examine Clear Zone standards for a cooler and more beautiful NSW**

Dear Ms Pavey,

As the national body that unites all Landscape Architects and pursues excellence in design and landscape in our cities and regions we urge you to re-examine the interpretation of the Austroads clear zone standards in NSW.

Clear zones are the area alongside the road where trees or other obstacles cannot be located. On fast rural roads these are more than 10m each side of the road and are necessary for safety reasons (although it is hoped in time advancing vehicle technology might prevent cars swerving off the road). However on slower roads, in cities, these zones can be from 3.5 m to 5m (60km/h and 70km/h). This city clear zone essentially stops trees being planted besides roads because there simply isn't space. Most vehicles travel slowly in cities and the chance of collision with trees set behind kerbs and along straight low risk sections of road are slim, particularly in heavily congested built up locations. If we can't get trees besides the road we end up with a much hotter city and a more concreted, unpleasant environment.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is not suggesting that the clear zones be removed but that a **risk assessment approach is adopted**. If the roads are in cities and large towns and have to be posted at 60 or 70 km/h then perhaps if the kerb is substantial, or the road is relatively straight, or there are already other obstacles such as buildings and poles, then a common sense approach is adopted. Roads authorities could weigh the benefits of well selected and planted trees against the risks of errant vehicles.

We hope you can consider this detailed but greatly significant matter and help to achieve a better more beautiful NSW.

We would be happy to meet you to speak about this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

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