



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

# Quality Green Public Space – AILA SA Discussion Paper

## Quality Green Open Space

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects defines Green Infrastructure as:

*The network of vegetation and water systems in urban areas, across the public and private realms, which provide multiple environmental, economic and social functions and benefits. It is the green and blue spaces in cities and towns that intersperse, connect and support people, plants and animals.*

The Healthy Parks Healthy People Action Plan 2 is sponsored by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, the Office of Design and Architecture SA and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

The Action Plan is focused on the design, development and management of green public space, that is, vegetated land freely available for the public to access including parks, public gardens, playgrounds, sporting fields, waterways, lakes, wetlands, conservation areas, civic squares and plazas, accessible school grounds, some community gardens and rooftop gardens in the public realm, greenways and many streetscapes.

The vision for Action Plan 2 is:

*Green public space is planned, designed, delivered and managed to provide the quality elements necessary to support health, wellbeing, biodiversity and ecosystem services.*

## Growing Importance of Quality Open Spaces across Greater Adelaide

The Adelaide Plains are the traditional country of the Kaurna people, and their cultural heritage, beliefs and ongoing relationship with the land are valued and respected.

The Plains are framed to the east by the Foothills and to the west by the Gulf of St Vincent. Between the Hills and the sea, stretch many creeks and rivers, many of which have been manipulated by the suburbanisation of the plains.

The landscapes of the Foothills, Plains and our coastal estuaries, wetlands, beaches and cliffs provide unique settings for life across our suburbs, as well as framing our cultural and social values. Their ongoing informed management and thoughtful development plays a crucial role in the environmental health of Greater Adelaide.

Greater Adelaide stretches from Roseworthy (north), to Mount Barker (east), and Sellicks Beach (south), covering an area of approximately 9,000km<sup>2</sup>. We desire cities, towns and suburbs that are healthy, comfortable, vibrant, attractive and productive places to live, work, visit and play. As Greater Adelaide continue to develop, the quality of its Open Spaces will become increasingly important in response to the following long-term challenges:

- The population of Greater Adelaide is intended to grow by over half-a-million people in the next 30 years, with over 80% of South Australians forecast to live within Greater Adelaide;
- 1 in 4 people living in South Australia were born overseas, adding greater cultural diversity, interpretation and expectations for quality open spaces;
- 85% of all new housing in metropolitan Adelaide will be infill in established urban areas (by 2045);
- Increased urban infill, including medium and high density developments, will significantly reduce the amount of private open space available to residents per capita across Greater Adelaide; and
- South Australia is the driest state, in the driest Country in the world.
- A changing climate will place increasing pressure on the biodiversity, amenity, accessibility, comfort and resilience of open spaces across the suburbs, with anticipated increased average temperatures, increased extreme fire risk days, increased rainfall intensity, lower annual rainfall and rising sea levels (*Resilient East Climate Change Adaptation Plan*, Eastern Region Alliance, 2017).



## Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA Chapter - AILA SA)

AILA SA is part of AILA, the growing national advocacy body representing almost 3,000 active and engaged landscape architects. Committed to designing and creating a better Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to resolve a diverse range of complex issues with innovative, integrated solutions.

Across South Australia, Landscape Architects value the importance of;

- planning and design in the realisation of high quality outdoor spaces appropriate for our unique climate and landscapes;
- building stronger healthier communities that represent local needs and interests; and
- the stewardship of the broader Australian landscape.

Landscape architects contribute leadership, creativity and innovation as they collaborate with many varied disciplines and stakeholders striving to achieve better, healthier environmental, social and economic outcomes for the built environment. From citywide strategies to the redesign of local parks, landscape architects within government and in private practice alongside other government and allied professionals, are building stronger communities through making places and spaces more sustainable, productive and enjoyable.

## 10 Proposed Aspirations of Good Quality Open Spaces

AILA SA proposes the following 10 key aspirations for defining the key qualities of successful open spaces within South Australia:

1. **Nature and Landscape:** *Good quality open spaces support local flora and fauna and provide people with the opportunity to reconnect with the natural environment through welcoming and attractive landscapes.*
2. **Health and Wellbeing:** *Attractive, functional open spaces can improve the physical and mental health of the local community by improving the cooling and comfort of local neighbourhoods and providing safe settings for active and passive pursuits.*
3. **Community Activation:** *Well-designed open spaces create unique settings that respond to the needs and aspirations of the local community. They help build a sense of community, enabling greater social interaction and positive behaviours that reflect local history, identity and aspirations.*
4. **Adaptability:** *Good quality open spaces can adapt to the community's changing social, physical or environmental needs over time.*
5. **Accessibility and Connectivity:** *Well planned open spaces are easily accessible and can contribute to a wider network of open spaces for people to move through and to experience as a destination.*
6. **Urban Context:** *Well planned open spaces integrate with their surroundings and create positive relationships between natural landscapes, active building edges and other community infrastructure.*
7. **Universal Design:** *Well managed open spaces are welcoming and inclusive settings that can be enjoyed by people of all ages, needs, abilities and cultures*
8. **Resilience:** *Well-designed open spaces incorporate natural systems to mitigate the effects of a changing climate and provide greater health benefits to the local community and Greater Adelaide.*
9. **Economic Benefit:** *Good quality open spaces contribute positively to the economic health of our city and our communities. Along with *high* quality built form, it enables the creation of communities that are attractive, productive places to live, work, play and visit.*
10. **Environmental Benefit:** *Well-planned open spaces contribute towards habitat creation in our cities and can lower temperatures in the built environment caused by the urban heat island effect.*



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The Aspirations towards good quality open spaces reflect AILA member contributions and reference [Best Practice Open Space in Higher Density Developments Project](#) for the City of Charles Sturt, undertaken by Suter Planners, WAX Design and URS.

These are aspirations that can be understood and championed by a broad range of stakeholders to deliver the best outcomes. They are proposed to assist local Councils, the development sector and other Government agencies overcome a range of complex challenges to meet the communities' needs.

## Enabling Quality Open Spaces

Higher quality outcomes are enabled through an integrated and informed approach to the planning, development and management of open spaces.

AILA SA proposes that the ten (10) aspiration must be considered at each of the following three (3) stages to realise quality outcomes:

- **Planning of Open Spaces;** Align strategy, research and engagement to understand the requirements of the existing and future needs of the community, local environment, and changing urban settings;
- **Development of Open Spaces;** Design distinctive, robust and innovative settings that respond to the local community's needs and expectations, and are designed to appropriately manage the long term expectations; and
- **Management of Open Spaces;** Maintain open spaces to ensure they are easily accessible and appealing to the local community and consider ongoing activation and adaptation.

The application of the ten (10) aspirations are intended to drive greater shared understanding of the value of quality open space, to enable innovation through greater collaboration, and to maximise long term liveability and sustainability of our communities and the environment.