



20 November 2023

Attention- Strategy Team, Infrastructure SA  
GPO Box 2343  
Adelaide SA 5001

### ***South Australia's next 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy***

To Whom it May Concern,

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, South Australian Chapter (AILA SA) extends its appreciation to Infrastructure SA to provide feedback on South Australia's next 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy.

#### **About AILA South Australia**

AILA SA leads a dynamic and respected profession, creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet.

We work together to create healthy communities, connected urban green infrastructure, and liveable, sustainable cities and regions. Our 2,900+ members are driven by AILA's Strategic [Plan](#) core values of Connection to Country and Climate Change, and are committed to creating **'A greener, healthier, inclusive and climate resilient South Australia'** which is further embedded in our advocacy approach.

The work of South Australian landscape architects is recognised for creating liveable cities, healthy active spaces, and sustainable design outcomes for everyone. Our 200+ South Australian members have helped shape many infrastructure projects across the State, creating the vibrant community spaces for all.

AILA advocates leading positions on issues of concern to our cities, suburbs and regions on matters regarding landscape architecture. We prefer to work alongside government to improve the design, planning and management of the natural and built environment. We support positive policies, strategies, and projects that achieve our values and advocacy to create greener, healthier, and climate resilient places for all.

#### **Feedback on South Australia's next 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy**

The importance of this Strategy cannot be understated. AILA SA supports of the overarching vision and acknowledges the importance of this review for preparing its next Strategy.

We note within the forward that South Australia's infrastructure needs have evolved due to the 'COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to net zero and increasing digitalisation'. We also note there are several other areas for consideration which have clear implications in the development of our cities and future infrastructure needs, including:

- equitable and safe access to quality, local, and green parks and open spaces
- equipping our cities, towns, and regions to be climate resilient in a warming, dry climate through the design and planning of blue and green infrastructure
- supporting more people walking and cycling through the planning and integration of active transport
- authentic and effective reconciliation with First Nations people



With these areas in mind, our recommendations for Infrastructure SA are:

- **Creation of a new, single, government agency to coordinate the planning, design, and delivery of South Australia's green infrastructure to accelerate meeting South Australia's pathway to Net - Zero Emissions**
- **Improving South Australia's connectivity by creating better streets for people**
- **Authentic, genuine and meaningful partnerships with First Nations**

Detail under each recommendation is provided below for consideration.

**1. Creation of a new, single, government agency to coordinate the planning, design, and delivery of South Australia's green infrastructure to accelerate meeting South Australia's pathway to Net Zero Emissions**

We recommend the creation of a **New Green Infrastructure Office** with the responsibility to plan, manage, and monitor the design of South Australia's green spaces. It will have oversight of green aspects of all state-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects to ensure greening targets are initiated delivered, managed, measured, reported and protected over time.

The new agency will positively work with infrastructure, health and education departments to better shape greening outcomes and provide the following benefits

**1.1 New State Green Infrastructure Policy**

There is a lack of integration across Government department strategies including planning, transport, infrastructure, climate change, and greening. A new *State Green Infrastructure Policy* represents an opportunity respond and provide a concise, aligned and strategically integrated plan

Greater policy alignment and government investment and partnership opportunities with local government could enable greater and high-quality development opportunities and accommodate for growth within existing corridors and precinct. This would also enable greater density in the inner suburbs - small-scale, low multi storey development (i.e., three-storey apartments), an effective way to increase housing supply and allow space on small blocks for green infrastructure and WSUD.

It will also assist with the new focus, as outlined in the State Government's Greater Adelaide Regional Plan Discussion Paper, for the peri-urban/outer 'spines' for the anticipated growth over the next 15-30 years.

A cohesive green infrastructure policy developed and owned by the new Green Infrastructure Office with agreed definitions, targets and reporting, supporting Green Adelaide and South Australia's Climate Change Action Plan would embed green infrastructure as an essential component of greener, wilder, healthier, and climate resilient places for all.

As reference AILA SA defines green infrastructure (GI) as '...the strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas in urban and regional settlements that provide environmental, social and economic benefits to society... GI strategy aligns with an ecosystems management approach to provide ecosystem services that can be measured, evaluated and deployed at a landscape scale; transcending private and public land, geographic and municipal boundaries.' (Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA), 2019. Green Infrastructure. Position Statement).



This is a new approach, which could elevate South Australia's infrastructure for the next 30 years as greener, more productive and respond to the climate challenges as outlined and addressed in the State's Climate Change Action Plan

## **1.2 Defined, agreed, and measurable targets**

South Australia's leadership in climate change and mitigation must ensure all projects pull their weight - in many instances there is confusion, value management and only passing acknowledgement of state greening targets.

We recommend a key focus of the Strategy should be how the interrelationship between government agencies, local government and private development align to deliver improved outcomes for all and therefore support 'living locally' principle within the Strategy.

Liveability and quality of urban environments correlate to the health, wellbeing and socio-economic prosperity of individuals and communities. Good design outcomes should continue to be an integral driver shaping the future of Greater Adelaide, and precincts and neighbourhoods should be designed holistically, incorporating services, amenities, accessible open and recreational space, civic, residential and commercial areas. This objective – of living locally – requires an integrated planning approach for infrastructure.

Our analysis suggests the following targets are considered, or at least investigated, for inclusion in measuring the success of the Strategy (in no particular order):

- Minimum tree canopy cover targets - currently 20% in the State's 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide
- Minimum tree canopy retention targets
- Minimum targets for new areas of quality green open space
- Minimum targets for stormwater retention, reuse and treatment
- Minimum targets for biodiversity and habitat increase
- All new State Government-funded capital projects must include these targets, form part of their project briefs, and be mandated for delivery
- Builds on the recently announced 'Green Infrastructure Commitment' by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

We are not recommending the Strategy incorporates every measure and target across government, more alignment of policies and strategies where possible.

## **2. Improving South Australia's connectivity by creating better streets for people.**

Our members have expressed a strong concern at the lack of public transport integration in the Strategy, noting the Discussion Paper is basically silent on integrated and active transport options.

We remain concerned that active transport connectivity and mobility need to form a key outcome in the State's future infrastructure funding strategy.

We recommend active transport connectivity and mobility includes:

- creating funded and integrated active transport infrastructure,
- prioritising proximity and connection to existing and planned amenities, open space and services, and



- ensuring adequate public transport options are accessible to all development precincts and projects.

### **2.1 Create a new Active Transport Plan**

We recommend the creation of an integrated active transport plan with a targeted annual investment, that sets agreed and measurable targets across South Australia, to provide connected, easy to access, and easy to use walking and cycling alternatives to private vehicle use. This will build on the current State Cycling Plan and Walking Strategy, which are not coordinated and lack clear, cohesive, and agreed strategic and local outcomes.

The active transport plan is to be used as a key input to all state-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects to ensure walking and cycling connectivity is integrated and aligned with more effective public transport.

### **2.2 Ensure integrated streets**

For all state-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects, ensure all project planning and scoping of projects creates better streets for people, habitat and biodiversity, as well as their new and existing communities.

This must be more than simply 'making good' - it means integrating active transport, greening targets, water sensitive urban design, habitat, biodiversity, and develop projects to become good neighbours. Moving beyond minimum requirements is the aim - ensuring universally accessible and enjoyable journeys for all are achieved.

For example, using the Transport for London 'Pedestrian Comfort Level Guidance' for all state-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects places pedestrian comfort at the centre of decision making, to encourage greater walking across our cities and regions.

## **3. Authentic, genuine and meaningful partnerships with First Nations**

The development of a new and collaborative design approach to First Nations involvement on all state-funded infrastructure, health, and education projects. This must be a process that is funded and acknowledges the difficulty in making time to meaningfully engage with First Nations.

We recommend that First Nations form an underlying part of **South Australia's next 20-Year State Infrastructure Strategy** using a Connecting with Country approach including:

- developing genuine and meaningful partnerships to promote positive outcomes, ensuring that future developments are inclusive and respectful of the land, communities, and cultural history, and relevance within our green publicly accessible open spaces.
- an agreed approach to cultural mapping to underpin the Strategy to ensure the development of growth areas are culturally sensitive, provide environmentally responsible outcomes, and preserve natural systems.
- an authentic and inclusive acknowledgement of traditional owners throughout the Strategy, advancing respectful and authentic reconciliation through the design of our places, links to the cities and connection to the regions.



We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our feedback or provide more detailed commentary to further explain the feedback above.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be involved with this consultation process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Arbon', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

Dr Janelle Arbon, Fellow (AILA), Registered Landscape Architect  
**President, AILA South Australian Chapter**