

Terms of Reference

Mentoring Program for Women



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

Context

The *AILA Gender Equity: Next Steps* document highlights the need for a focused approach to Gender Equity in our industry. The report's Action Plan identifies under *Career Progression, next step item 3.4.2 Investigate establishing a mentoring program for women*. The National Gender Equity Committee is managing the implementation of this action for each State Chapter.

Individual landscape architects can utilise mentoring to make sense of their individual career trajectories, to strategise their future and to help support others. AILA has identified the need to provide resources to assist in moving towards a more equitable profession. This paper outlines the Terms of Reference for a trial Mentoring Program to be undertaken by State Chapters.

Changes in gender equity will not be solely resolved through mentoring but driven through a change in culture. A mentoring program allows people to have a voice, create conversation, help highlight the issues, and to demonstrate that Landscape Architects are advocating for change.

Objective

The Mentoring program in conjunction with other AILA initiatives will deliver the following:

- Retention of women in the profession based on graduation rates.
- Reduce gender-based bias and discrimination to ensure women have the same opportunities for career progression.
- Increase in women among owners of incorporated businesses.
- Reduce /eliminate gender pay gap.

Existing Mentoring Programs

AILA currently has AILA Fresh mentoring programs for graduates and formal mentoring for individuals seeking Registration. The Gender Equity mentoring will supplement existing programs.

Access to the Program

Who can be a Mentor: Any experienced practitioner (minimum experience equivalent to senior Registered Landscape Architect) who is willing to share their experiences and extend support to other professionals and commitment to meeting regularly.

Who can be a Mentee: Any graduate of a Landscape Architecture program who is a member of AILA with initial preference for Registered Landscape Architects.

The program

The mentoring program will include the following activities:

- Mentoring for Landscape Architects (or related fields) throughout Australia.
- Access to group and individual mentoring sessions.

Group sessions include but not limited to established state activities such as AILA Fresh, Small Practices Group and external organisations such as Parlour, WIDAC (Women in Design & Construction), WIE (Women in Engineering, and other State events), International Women's Day activities.

Individual mentoring can comprise of one on ones or small groups being mentored by a senior practitioner.

Scope for the Mentoring Program

Mentoring will not provide advice or direction on specific situations but assistance in how circumstances can be approached.

Management

The Mentoring program will be monitored at State Chapter Level by the Gender Equity Committee and State Manger and report back to the National Gender Equity Committee.

Measuring Success

How do we monitor the program in order to take it from a 'pilot' program to a permanent program?

- Number of participants.
- Undertake surveys following each event, about that particular event but also what they would like to see for future events, and what they think of the program overall?
- Undertake surveys of mentors and mentees after 12-18 months.

Confidentiality

Any details discussed during the mentoring sessions and events will remain confidential. We note that formal AILA events may be recorded at times to enable sharing of the event with others.



APPENDIX

AILA GENDER EQUITY MENTORING PROGRAM MENTOR GUIDE

Skills and experiences required for a mentor:

Leadership and management know-how – the mentor should be familiar with the processes and the leadership context within the landscape architectural professional.

Credibility – the mentor should have personal and professional credibility with a personal connection and professional experiences in Landscape Architecture.

Self-Awareness – a mentor should have a good understanding of their own strengths and development needs be able to support others in their learning.

Accessibility – the mentor should be willing and able to commit sufficient time to the mentees to offer support and guidance.

Communication – the mentor needs good communication and listening skills and be able to focus on applying knowledge in practice. Not just how to do something, but why it's useful to do it this way.

Timeline

The mentoring process is designed to last approximately twelve months to ensure the maximum learning. The mentoring meetings should be scheduled at regular intervals and the proposed sessions can be rearranged and/or revisited if needed.

MENTORING PROCESS

1. Establish a common ground

At the first meeting, the mentor will explain their role and the purpose of the Mentoring Programme and answer any mentee questions about the mentoring process. The mentee is required to come prepared with what they want out of the sessions, set discussion topics and regular meeting dates.

Equal partnership between mentor and mentee

2. Carry out an informal needs assessment and set goals together.

Establish priorities for the mentoring sessions and which aspects of gender sensitivity/women's access to career pathways do they want to know about most? What areas are they hoping to improve in?

Content for mentoring to be built according to the needs of the mentee

3. Set a mentoring schedule

How often will you meet in person? Will there be group mentoring sessions or only individual ones? How will you be in touch regarding the meetings (phone, e-mail?), what is the most convenient channel for both of you? What form will the meeting be, in person, by Zoom/Teams or a combination?

4. Mentors will listen first, then ask and advise. Mentor will not instruct the mentee/s on what to do.

The mentor will focus and inquire on what the mentee has to say before giving an opinion.

5. Check your own biases

Mentors and mentees to avoid letting stereotypes distort impressions. We are all biased and with our own impressions from time to time.