



Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
PO Box 15009, City East, Queensland 4002
Via Email: SIP@dsmip.qld.gov.au

21 October 2021

Re: Draft State Infrastructure Strategy

The Queensland Chapter of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft State Infrastructure Strategy (September 2021). As landscape architects working in Queensland, we have a strong interest in ensuring that our state has the right strategy in place to forge a positive and sustainable future for our communities that provides the facilities and infrastructure we need, while respecting and enhancing the environment upon which our future health and resilience depends. To be able to deliver on this sustainable infrastructure, we recommend that:

- the State Infrastructure Strategy be updated to refer specifically to Urban Green Infrastructure (UGI) or
- each relevant infrastructure type be updated to include a priority action related to Urban Green Infrastructure and/or to strengthen references to green and blue infrastructure within the strategy for each infrastructure type.

AILA is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture, leading a dynamic and respected profession: creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. AILA's national position statements on Green Infrastructure, Climate Positive Design, Child Friendly Cities, Healthy Communities and Active Travel all examine how landscape architecture plays an important role in developing these strategies – you can view them [here](#).

Queensland's cities and towns are currently the focus of intensive efforts to reduce resource use and maximise efficiency, in response to escalating social, environmental, and economic pressures from global development, urbanisation, population growth and climate change. We consider that the provision of appropriate Urban Green Infrastructure is critical at both local and regional scales to the effectiveness of our state's responses to such challenges. AILA is currently leading the development of an interim standard for Urban Green Infrastructure and the development of an associated handbook with Standards Australia. As defined by AILA in our [Green Infrastructure Position Statement](#); *Green infrastructures (GI) are the strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas in urban and regional settlements that provide environmental, social and economic benefits to society.*

Please find attached comments from AILA Queensland regarding the Draft State Infrastructure Strategy. We believe the principles discussed are just some of the considerations that should be included. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further, and request that we remain involved in the ongoing development of this strategy. Should you have any queries or wish to discuss, please contact Melanie West, AILA Queensland Chapter Manager on 0417 666 622 or melanie.west@aila.org.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tessa Leggo'.

Tessa Leggo
Queensland President
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects



Australian Institute of Landscape Architects: Response to the Draft State Infrastructure Strategy

Comments on overall strategy:

We applaud and support the State in seeking to provide a comprehensive and strategic framework for infrastructure delivery and support the plan's acknowledgement of *'the need for infrastructure to be more sustainably designed, constructed and operated'* as evidenced through the objective to *'Enhance sustainability and resilience'*. We also support the infrastructure focus areas, particularly establishing Queensland as a renewable energy superpower, creating liveable communities and building a 2032 games legacy.

However, as described below, we have identified a number of areas that we consider should be strengthened in the development of the final plan.

As the plan already acknowledges, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of accessing green infrastructure (natural and built landscape assets that incorporate natural vegetation) and blue infrastructure (beaches and waterways and the facilities that support them) for our urban population.

We believe that Urban Green Infrastructure is an integral element of all infrastructure classes promoted in the draft plan but, due to its particular importance, should be included and discussed as a *separate infrastructure class* to highlight its overarching significance. Key elements include:

- Prioritising green infrastructure within the urban environment to enhance urban ecosystem functionality and enhance the effectiveness of responses to climate change at a local scale.
- The protection and increase of access to nature to improve mental and physical wellbeing.
- The protection and enhancement of natural areas and habitat for flora and fauna many of which will be impacted by climate change and rapid urbanisation.

We note that Green Infrastructure is identified as one of nine key sectors in AS 5334-2013 *'Climate change adaptation for settlements and infrastructure—A risk-based approach'*. Without strong leadership and prioritisation at state level there is considerable risk that green infrastructure will not be given the level of importance required at the project delivery level and will be seen as 'nice to have' rather than a fundamental element that ensures infrastructure meets our future needs.

In relation to the relevant key infrastructure classes currently defined; we believe the following broad principles are important to reconsider in the development of the final strategy:

Transport

We support the acknowledgement of balancing transport network enhancement with placemaking to create attractive, sustainable and healthy places particularly including Transport priority actions 7, 8, 9, 16 and 21. We also strongly support the plan's discussion of the importance of active transport (including walking and cycling). We stress that Urban Green Infrastructure also needs to be an integral consideration of all transport upgrades, particularly the provision of shade for active transport routes.

Energy

We support the aim to realise Queensland's potential as a renewable energy superpower, in particular Energy priority action 1, the establishment of a 50% renewable energy target by 2030. The aesthetic impacts of new infrastructure such as wind and solar farms need to continue to be managed to safeguard the identity of rural communities and the tourism industry.



Water

We support the actions on water security and particularly priority action 5 to encourage best practice catchment analysis and water planning, priority action 6, embedding climate change risk and analysis and action 13, preserving our natural assets. However, it is our opinion that greater emphasis should be put on Blue Infrastructure in this section (or as a standalone infrastructure type) including Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).

Health

We support the plan's emphasis of building healthy communities. Our concern is that the plan is not currently explicit about the benefits of active transport and Urban Green Infrastructure to the mental and physical health of communities as a prevention strategy. While priority action 13 seeks preventive health measures to improve population health and priority action 14 seeks to promote and implement the healthy places, healthy people framework we feel it is important that green infrastructure is specifically identified and described as an important element of this strategy.

Education and training

We support the emphasis on planning and management of schools and training facilities. In particular, we support priority actions 4 and 13 that seeks to establish sustainable, efficient buildings and facilities and greener buildings. However, we consider that landscaping of schools and training facilities to be an important element of this, which is not currently sufficiently acknowledged (albeit it does factor into sustainability rating).

Justice and Public Safety

As acknowledged in the introduction to the plan, Queensland is Australia's most disaster-affected state. Effective stewardship of natural assets to deliver ecosystem services is essential to the resilience of the natural landscape which, in turn, is important to the health and safety of the Queensland community. This element does not appear to be discussed in the priority actions and we consider that this omission should be addressed in the final plan.

Arts, Culture, Recreation and Tourism

This key infrastructure type is of particular importance to AILA. We strongly support all initiatives that seek to support sustainable development of infrastructure that enables our population and visitors to participate in healthy sport and recreation activities, particularly activities that protect and showcase our distinctive natural landscapes. In particular, we support the following priority actions:

- Priority action 1 that seeks to optimise the Brisbane 2032 Games infrastructure and legacy.
- Priority action 2 that seeks to develop partnerships for active places and spaces
- Priority action 4 that seeks to embed arts and culture into infrastructure planning and design projects
- Priority action 6 that seeks to value arts, cultural and recreation.
- Priority action 14 that seeks to revitalise National Parks – it will be important that an appropriate level of funding is allocated to realise this ambition.
- Priority action 15 that seeks to support nature-based tourism opportunities. However, we consider it will be vitally important to balance the values of national parks with the benefits of tourism. We request that the wording of the action be updated to ensure it is clear that visitor activities must be compatible with the ecological, scientific, aesthetic and/or cultural values of the protected area.
- Priority action 16 that seeks to expand the protected area system
- Priority 17 that seeks to provide a capital works program to support the Queensland Active Precincts.



- Priority action 18 and 19 that seek to integrate First Nations arts and cultures into infrastructure projects and promote cultural tourism.

Social Housing

We support the emphasis of priority action 3 on supporting sustainability and innovation of person-centred and place-based responses to community housing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we recommend and believe that it is of critical importance to the future liveability and prosperity of Queensland that:

- the State Infrastructure Strategy be updated to refer specifically to Urban Green Infrastructure (green and blue infrastructure), *or alternatively*,
- each relevant infrastructure type be updated to include a priority action related to Urban Green Infrastructure and/or to strengthen references to green and blue infrastructure within the strategy for each infrastructure type.