



Australian Institute
of Landscape Architects
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AILA SA response to the draft Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-2025

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects – South Australian Chapter (AILA SA) is pleased to provide a response in support of the draft Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-2025. AILA SA is part of AILA, the growing national advocacy body representing 2,500 active and engaged Landscape Architects. Committed to designing and creating a better Australia, Landscape Architects have the skills and expertise to solve macro issues with innovative integrated solutions. Landscape Architects contribute leadership, creativity and innovation as they strive to collaborate to achieve better health, environmental, social and economic outcomes. From citywide strategies to the redesign of local parks, Landscape Architects are making places and spaces more sustainable and productive.

The Adelaide Park Lands Management Authority (APLA) and Adelaide City Council (ACC) should be congratulated on an open, engaging, collaborative and structured approach to the Park Lands Management Plan, and the use of design as a tool to demonstrate the Vision Objectives and Outcomes of the Strategy.

AILA SA has appreciated engagement with Adelaide City Council staff in the development of the Park Lands Strategy through the *Shape the Adelaide Park Lands* consultation as well as workshops with members to develop and review the draft Strategy

AILA SA recognises the influence of the profession in the development and delivery of the Strategy. Landscape Architects have been custodians of the process within Adelaide City Council; they have contributed as stakeholder as representatives within State Government and Inner Metro Councils; as well as fulfilled the role of design consultants in assisting the interpretation and representation of the Strategy.

This has been a unique local process and Adelaide City Council should be applauded for its collaborative approach with the profession.

Strategy Review

On review of the process undertaken to develop the draft Strategy, AILA SA provides the following comments in support:

- The broad and extensive consultation with the community through the *Shape Adelaide Park Lands* engagement is commended and provides a sound base to develop a responsive strategy
- The approach of the Strategy to look outwards and engage with the inner metro Councils, through a 'Park Lands without Borders' is recognised as an important collaborative step in the process and has contributed significantly to the engagement and debate regarding the Park Lands, and elevated its significance
- The Park Lands are fundamental to the identity, history and heritage of Adelaide and the inner suburbs. The appeal of the Park Lands, building on its existing character can have a significant influence in better surrounding built form, lifestyle as well as economic opportunities. AILA SA supports the recognition the Park Lands are given in the Strategy to drive growth, through an emphasis on people and place qualities. The identification of future growth within the city and inner rim suburbs is an important driver for change. The strategy acknowledges and responds to the

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importance of the Park Lands in leading change and ensuring greater liveability in changing urban forms across the CBD and surrounds

- The Vision, Big Moves (recognising both places and corridors), Objectives, Outcomes, Targets and Typologies build a logical approach to a balanced strategy that recognises the importance of place, as well as the Park Lands as a System. The Precinct Plans are highly graphical, acknowledging the existing character and proposed changes, through a layered and consistent approach. The Precinct Plans can be easily understood and interpreted, setting direction whilst retaining a level of flexibility to adapt to future change.
- The Urban Address is a significant shift in the conceptualisation of the Park lands. Many of the existing Park Land edges are not welcoming or in certain locations, not safe for people to access or enter. In recognition of the future change to the inner metro suburbs, the urban edge should be more attractive, accessible and active. The should not be 'back of house' or take the appearance of 'road verge', but points of entry, orientation, places to meet people or pause, as well as an accessible green edge to move along. More identifiable edges should bring the character and identity of the Park Lands out to the surrounding road network and reinforce its people and place qualities. The Urban Address is one of the strongest demonstrations of new thinking from an inward city centric view, to an outward and welcoming view to inner suburbs.
- The Riparian typology and the intent to naturalise the creeklines and drainage corridors through the park lands is also a significant proposal within the Landscape Typologies and has the potential to bring a very different amenity to the Park lands, appropriate to its place.
- The medium / large / major nodes all identify the possibility of multi-use built form within the Park Lands. These structures can provide recognised destinations and the opportunity for cafe / local events to draw people into the Park Lands and encourage them to stay longer. However in the detail, these facilities (buildings and supporting infrastructure) should reflect their Park Lands setting, and be as efficient in footprint as possible. The management of these nodes should avoid the privatisation of space within the Park Lands for commercial activities, without benefit to the Park Lands.

Recommendations

In support of the Strategy, AILA SA provides the following recommendations to further the impact of the work undertaken to date:

Living Cities

Climate change, and related issues such as Heat Island Effect, air pollution and increased Greenhouse gas emissions will be significant social, environmental and economic challenges in the densification of the CBD and inner suburbs.

The Strategy correctly acknowledges the need to respond to changing weather conditions to ensure the long term sustainability of the Park Lands. However AILA SA encourages the Strategy to use its profile to better identify the challenges and explain the role the Park Lands can play in Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.

The integration of climate change adaption and mitigation strategies into the Management Plan should be elevated to a fundamental *Driver of Change* and inform the prioritisation of key moves.

“The liveability of Australia’s cities will be affected by how their sustainability is managed.”

(Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development, *State of Australian Cities* 2013)

As average temperatures continue to rise, and the number of extreme heat days increase annually, methods to cool our cities are becoming increasingly important. With over three-quarters of Australians now living in urban areas¹, combating the “urban heat island effect” within our cities is becoming a major public health issue.



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The State of Australian Cities 2013 reports “People living in cities, particularly those in Australia’s inland cities, can be more susceptible than non-urban dwellers to the effects of heatwaves as a result of the urban heat island (UHI) effect. This is caused by the prevalence in cities of heat-absorbing materials such as dark coloured pavements and roofs, concrete, urban canyons trapping hot air, and a lack of shade and green space in dense urban environments.”ⁱⁱ

Increases in urban temperatures can increase air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and reduce human comfort, making it harder for people to cool down. Research undertaken by Melbourne City Council has found that average temperatures within Melbourne’s CBD are up to 4°C higher than the surrounding suburbs. During the evenings, the temperature difference can be up to 12°C. On hotter days and nights health risks increase for the most vulnerable within cities, particularly the young and elderly.

The City of Melbourne has commissioned a report into the current and future costs associated with heat, heat waves and the intensification of the urban heat island effect. It considered the impacts on health, transport infrastructure, energy demand and infrastructure, trees and animals, and crime. The report concluded: “The total economic cost to community due to hot weather is estimated to be \$1.8 billion in present value terms. Approximately one-third of these impacts are due to heatwaves. Of the total heat impact, the urban heat island effect contributes approximately \$300 million in present value.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Every 1°C temperature reduction that can be achieved through the better design of cities can equate to five per cent energy saving through reduced cooling loads.^{iv} Reduced cooling loads will have significant social, economic and environmental impact to the long term sustainability of Australian cities.

Alternatively, without changing the way we manage the growth of our cities, a Flinders University-led study has found that a 1°C temperature increase boosts cooling loads by 1.5million kWh per year, generating 1000 tonnes in carbon dioxide emissions. v

The Strategy should provide greater recognition of the economic impact the Park Lands would have on cooling and cleaning the neighbourhoods around the Park Lands. This is a major ‘Driver for Change’ that could be strengthened in the policy approach of the document. This message is already been promoted by Adelaide City Council in other initiatives, including Carbon Neutral Adelaide and would reinforce the importance of the Landscape Typologies as well as the overall strategic (living) systems approach to the Park Lands. The Management Strategy should build the case that we cant afford not to invest in the Park Lands.

Healthy Communities

The benefits to physical and mental health and well being, as well as increased productivity through access to green space should be amplified as a driver for change and targeted in policy as well as detailed in the typologies and precincts. The importance of play (natural, formal, unstructured, all ages), all ages learning and activity, as well as the building stronger communities should be highlighted in the document. The cost of physical and mental health issues, social isolation, lost productivity, and the social and economic benefits building communities, enhanced childhood development and aging in place should be emphasised to reinforce the importance of investing in the Park Lands

Integrated Transport Planning

The State Government through the ITLUP has identified a light rail network , including city loop and 4 key metropolitan spurs which engage with the Park Lands or pass through it. The tram alignment is not reflected in the Precinct Plans and AILA SA recommends the Adelaide City Council identify the preferred tram stop locations in the relevant precinct plans. Tram stops should be considered as “hubs” within the methodology of the Strategy and integrated with appropriate movement and landscape typology responses. Tram stops should not be considered as infrastructure but valued as places. Integration of Light Rail is recognised as a significant opportunity for the future focus of the Strategy and its strategic importance.

Implementation and Governance

The development of the Strategy is recognised for its success in bring together Adelaide City Council, neighbouring Local Governments, State Government and other stakeholders to develop common aims and objectives for the Park Lands. The detail within the draft Strategy is also a significant achievement.



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AILA SA recognises that issues regarding implementation and funding will be address following consultation of the draft Strategy. It is recommended that the same commitment that has achieved the draft Strategy is invested into developing a robust implementation framework and governance structure that will enable the vision and outcomes of the Strategy to be realised across the Park Lands in the short medium and long term.

AILA SA emphasises that budgets for Precinct Key Moves must consider the importance of ongoing maintenance in the long term success of the Strategy, and ensure appropriate financial commitment is in place.

Conclusion

In summary, AILA SA supports the draft Strategy and the process that Adelaide City Council and the Adelaide Park Lands Association (APLA) has undertaken. It is an easily understood and accessible document that elevates the significance of the Park lands in the future development of the CBD and the inner suburbs. Importantly the draft Strategy places a strong focus on people and places. The document is presented in a format that is highly graphical, well written and appropriately resolved, whilst balancing the needs for a framework that allows flexibility and adaptability to suit its long term implementation requirements.

The resilience of our cities, towns and suburbs to climate change will underpin their long term economic future. The long term management and investment of the Park Lands must be strengthened to recognise its importance in mitigating against the social, economic, and environmental impacts of climate change. The long term management of the Park Lands through the implementation of the Strategy must positively contribute to the long term sustainability of South Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Willsmore', written over a light grey grid background.

Ben Willsmore

AILA SA President

ⁱ Block, A. Livesley, S., Williams, N. 'Responding to the Urban Heat Island: A Review of the Potential of Green Infrastructure' Available from: <http://www.vcccar.org.au/sites/default/files/publications/VCCCAR%20Urban%20Heat%20Island%20-WEB.pdf> [Accessed 19 March 2015]

ⁱⁱ Infrastructure.gov.au, (2015) *State of Australian Cities 2013* [online] Available from: http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/soac/files/2013_00_INFRA1782_MCU_SOAC_CHAPTER_4_WEB_FA.pdf [Accessed 19 March 2015]

ⁱⁱⁱ AECOM, (2015). *Economic Assessment of the Urban Heat Island Effect*. [online] Melbourne: City of Melbourne. Available at: https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Sustainability/AdaptingClimateChange/Documents/UHI_Report_AECOM.pdf [Accessed 10 Jun. 2015].

^{iv} Lehmann, S. (2014). *Green Spaces Can Combat Urban Heat Stress - The Adelaide Review*. [online] The Adelaide Review. Available at: <http://adelaiderreview.com.au/form/green-spaces-can-combat-urban-heat-stress/> [Accessed 9 Jul. 2015]

^v Blogs.flinders.edu.au, (2015). *Flinders News > Adelaide Urban Heat Island project*. [online] Available at: <http://blogs.flinders.edu.au/flinders-news/tag/adelaide-urban-heat-island-project/> [Accessed 9 Jul. 2015]