



Australian Institute of  
Landscape Architects

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Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning

Submission by:

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

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To whom it may concern

**RE: AILA Submission regarding the Draft Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria**

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victorian Chapter provides the following submission in response to the **Draft Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria** (Framework), prepared by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

AILA is the peak organization for the landscape architecture profession in Australia and is a growing national advocacy body that promotes over 3,000 active and engaged landscape architects and their crucial role in shaping the world around us. Our membership covers a diverse range of professional services including strategic planning, urban design, building settings, open space design and natural resource management. Landscape architects work across all levels of government and within the private sector. Our profession creates benefits for communities by delivering meaningful landscape design that is adaptive to social and environmental change. AILA advocates an integrated, whole-of-government and multidisciplinary approach to the design, planning and development of all settlement, regardless of size or location. The five key principles underlying AILA's activities relate to climate change, green infrastructure, integrated urban design, stewardship and community engagement<sup>1</sup>. Each of these is central to sustainable settlement, which AILA regards as a matter of national priority<sup>2</sup>. Sustainable settlement involves complex interactions, complementarities and conflicts, which occur between individual sustainability parameters, one of which is water, and their subsequent impact on the patterns and effects of human settlement at local, regional and national scales. Decision-making frameworks are essential to guide the inevitable tradeoffs that this complexity demands.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://members.aila.org.au/imis\\_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Landscape%20Architecture%20Key%20Statements.pdf](http://members.aila.org.au/imis_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Landscape%20Architecture%20Key%20Statements.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.aila.org.au/imis\\_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Sustainable%20Settlement.pdf](http://www.aila.org.au/imis_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Sustainable%20Settlement.pdf).

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Specifically relating to water, AILA advocates an integrated, environmentally sensitive approach to the management of all our urban and regional waterways, with an emphasis on their conservation as a fundamental resource for human life and environmental health<sup>3</sup>. AILA supports the sustainable management and use of Australia's water resources, and promotes the key role of landscape planning processes in the design and management of waterways, water supply and distribution networks across myriad landscape contexts.

Thus, AILA congratulates DELWP for preparing this draft framework for the integrated management of Victoria's urban water, incorporating as well important peri-urban and rural interfaces. AILA shares DELWP's belief that integrated water management (IWM) can provide better community and environmental outcomes than the traditional approaches to water management. We commend DELWP's recognition of four factors for successful IWM:

1. embedding water management into existing planning processes as 'business as usual' state-wide,
2. identification of roles and responsibilities amongst the various collaborating organisations, including allocation of benefits, costs and risks,
3. shared values of these organisations, released from institutional constraints to explore alternative servicing options that were not previously considered part of 'business as usual', and
4. integrated solutions for implementation.

Involvement of the community in IWM is critical and AILA commends the inclusion of forums in the IWM planning process to identify, coordinate and prioritise IWM options. The framework recognises that the community is inextricably connected to the water cycle. It highlights the efficiencies that can be gained when the community is in harmony with the water cycle. AILA suggests that there are other benefits, relating to sense of place, social relations and biophilia. For this reason, AILA would like to see the forums opened to wider participation, including interested members of local communities. Community views and preferences are listed amongst considerations for setting priorities. Individual community members are unlikely to provide a representative view of the wider community. What mechanisms are proposed to ensure that community views and preferences are known and understood? Will formal studies be commissioned or will anecdotal evidence be accepted? The resultant IWM Forum Strategic Directions Statement is seen to be a useful communication tool in seeking feedback from the community. What form will this feedback take? AILA would encourage DELWP to use inclusive models of collaboration and transparent decision-making processes that promote positive engagement and consultation with communities at the forum itself, not limited to responses to a directions statement produced by water professionals and other 'experts'. Informal, tacit knowledge can be as important as formal knowledge.

The Framework recognises the importance of place-based outcomes and service levels, including water sensitive urban design (WSUD). AILA supports the use of WSUD as an integral component of all interventions in the natural or built environment. AILA advocates WSUD strategies that seek to move beyond merely addressing the requirements of public health and sanitation to encompass a broader range of social, economic and environmental objectives<sup>4</sup>. The goal of place-based outcomes is important to optimise the benefits of WSUD as advocated by AILA. Again, collaboration with local communities will be essential to achieve this goal. The framework accommodates this in the development of IWM plans, which AILA applauds.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://members.aila.org.au/imis\\_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Water.pdf](http://members.aila.org.au/imis_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Water.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://members.aila.org.au/imis\\_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Water.pdf](http://members.aila.org.au/imis_prod/documents/AILA/Advocacy/National%20Policy%20Statements/Water.pdf)



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AILA supports a collaborative governance model, as proposed in the Framework. Again, representation of the community is highlighted. How this representation will be undertaken is not

clear. AILA encourages DELWP to ensure that community representation is real and valid, and that community values are evidence-based. Risk management will be an important aspect of collaborative governance, which will be based on best practice. AILA is pleased that risk is acknowledged and will be managed rather than averted.

It is also noted that while the Framework identifies partnerships between local government, DELWP, Melbourne Water and catchment management authorities, it should also reference the Victorian Planning Authority and Places Victoria as they play a crucial role in the planning and implementation of IWM into urban development. It is also important that the proposed IWM Forums recognise and align any future planning with relevant work already undertaken by others including existing IWM Forums, the Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee work, the Greening the West Project etc.

IWM involves many challenges, among them the need for new professional practices and institutional cultures. AILA commends the provision of technical guidance and capacity building to support IWM. In particular, DELWP will provide an economic evaluation and cost allocation framework for assessing IWM plans; preliminary project assessment guidelines for IWM options; and guidelines for integrated water planning and analysis, a web-based IWM collaborative mapping tool, and guidelines for planning green-blue infrastructure, to IWM forum participants. In addition, DELWP is developing a capacity-building program to help the transition by the water sector to IWM.

Melbourne is growing fast and undergoing rapid densification, which also presents a major challenge for IWM. It is important that the IWM planning process is timely to ensure that wherever possible precinct IWM plans are in place in advance of new development projects when IWM opportunities are greatest. In addition it is important that implementation of IWM projects is supported by funding streams.

In summary, AILA is pleased to support, in general, the draft IWM Framework developed by DELWP. Attention, however, should be given to the role of the community in participating in the IWM forums and subsequent development of IWM plans to ensure that the outcomes are truly place-based and informed by community values.

Should you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact Felicity McGahan, AILA Victoria Chapter Manager, on 0401 811 976 or [vic@aila.org.au](mailto:vic@aila.org.au) .

Yours sincerely

**Felicity McGahan**

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