



Standing Advisory Committee  
For Golf Course Redevelopment

2 October 2019

Dear Golf Course Redevelopment Standing Advisory Committee,

**RE: Review of Draft Planning Guidelines for Golf Course Redevelopment**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Planning Guidelines for Golf Course Redevelopment.

**The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)** is a professional organisation representing landscape architects with core expertise in design of public space in cities including transport infrastructure and open space. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities and greater environmental stewardship, for which we advocate with all levels of government.

We provide our members - which number over 3,500 in urban and rural Australia, and overseas – with training, recognition and a community of practice to share knowledge, ideas and action.

With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design, planning and management of the natural and built environment.

AILA's Victorian Chapter supports the initiative to develop Planning Guidelines for Golf Course Development and feels that its members could make a significant contribution. Melbourne is experiencing its third great population boom.

This involves a process of densification and sprawl. In this context, green open space will become ever more important. Golf courses are large areas of green open space that have been preserved within areas of suburban development. Often these sites have been selected for their high level of natural amenity. The land use future of these rare and high-value landscapes requires careful and holistic decision making to ensure the best outcome for Victorians, now and into the future.

While the draft guidelines' three steps clearly outline the key planning steps and outline a planning decision framework for assessing planning applications, we provide the following feedback:

**Step 1. Is there strategic merit to the proposal?**

- Consult with Traditional Owners to gain an understanding of the site's cultural and ecological significance as well as to identify opportunities for Traditional Owner involvement in the site's future.
- Include the *Yarra Strategic Plan* (pending) in the list of relevant local and state planning strategies. Being developed by Melbourne Water as a requirement of the landmark *Yarra River Protection Act*, this legislation represents a significant approach to site planning through an integrated consideration of cultural, ecological, open space and land use values. Given the high number of golf courses located within Melbourne's most culturally and ecologically significant landscape corridor, reference to the Plan and Act in these guidelines is considered especially crucial.
- All rezoning of former golf course land, given the high value of these sites, should (vs. 'may', per page 3) require ratification by both Houses of Parliament.
- Delay any major land use decisions should significant legislation or strategies be pending.

**Step 2. Are there particular site values or constraints?**

- To understand the values of the site, require (vs. 'recommend', per page 4) a CHMP for every site as well as a comprehensive ecological assessment.



**Step 3. Does the proposal deliver net community benefits?**

- Carefully define 'net community benefit', capturing the current and future needs of the community.
- Carefully define 'environmental sustainability', referencing measurable industry best practice standards like Green Star.

Given that the document is at its early stage, these comments are preliminary. AILA would appreciate the opportunity to participate in future workshops or forums on what will become very important policy for Victoria.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. We would be happy to discuss our submission further. Please contact that AILA Victoria Chapter Manager, Martha Delfas at [martha.delfas@aila.org.au](mailto:martha.delfas@aila.org.au)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ella Gauci-Seddon', written in a cursive style.

Ella Gauci-Seddon  
AILA Victoria, Vice President

**About Landscape Architects**

Landscape architects are skilled in the development of design approaches that consider the social, cultural and ecological contexts of sites to achieve holistic outcomes and maximise their benefit. Given the high value of these sites and the need for a holistic understanding of them, AILA recommends, in addition to a robust and thorough statutory planning process, that a comprehensive site analysis, design and design review process take place in parallel. We recommend a requirement that both a planner and landscape architect be involved in both the preparation and assessment of all town planning applications of this type.

Areas where landscape architects involve:

1. Project Master planning;
2. Landscape assessments;
  - significant landscape overlays
  - biodiversity and wildlife assets
  - cultural heritage sensitivity
3. Design of open space, sports and recreational facilities including golf;
4. Site planning of innovative housing and other facilities and;
5. Promoting use of indigenous plants and retaining biodiversity links.

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