



Australian Institute  
of Landscape Architects  
1966/2016

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Submission by:

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

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To whom it may concern

**Re: *Safe and Accessible Victorian Waterways Discussion Paper***

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victorian Chapter provides the following submission in response to the *Safe and Accessible Victorian Waterways Discussion Paper* prepared by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

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. We support environmental stewardship through thoughtful leadership in planning, design, construction and management of quality landscapes, including coastal, aquatic and riverine landscapes. Such landscapes can be directly impacted by the recreational use of Victorian waterways.

AILA supports the contents of the Discussion Paper and praises the Victorian Government's commitment to safe and accessible use of our waterways. We are pleased that the government acknowledges Victoria's waterways as one of the state's greatest natural assets, with important social, economic, environmental and cultural values that need to be managed and maintained. The Discussion Paper reveals the dispersed management structure for the state's waterways, with multiple agencies and authorities involved, often with little co-ordination and consequent confusion, inconsistency and inadequate maintenance. AILA advocates for a truly integrated approach to managing the state's waterways, aligned with urban settlement development. To do so demands the collection and analysis of data and information on waterway use, values and current management. This is essential for evidence-based decision-making, to help resolve conflicting pressures on the waterways. The waterways must be managed in a sustainable manner, supporting sustainable aquatic and marine industries across relevant spatial and temporal scales, as part of a national sustainable settlement strategy. A major challenge will be adaptation to climate change, assessing vulnerabilities and impacts, particularly along the coast, and designing responses.

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The Discussion Paper highlights challenges and opportunities for safe and accessible waterways in Victoria. In addition, AILA would draw attention to the many challenges inherent in ensuring that safe and accessible coastal waterways are also developed and managed in a more sustainable manner. Not least of these is our relatively poor understanding of the ocean's complex environmental settings and the drivers of pattern and change in its ecological communities, including coastal ecosystems. Further complexity is introduced by addressing the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels, rising ocean and air temperatures, ocean acidification and extreme weather events are amplified by underlying sustainability pressures associated with increased use of waterways, such as resource depletion, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Where commercial interests and economic potential exist, only waterway development that supports and enhances ongoing ecosystem functioning should be encouraged. Nevertheless, development should in all cases be consistent with sound land and water management practices, recognizing the extremely dynamic biological, ecological and geomorphological processes that shape and influence our local and regional coastal areas.

The Discussion Paper compares aspects of Victorian waterway management with that in other Australian states. AILA supports greater consistency and co-operation between the states in such matters. We particularly recommend a national coastal and aquatic information system for environmental reporting, which should be integrated with state and local government strategic planning legislation and management instruments. We also encourage the development of specific frameworks, guidelines and tools for integrated coastal and inland waterway management that considers industry development and settlement planning. This should lead to design-based initiatives that would enable governments, industry and communities to work together to improve sustainability and climate adaptation outcomes in areas associated with waterways.

Should you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact Felicity McGahan AILA Victoria State Manager on 0401 811 976.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith Dobbie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Meredith Dobbie  
Chair, Environment Committee  
AILA Victoria