



Infrastructure Victoria
Level 33/140 William St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Friday 26 February 2021

RE: Feedback on Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy, December 2020

To Whom It May Concern.

WHO ARE THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (AILA)?

AILA is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members 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.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 3,500 landscape architects nationwide and promotes excellence in planning and designing for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability by delivering innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, landscape architects contribute to better environmental, social, and economic outcomes for all Australians.

AILA's Charter stresses that urban and rural landscapes contribute to the Australian quality of life and that the condition of the landscape influences the economic, social and environmental health of the nation.

RESPONSE TO VICTORIA'S DRAFT 30-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Victoria's Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy has ten objectives:

1. Prepare for population change
2. Foster healthy, safe and inclusive communities
3. Reduce disadvantage
4. Enable workforce participation
5. Lift productivity
6. Drive Victoria's changing, globally integrated economy
7. Promote sustainable production and consumption
8. Protect and enhance natural environments
9. Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation
10. Build resilience to shocks



In addressing these objectives, the draft strategy has four key sections:

1. Confront long-term challenges
2. Manage urban change
3. Harness infrastructure for productivity and growth
4. Develop regional Victoria

Within these sections, there are 95 recommendations, across nine key topics:

1. Transport and freight
2. Community, culture and education
3. Digital connectivity
4. Energy
5. Climate, environment and tourism
6. Health and human services
7. Justice and emergency services
8. Water
9. Housing and land use planning

AILA has a number of [position statements](#) that articulate and clarify its stance on topical issues impacting our society today. In addition, AILA declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in 2019. These documents support all ten objectives of the draft 30-year strategy. The professional activities of landscape architects impact on all sections and topics presented in the strategy. However, for the purposes of this submission, the focus is on topics 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9. In responding, we adopt the format of the summary of draft recommendations.

Section 1: Confront long-term challenges

1.1 Navigate the energy transition

- AILA supports all recommendations 1-8.

1.2 Respond to a changing climate

- AILA supports all recommendations 9-15. In particular, we emphasise the importance of recommendations 11-13. All water supply sources must be considered for Victorian consumers (#11). The role of green infrastructure in contributing to fit-for-purpose water supply must be included in the strategy. Integrated water cycle management is essential (#12), as is improved decision-making for urban water investment (#13). Risk perceptions and unconscious biases must be understood and managed when making such decisions. The review of policy settings relating to these recommendations should also consider how to reduce hard surfaces/increase area of permeable surfaces in public and private space, as well as consider how to better utilise stormwater run-off.
- AILA supports recommendation 16, Invest in protecting Victorian coasts. This is likely to be extremely costly and not always feasible. Equally important is appropriate planning to prevent development and construction of buildings in locations shown by sea-level rise scenarios to be likely subject to inundation.



1.4 Stay connected to global markets

- AILA prioritises development of public transport over increasing the road network. Although we acknowledge the benefit of constructing an outer metropolitan road and rail corridor (recommendation 27), AILA encourages Infrastructure Victoria to adopt innovative solutions, especially for any new road construction. International examples demonstrate that it is possible to construct major roads that do not negatively impact on landscape amenity and environmental values, e.g. [Madrid River project](#) and the [Big Dig project](#) in Boston. Such infrastructure projects should be undertaken by a multidisciplinary team from the outset, led by urban designers/landscape architects rather than traffic engineers. This ensures that innovative solutions can be scoped from project inception to deliver on a range of financial, safety, social and environmental success metrics.

Section 2: Manage urban change

2.1 Integrate land use and infrastructure planning

- AILA believes that Victoria's transport system must be integrated (recommendation 33). Transport and land use plans must not only be aligned but also integrated.
- Recommendations 34, 37 and 38 relate to funding greener spaces. This work should also include an exploration of new ways to capture the value of an investment in street greening, leveraging the value created when additional trees are planted in a street. Further information on this concept is contained in this 2017 [AECOM report](#).

2.2 Create thriving urban places

- AILA strongly supports recommendations 35-44 relating to the creation of thriving urban places. However, some of these can be improved. An omission in recommendation 35 is the provision of adequate open green space and canopy cover in established suburbs undergoing densification. The experience of COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of close access to open green space for active and passive recreation and for the restorative qualities of nature. In addition, there is much evidence to show the benefit of increased canopy cover in urban and suburban settings. Increasing canopy cover in established suburbs can be more challenging than in new residential developments but this should be included in the recommendation. Mention should be made of the potential of green infrastructure to contribute to the quality of pedestrian infrastructure (#38) and cycling (#39) and reallocation of road space to priority transport modes (#41). This work should also include assessing the potential to transform roads into open space through road closures and/or narrowing to ensure the area of open space per person within a 5-minute walk is maintained and enhanced as densification occurs.

2.3 Adapt infrastructure for modern needs

- Recommendations 57 and 58 discuss public housing renewal and public hospital provision. This work should include a focus on building AND landscape redesign and integration to ensure user-centred therapeutic public spaces are created for clients, visitors and tenants. To ensure this occurs, a multidisciplinary team should be appointed comprised of urban designers, landscape architects and architects.



Section 3: Harness infrastructure for productivity and growth

3.1 Shape the transport network for better access

- AILA supports all recommendations that improve the delivery of public transport services (#62-#67). In recommendation 67, AILA encourages Infrastructure Victoria to be innovative in the design and implementation of any new motorway linking the Eastern Freeway and CityLink. Such a motorway should be established as an urban design project, not as a traffic engineering project. Please refer to comment under 1.4 Stay connected to global markets.

3.2 Plan for growth areas

- AILA supports recommendations 68 and 69, which relate to infrastructure provision and rail access for outer suburbs and developing areas.
- AILA believes that recommendation 70 is critical. A **minimum** continuous canopy cover of 30% must be achieved in new growth areas. In addition, this target must be extended to existing development in all towns and cities in Victoria, including regional areas. Funding is critical to achieve this canopy cover, especially for maintenance of trees once planted. This recommendation must apply to both the public and private domains of Victorian cities and towns to achieve an optimal outcome. A project has commenced in NSW by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to take an evidence-based approach to setting canopy targets to ensure planning controls are amended to enable the maximum canopy target based on land use types. It is recommended that Victoria consider a similar approach. In addition funding of canopy targets through value capture associated with infill development should also be explored. Refer to 2.1 Integrate land use and infrastructure planning.

3.3 Align social infrastructure with better service delivery

- AILA supports recommendations 72 and 73, to improve the provision of social infrastructure to our Indigenous communities and to increase the availability and suitability of social housing. Innovative design of social housing that responds to the cultural and physical needs of families across multiple generations, including surrounding landscape amenity, is key to the success of social housing. An additional focus on testing new approaches to integrated building and landscape design supported by innovative social service models would be beneficial.

Section 4: Develop regional Victoria

4.2 Unlock regional economic growth opportunities

- AILA acknowledges the importance of improving economic growth opportunities in regional Victoria. However, regarding recommendations 82 and 84, great care must be exercised when developing nature-based tourism in national parks. The specific criteria for approval of leases for infrastructure proposals in national parks must be very strict and environmental and heritage values must not be compromised in any way by development.

AILA congratulates *Infrastructure Victoria* for preparing the Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy, which acknowledges the challenges facing Victoria, especially those associated with climate change, population growth and COVID-19.



The draft strategy's 10 objectives are appropriate to support the lives and well-being of Victorians in the future, and the 95 recommendations should contribute to the objectives' achievement. AILA encourages *Infrastructure Victoria* to continue to be innovative in its approaches to the use of existing infrastructure, management of demand and planning for new infrastructure. In particular, AILA would like to see the integration of land use and infrastructure planning, implementation of green infrastructure, integration of water cycle management involving all water supply sources and a shift in emphasis from road building to development of integrated public transport.

Should you require additional input from AILA, please contact Victoria Chapter Manager, **Martha Delfas** at vic@aila.org.au.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heath Gledhill', written over a faint horizontal line.

Heath Gledhill

State Chapter President, Victoria
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Submission authored by AILA Environment Committee Chair, **Dr Meredith Dobbie**.