
From: Catherine Neilson [climate@aila.org.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 23 August 2011 15:46
To: Our Cities
Subject: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) response to Draft Framework "Creating Places for People - an urban design protocol for Australian cities"

Dear Sara,

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) submits the following comments regarding the "*Creating Places for People – an urban design protocol for Australia's cities*" document, recently released for public comment by the Major Cities Unit, Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

Up until late February 2011, AILA representatives - as invited members of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee - had made extensive contributions to development of the draft Australian Urban Design Protocol via the AUDP online *Collabforge Wiki* process, led by Jenny Rayment on behalf of the Major Cities Unit and Melbourne City Council.

Work carried out by this group appears to have been utterly disregarded in the current draft version of the Protocol, and the apparent abandonment of this collaborative multi-stakeholder process has resulted in a significantly weaker document than the Institute expected. The Institute is both disappointed and puzzled as to why the Major Cities Unit has elected to apparently overlook all previous work and collaborative efforts on the development of the Protocol without consultation with key stakeholders, and no explanation has been offered to AILA as to why this change of direction has occurred.

The AILA endorses the comments made in separate responses by AILA Fellows Katharina Nieberler-Walker and Tony Blackwell to the draft document – in short, that this document as it stands represents a significant missed opportunity for the Commonwealth Government, if it wishes to drive best policy and practice outcomes for urban design in Australian cities in the immediate or long-term future.

Most critically, the document fails to adequately articulate or address what is currently widely regarded as a crucial ('best practice') responsibility of urban design & policy mechanisms – i.e. that of prioritising efforts to develop, enhance and support regenerative green infrastructure capacity within our cities and towns, for the ongoing health and prosperity of all citizens. It is superficial in the extreme to relegate the function and performance of urban landscape to merely 'appearance', as the current draft implies.

AILA's submission to the National Urban Policy outlined the extensive linkages between green infrastructure capacity and national prosperity, sustainability and liveability. We remain as an organization willing to support the government's efforts to enhance initiatives for planning and development of Australian cities for a more liveable, sustainable future.

To this end, AILA would be happy to re-engage with the Major Cities Unit as a key stakeholder, & to assist with necessary amendments to enable the existing draft protocol to fulfil its true potential to act as a mechanism for driving meaningful change in our urban environments of the future. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the AILA National Office (details below) if you wish to discuss any of the issues raised herein.

Kind regards,
Catherine Neilson

