



Australian
Institute of
Architects

NSW CHAPTER

2015 NSW ELECTION PLATFORM

URBAN POLICY

Sydney cannot continue to expand outwards as its population grows, as this will increase the strain on roads, infrastructure and arable land.

To meet the housing needs of its growing population Sydney needs to become thicker and higher so that more people live in its current footprint.

But there has to be a public pay-off for this increased density. The community does not accept more intense urban development without corresponding urban improvement.

The city needs to become better as it becomes bigger.

Design is the key to Sydney's bigger and better future.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW Government facilitates quality urban renewal by:

- i. encouraging community engagement in local government strategic planning within the framework of current planning legislation;
- ii. focusing on design as a key element in strategic planning at all scales – local to regional;
- iii. encouraging metropolitan councils to adopt design excellence provisions in their LEPs for major developments and landmark sites; and
- iv. mandating the use of design review panels for all building projects above \$10M.

MULTI-RESIDENTIAL RENEWAL

Sydney's residents are increasingly choosing not to live in houses.

22% of all Sydney's private dwellings are now apartments – up from 15% in 2002 – and house approvals have dropped to 45% of total residential building approvals.

But this increasing trend towards multi-residential living is being hampered by a property market and approvals system that discourages the re-development of older building stock, particularly three-storey walk-ups built in the 1960s and 70s.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW Government facilitates the expansion of the multi-residential housing market by:

- i. encouraging the retro-fitting and re-development of older multi-residential building stock through negotiations between local governments, property developers and the banking sector;
- ii. relaxing the 100% voting rule for strata owners to agree to retro-fitting or re-development. The Institute recommends:

75% for buildings with less than 10 owners; and
80% for buildings with more than 10 owners.
- iii. facilitating precinct planning for developments that provide residents with access to jobs, green spaces, public transport and amenities.

MULTI-RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

SEPP 65 has dramatically improved the design quality and amenity of apartments in NSW.

The current review of the legislation is an opportunity to create policies and approval processes which insist on a minimum level of design performance, while facilitating and encouraging design excellence.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW Government promotes design excellence in the multi-residential sector by:

- i. including metrics for design standards in the amended SEPP 65;
- ii. providing separate advice for development control plans (DCPs) and development assessment in the Apartment Design Guide; and
- iii. extending the coverage of SEPP 65 design principles to other multi-residential building types, such as villas and townhouses.

PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT

The NSW Government is a key player in the state's property industry as manager and developer. There is inconsistency between agencies in methods of procurement and the conditions under which architects and other professionals are engaged. This hampers the creation of a consistent culture of excellence in the NSW public sector procurement program.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the Government Architect delivered quality buildings and infrastructure projects that are now the cornerstone of the state's cultural heritage. The Government Architect's Office has the potential to facilitate the strategic delivery of a quality public sector procurement program.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW government aims to achieve excellence in the delivery of public infrastructure and buildings by:

- i. adopting a consistent building procurement system across all state agencies;
- ii. using the Association of Consulting Architects of Australia's guideline for the preparation of architectural briefs;
- iii. using AS 4122 – 2010 with amendment No. 1 as the base contract document;
- iv. encouraging the participation of new and emerging architectural practices in the procurement process;
- v. developing a design excellence policy for key public sites through the Government Architect's Office; and
- vi. introducing a State Design Review Panel for major public projects to be managed by the Government Architect's Office.

SUSTAINABILITY

Buildings are responsible for 23% of total carbon emissions. It is therefore important that the property sector plays a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change.

The NSW Government can assist this process by setting a realistic date for compliance with zero carbon emissions from new buildings and using available rating tools such as BASIX to achieve it.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW Government sets a target of zero carbon emissions in new buildings in the 2020-2030 decade and raises the BASIX target in increments over the next decade.

HERITAGE

NSW has one of Australia's finest collections of heritage architecture, including the country's only 18th century buildings. Much of the state's heritage portfolio consists of public buildings and infrastructure delivered by successive Colonial and Government Architects.

The Australian Institute of Architects maintains a Register of Significant Architecture and makes recommendations on significant buildings for listing on local environmental plans and the State Heritage Register. The Sulman Medal is the highest accolade awarded by the Institute's NSW Chapter. In 2012 the Chapter adopted a policy of recommending all existing Sulman Medal winners for listing on the State Heritage Register.

The Australian Institute of Architects recommends that the NSW Government:

- i. provides leadership in heritage management by conserving, managing, adapting and creatively using key public heritage assets; and
- ii. lists all existing Sulman Medal winners on the State Heritage Register.

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