



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Communities need schools, health care and transport – but what about housing? The Australian Institute of Architects responds to NSW Budget 2018-19

The Australian Institute of Architects is pleased to see yesterday's budget announcement includes spending on built infrastructure for health and education, as well as an undertaking to engage community on small projects, but asks 'what about the housing for the people of NSW to live in?'

NSW Treasurer, The Hon. Mr Perrottet yesterday announced \$6 billion over four years to build and upgrade 170 schools and \$8 billion over four years to build and upgrade 40 hospitals. This funding is welcome, however, it needs to be rolled out in a considered way to ensure the best outcomes and value for money for the people of NSW.

'Architects will lead the design of spaces for education and health that best support teachers, students, patients, health professionals and the public,' said the Australian Institute of Architects' NSW Chapter President, Mr Andrew Nimmo. 'However, they need to work to a well-developed brief, with a shared commitment to design excellence and be supported by a fair procurement process that recognises both the real cost and value of design. That has not always been the case.'

In announcing the My Community Dividend, Mr Perrottet explained that: 'Governments don't always have the best solutions, particularly on smaller projects that make a difference to people's lives.' The Institute recognises the key role community plays in providing input for planning and projects, and our experience shows that '*better places*' are achieved when architects are brought into a design-led process as collaborative partners.

'Architects' involvement helps ensure ideas and requirements arising from the community are developed into highly considered built forms that realise greatest community benefit and connect well with their broader context,' explained Mr Nimmo. 'We look forward to learning further about this initiative and receiving more detail with which to form a clearer view about how the initiative can be made to work most effectively for the people of NSW.'

The Institute is also pleased to note that the announcement of this program indicates a counterpoint to previous budgets, in which a greater emphasis has been placed on major infrastructure. 'Strong communities are brought together and supported by quality design, which relies as much on the broader infrastructure as it does the local places in which people live, and the facilities they share.'

From schools and hospitals to housing and community amenities, development of our built environments needs to be responsive to climate change. It must also support sustainable practices, from procurement and construction right through to the way these environments enable people to operate and move within them. It is therefore disappointing to see the low priority given to environmental issues in this budget, particularly against the backdrop of a significant underspending of money allocated in the previous budget to the Climate Change Fund.

Despite housing affordability being described as ‘the biggest issue’ for people across NSW, the budget is strangely quiet on measures to address this directly. Given the NSW population is set to jump more than 40 per cent to more than 11 million by 2056 it is clear that a highly considered and committed strategy needs to be developed to ensure high quality, diverse housing options in all areas to accommodate the variously configured households that do – and will – make up our population.

Mr Nimmo stated: ‘We trust that in the coming twelve months in the lead up to the election we will be able to have a frank conversation about the need for greater housing diversity – crises rarely dissipate in the space of 12 months.’

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Australian Institute of Architects is the peak body for the architectural profession, representing almost 11,000 members across Australia and overseas.