



## CENTRAL DARWIN AREA PLAN | DISCUSSION PAPER

This submission has been prepared in response to the work currently being undertaken by the Planning Commission, with respect to Central Darwin Area Plan. The Australian Institute of Architects thanks the Commission for the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the process.

We acknowledge that this is the first in a three stage process, which will culminate in the preparation of an Area Plan. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the terms of this phase of community consultation are set out in the Central Darwin Area Plan Discussion Paper. We offer the following comments in review of the high level principles set forth in this document.

### PLANNING THEMES

#### Growth Considerations

- Dwelling types, as identified by the ABS, clearly highlight a need for more housing choice. There is a significant gap in low-rise, medium density housing.
  - Currently high-rise, high density living dominates the options in Central Darwin.
- The lack of housing choice together with limited access to green space and community services has meant fewer family households are able to enjoy the benefits of urban density.
- A lower percentage of family households can also be held accountable to this lack of variety as can limited green space and community facilities. Family living is not limited to detached houses, but for families to be interested in higher density living there needs to be a provision for public amenities.
- The infill dwellings required could be repurposed existing buildings.
- Growth predictions of both retail & commercial and housing clearly show that a mixed-use approach to development is necessary. Retail won't survive without residents and workers coming into the city. People won't live in the city without retail and commercial activities.
  - **(From Previous Mid Suburbs Plan)** *Where the Australian Institute of Architects supports the principle of "activity centres", we recognise that how this relates to specific contexts requires individual analysis, and is unlikely to 'look' the same from one area to another. We wish to caution that the emphasis on "centres" of activity can be misleading, and for the less well informed, misconstrued as a one-size fits-all policy. The history of urban form suggests that such policies have a tendency to be misappropriated as a shortcut to easily implementable, but long term inappropriate, "solutions" by those not engaged in their development.*
- We support and encourage the growth of Harriet Place as an "activity centre." With the relocation of Creative Accomplice to Mayfair gallery in 2018 this area will continue to expand, especially within the arts and culture sector.

## **Movement and Transport**

- The AIA disagrees with connection of Barneson beyond McMinn. However, in this occurrence the connection of Barneson to Cavanagh and the rest of the city is of concern for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Once people terminate at the end of Barneson Boulevard on Cavanagh St there is limited infrastructure to direct traffic to car parks as well as good networks for cyclists and pedestrian. This will need to have significant planning from the NTG and CoD to ensure good traffic flows.
- We support introduction of ferry services to Darwin CBD.
- We encourage the inclusion of a clear public transport connection from Cullen bay to the Waterfront, in the process connecting the new Museum to State Square.
- Pedestrian activity high along Knuckey and Smith Streets due to retail activity and shade/cover and should be a key part in planning for walkability.
- Cycling networks to the city are to be commended but once in the city there is no infrastructure for cyclists. Map 3 clearly shows this existing disconnection. Clear & protected cycle paths, showers and lock up facilities need to be invested in to increase the number of cyclists entering Darwin CBD. If not provided by government there should be consideration for mandatory inclusion of cycling facilities in all new buildings.
- We support focus on walkability through increased shade, landscaping and street cooling.
- Urban information technology projects could include: public Wi-Fi, experiential and tourism app developments, way finding tools etc.

## **Environment**

- Darwin CBD currently turns its back on the coastline, our most valuable asset as the capital of the North. This connection needs to be improved as a part of becoming a vibrant tropical city.
- We support the urban forest; this is as much about the ground below as it is the canopy. Landscape architects have a lot to offer in this sector.
- Green space in private development needs to be increased and enforced.
- Map 4 clearly shows a lack of open space and organised recreation. The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests a minimum of 9 square metres of green space per person and could easily be integrated as a minimum standard in new developments.

## **Culture and Heritage**

- We support adaptive reuse of built environment heritage. However this may not apply to cultural and natural heritage sites; these should be assessed on a case by case basis.
- Support the value and inclusion of the Larrakia voice in the development of the Area Plan.

## **Social Infrastructure**

- Support upgrading and provision of community facilities, agree that they include museums, libraries, childcare, schools, aged care, creative space, cultural spaces and community meetings space.
- There is a lack of medium sized space for community groups outside of Browns Mart. Creative and cultural places should be led by those in the creative industries and cultural groups.
- Green space should also be considered social infrastructure encouraging public engagement, social interaction and civic participation.

## **FOCUS AREAS**

### **City Centre**

#### **What do you think about the opportunities, influences and considerations show on Map 5?**

- Current housing lots highlighted as “potential urban renewal” raises concerns about the availability and variety of housing. Moving the only affordable housing in the CBD will significantly impact the variety of people that makes a city liveable/successful. Agree with the urban renewal of parliament carpark and the post office carpark with significant protection of the boab tree. Darwin should be leading the way of turning carparks into green spaces as a part of the urban forest
- Agree that buildings heights along the esplanade need to be reassessed. The lack of connection from the city to the park and water’s remains a lost opportunity.
- Again open space/recreation obvious gap

### **Old Darwin Hospital Site, Myilly Point and Cullen Bay**

- Connectivity between the new museum and the existing urban fabric is a key concern in this area. Components of connectivity include:
  - a link loop bus service;
  - smooth transition shared slow traffic bike & pedestrian path;
  - fast bike traffic path;

### **Larrakeyah**

- The character of Larrakeyah can be attributed to significant vegetation, proximity to the city and a variety of style and types of housing.
- Map 7 clearly shows the high and low density living with a significant gap in in low-rise, medium density housing. The area of transition, as identified, is key to the retention of the existing character of this suburb.

### **Darwin Waterfront**

- The most recent subdivision application undermines the long term vision of the Waterfront. It abandons the overriding principle of public access to the waterfront and lacks sufficient detail to assess the quality and effectiveness of future linkages with existing infrastructure and open space.
- Support the priority of a continuous pedestrian connection along the water’s edge, however this should also extend to the cyclist network.

- Support the prioritisation of pedestrian connections to the city at both Smith St and The Esplanade
- A pedestrian connection from the Cruise Ship Terminal to the CBD should a priority in this area

### **Frances Bay**

- Possible car ferry terminal to Cox peninsula, location subject to outcome of the study commissioned by the NT government: **'Study to identify future ferry sites and infrastructure need for Darwin'**.
- Public transport loop from Frances Bay to CBD.
- Support mixed use development, retail, residential and cultural.
- Ensure any future development the foreshore access is open to the public.
- New development and associated land reclamation to foster the development of a pedestrian and bike link from the waterfront to Bayview and recently completed tiger Brennan bike path.
- Develop the retail (fish market) hub.

### **Tank Farm**

- Possibly contaminated soil from previous industrial use, remediate area to an urban Park with urban activities, Parkour, Skate.
- Indigenous cultural space as a job and income generator for the one mile community.
- Light retail to cater for park user, one mile dam community and established low rise residential development.
- Public transport loop