



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

Response to the 30  
Year Plan for  
Greater Adelaide  
2016 Update

**Submission to**

**Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure**

## SUBMISSION BY

Australian Institute of Architects  
ABN 72 000 023 012  
South Australian Chapter Office  
100 Flinders Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

100 Flinders Street  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Telephone: 08 84025900  
Facsimile: 08 84025999  
email: [sa@architecture.com.au](mailto:sa@architecture.com.au)

## PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure in response to the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide 2016 Update
- This submission has been prepared with the assistance of David Homburg (Chapter President), Matt Davis (Davis and Davis Architects), Mario Dreosti (Brown Falconer), David Burton (Williams Burton Leopardi), Tony Giannonne (Tectus), Paul Boyce (Tridente Architects) and Enzo Caroscio (Enzo Caroscio Architecture and Design).
- At the time of this submission the SA Chapter Council of the Institute is: David Homburg (State Chapter President), Steve Grieve (Immediate Past President), David Brown, Anthony Coupe, Tony Giannonne, Sean Humphries, Adam Hannon, Eddy Lukac, Leah Salamon, Dino Vyrnios, Vanessa Amodeo, Sally Bolton, Chantelle Fry, Jordan Bails
- The Institute State Chapter Manager is Nicolette DiLernia

## INFORMATION

### *Who is making this submission?*

- The Australian Institute of Architects is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia, representing 12,000 members. The Institute works to improve our built environment by promoting quality, responsible, sustainable design. Through its members, the Institute plays a major role in shaping Australia's future.

The SA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (The Institute) welcomes the release of the 2016 Update of the 30 Year Plan and the opportunity to provide a response.

We acknowledge that the policies set out in Living Adelaide are complemented by the planning system established through the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* which as Minister Rau points out in his Foreward aims to deliver “faster and more consistent planning assessment processes with a greater emphasis on the importance of good design”

We agree that Architects and other built environment design professionals (Landscape Architects and Urban Designers) should be an integral part of the planning process at the outset. Design professions offer unique expertise in the assimilation of multiple briefing inputs and the generation of lateral and creative solutions.

We have focused on three of the areas of target areas in the update – Design Quality, Smarter Travel and Housing Mix and Affordability. However the themes and proposals that we have made against each of these have applications in the other targets.

Architects are at the coal face of the interpretation and application of planning systems. We implement in built form the policies of the planning system. We can provide constructive feedback to inform the development of effective planning guidelines and controls that support the government’s objectives to improve quality and reduce red tape.

We trust that this submission is of value to DPTI, and we would welcome discussion with you on any of the proposals that we have made.

## **Design Quality**

The principles outlined in the section on Design Quality are sound, however their implementation relies on assessment and review by qualified design professionals, which is currently not always the case.

As urban areas become more compact the increase in density and population will need to be accompanied by minimum quality standards that will underpin the process from design guidelines, through to design review and assessment processes.

Projects should be capable of being reviewed by qualified design professionals as part of the assessment process whether they be individual houses or whole precincts. While the latter is happening more regularly, our members are continually encountering situations where design decisions on residential projects are being made by local government planning staff who do not have the design skills to make the appropriate assessments.

The present Design Quality policy is very much focused on the built form, whether it be individual buildings or the public realm. But good design can influence health, social, environmental and economic outcomes. The linkages between design and these outcomes need to be understood much better and the effectiveness of design decisions measured in order to refine and improve them. This is a significant and undeveloped body of work, but it is possibly the most potent area of influence that good design can have on our society.

It will involve cross departmental discussions and input into the 30 Year Plan, and an evidence base – simply put, the 30 Year Plan should be a document that sets goals for health, social, environmental and economic outcomes in a comprehensive and integrated manner. It is touched on in the review documents, but in our view could be far more sophisticated. It is something that we would like to discuss further with you.

Recommendations:

*Proposal: A Residential Flat Design Guide be developed based on the guide in NSW enabled under their SEPP 65 framework. Compliance should be mandatory for all multi unit residential development.*

*Proposal: All multi unit residential projects undergo design review via qualified design professional panels in parallel to the planning assessment process.*

*Proposal: All government projects (state and local) including infrastructure projects are required to undergo design review via qualified design professional panels*

*Proposal: All documents incorporated into a state-wide menu of planning rules have input and review by qualified design professionals as part of their preparation and maintenance.*

*Proposal: projects that do not fall into a category that triggers a full design review process (eg detached single dwelling housing) are able to be reviewed by qualified design professionals rather than just planning professionals as part of the development assessment process.*

*Proposal: performance targets regarding health, social, environmental and economic outcomes should be incorporated into the plan. We should begin the process of measuring the outcomes of design policy in these areas, and develop an evidence base to inform future decisions. This is a significant body of work, and we would like to discuss this in more detail.*

### **Smarter Travel and Getting Active**

Our transport systems fundamentally influence our experience of our city. They are major interventions in the urban form, and require appropriate, holistic oversight to ensure that they do not diminish the quality of the city.

Mass transit infrastructure must be about people first and foremost – they are in place to move people between destinations. They also act as catalysts for urban development. In our opinion, currently engineering outcomes are prioritized over urban and people focused outcomes.

Policies in the areas around transport nodes need to be carefully structured to ensure that they a) are easy and enjoyable to use and allow seamless modal change, especially for pedestrian, bike and other mass transit users, and b) deliver value from increased intensity of development.

Similarly, major road projects can be detrimental to the urban areas through which they pass, and need to be carefully designed to minimize their impact on communities.

And transport technologies are rapidly changing. Share schemes, autonomous vehicles and providers such as Uber will change traditional models of car ownership, movement and parking infrastructure. For example, if autonomous vehicles reduce car ownership, or cars can park themselves, it will require a fundamental rethink of policies around parking. The plan needs to anticipate this.

Allied to this will be the need to properly test and prototype how the city might be affected. Therefore one of our key recommendations is to build a sophisticated virtual model of the metropolitan area or at least the inner metropolitan area. This model should be capable of built form, density and transport flow modelling to test scenarios.

More people using transport alternatives other than cars will undoubtedly deliver health benefits. This will achieve the goals outlined in the Getting Active focus area. If more people are walking and riding, there will be improvements in ‘lifestyle’ diseases such as obesity and cardio-vascular disease. This will impact our spending on health.

There should be a better interaction between budgeting for urban development and budgeting for health costs, so that reduced health spending can be diverted to improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. This needs to be properly studied and understood though in order to properly account for it.

*Proposal: All transit infrastructure is subject to design review overseen by ODASA to ensure that appropriate urban outcomes are achieved. Design guides should be utilised to make sure that travel infrastructure is people focussed and achieves the right urban outcomes..*

*Proposal: All new investment in major transport interfaces (e.g. rail stations) must be capable of catalysing town centres, utilising sound urban design as a priority over engineering outcomes. Transport that is people and urban development focused will be more attractive, better utilised and better long term value for money.*

*Proposal: Planning policy should be structured so that activity and densities are maximised around transport stops. Minimum density targets should be employed within the 800m transport catchment*

*zones, increasing the closer to the node the land is. This will ensure that nodes are supported by appropriate population and activity densities.*

*Proposal: Cycling and walking should be prioritised as the primary means of getting to the transport nodes/stations/stops within the zones around them, with highest prioritisation closest to the node. Reducing the reliance on private car to access transport is realistic provided distances are not excessive and the route is well considered and is safe and attractive.*

*Proposal: consideration of new transport technologies be introduced into the plan and their development monitored over the next five year review period. Certain areas should be identified to test scenarios for new transit technologies as desktop studies. They should include CBD, inner metro and outer suburban precincts.*

*Proposal: build a virtual model of the city capable of testing and prototyping density and transport impacts*

*Proposal: implement detailed studies of the interaction of reduced car dependence and health during the next five year period of the plan. Incorporate health targets into the 30 Year Plan – these will begin to bring better multi departmental involvement in the development of planning policy.*

### **Housing Mix and Affordability**

Good design is the key to the wider acceptance of a new mix ‘housing types’ by the community. As densities increase, precinct planning, public realm and building design needs to become more sophisticated.

The over reliance on the outer suburban and satellite townships will not serve the State. The real long term cost of urban expansion/sprawl cannot be understated and we agree with this sentiment of the Plan. The full cost to society, including health and social outcomes needs to be better understood.

The idea of the missing ‘middle’ between detached housing and Multi-level apartment building is a good conceptual framework and needs to be implemented with consideration of broader context that looks beyond a lot by lot approach. The relationship of density to other objectives needs to be considered otherwise we risk achieving one aim while compromising another.

We agree that household types that respond to changing demographics and support concepts such as ‘ageing in place’ are worth reviewing. There are also new models of procurement that are beginning to deal with issues of affordability.

We have concerns around the listing of 13 housing choices in the document in that the listing of these specific typologies is that it will inevitably be interpreted as there being only 13 options. As an example, one of our members has recently completed a PhD that illustrates a far greater range of possibilities to deal with the ‘missing middle’.

It would be better if the argument was framed around housing choice and adaptability and these were offered as case studies that should be adapted.

There are also areas in the inner suburbs that have effectively been ‘locked up’ from a more diverse housing stock through policies such as streetscape character zones. These have the effect of preventing more diverse housing in areas close to transport and the city, which runs counter to

some of the plan's targets. Good design can overcome the issues associated with urban infill in these areas.

We also believe that the population targets in the City of Adelaide are not high enough. The city can offer genuine choice of housing mix, and this should be the primary part of greater Adelaide that can deliver on all of the targets on the plan review.

#### **Recommendation:**

*Proposal: A more comprehensive suite of housing types be considered in the plan. These can be developed through a mechanism where designers are engaged to prototype housing designs in various areas. As an example, NSW has just announced a "Missing Middle" design competition to look at this topic.*

*Proposal: future transport infrastructure should be mapped against local government planning policies to ensure that local government areas that support high density are prioritised for the delivery of mass transit infrastructure. The ability to walk and cycle to transport directly affects the overall affordability of households.*

*Proposal: a study be commissioned into the full cost of infill versus suburban development, including health, social and environmental outcomes on a whole of life basis. Results could be used in a variety of ways, from general public information to a star rating type system for the affordability of housing products as they are sold.*

#### **Conclusion**

The six Targets and three Areas of Focus provide a comprehensive coverage of the factors that impact on the physical development of Adelaide. The impact of the 30 Year Plan on the State's economy can be greatly increased if it becomes a document that drives performance in other areas of policy within government.

An example of this is to plan our city to reduce the cost of delivering health care through the prevention of lifestyle based disease. If the 30 Year Plan were linked to health policy outcomes, infrastructure such as cycling networks and walkable neighbourhoods would become an economic imperative and priority.

To our knowledge there are not many examples around the world of this type of deep policy interrelationship. However, South Australia is well known for its excellent planning policy framework. We have the potential to take this to the next level and become a world leader in this area. It is a discussion that we would like to explore further with the State Government.

Finally, we should be measuring the effectiveness of the policy at each five year review. Targets are included in the document but can be much more focused toward creating a comprehensive evidence base for design and planning decisions. Development of clear criteria for measuring the outcomes of the 30 Year Plan is recommended.