

15 April 2020



**Australian Institute of Architects**

The Hon Dominic Perrottet MP  
Treasurer

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP  
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

The Hon. Matt Kean MP  
Minister for Energy and the Environment

The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP  
Minister for Better Regulation

*Via email*

Dear Ministers

### **Planning stimulus and measures for evaluating public benefit**

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) greatly appreciates the opportunity to participate in weekly industry meetings convened by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to address issues relating to COVID-19. These are challenging times and we are eager to assist wherever we can.

In response to DPIE's call for industry representatives to define measures of Public Benefit to inform criteria against which projects are evaluated for prioritisation, we suggest the following:

#### **1 Community**

- a. Resilience: Rebuild bushfire affected areas with a strong focus on environmental initiatives that promote resilience.
- b. Public domain: Create a fast-track 'Place Based' taskforce, as per our letter 2 April 2020 to improve state and local public domain. 'Precincts' and the built environment need to contribute to 'place.' Green space, parks and significant public space are needed now more than ever as community members seek outdoor environments to exercise healthily.
  - Identify potential public space, greenspace and parks adjacent to metro / roads / rail nodes – these can be quickly repurposed for public benefit.
  - The taskforce should include architects, landscape architects, planners and urban designers. It needs local strategies for places through co-design processes that involve local communities. Once set up, the taskforce can continue to engage with the LGA, reporting directly to the general manager and engaging directly with elected members to educate them in design and assisting in the formulation of briefs etc.
- c. Urban quality: Promote urban quality, which arises from the physical structure of the city as well as its rules (formal and tacit) and from understanding the city as a system that has both material and immaterial systems. Design excellence is founded on urban quality.
  - In addition to relevant state bodies, all local governments should have access standing panels with architecture, urban design and landscape expertise reporting directly to the CEO/GM and

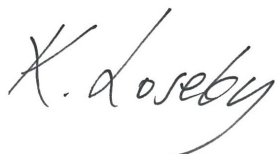
engaging directly with elected members to educate them about design and assist in the formulation of briefs etc.

- 2 Social
  - a. Social and affordable housing: Boost the supply of housing as per our joint letter of 7 April 2020 (attached).
  - b. Place-making in community spaces: Promote social and community wellbeing through development of spaces and places that anticipate and meet the needs of local communities.
- 3 Environmental / eco-technological / economic improvements
  - a. Green stimulus: Utilise the practical plan for emissions reductions detailed in the *Every Building Counts* initiative by the Green Building Council of Australia, Property Council of Australia and ASBEC (refer the list of 27 current membership organisations, and 21 Observer members, including the DPIE, listed at the end of the attached). We recommend NET ZERO targets of 2030 are used, instead of 2050. Refer to attachment.
  - b. Technological innovations: Propel Australia's green credentials by promoting development and implementation of eco-technologies.
  - c. Leverage renewables potential: Embrace low carbon opportunities as per Ross Garnaut's recommendations in *Super Power: Australia's Low Carbon Opportunity*;
  - d. Create an electric car, hydrogen, distributed energy and energy storage infrastructure.
  - e. Regenerative economy: Mandate that new development proposals and competitions advance the regenerative economy.
  - f. Higher Greenstar and NABERS requirements to accompany up-zoning. We understand many local councils are advocating higher BASIX and NABERS targets and that significantly higher targets are technically and financially feasible.

These measures are aligned with the strategies and actions in the Greater Sydney Regional Plan and District Plans related to carbon, water, waste and resilience, especially with regard to the establishment of low-carbon precincts in planned precincts, growth areas, collaboration areas and State significant precincts. We understand that many local councils are keen to establish such precincts.

Finally, we note that at this pivotal point we have an opportunity to deliver near-, mid- and long-term quality outcomes to the community of NSW if we adopt a lens that effectively filters development and investment. The Institute considers a framework such as [Doughnut Economics](#) – which the [City of Amsterdam has embraced to rebuild the post-COVID-19 economy](#) – as an appropriate lens for the NSW context.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss further this letter or how the Institute can offer assistance at this challenging but opportunity-rich time.



Kathlyn Loseby FRAIA  
**NSW CHAPTER PRESIDENT**  
**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

cc: Mr Marcus Ray, Group Deputy Secretary Planning and Assessment, DPIE  
Ms Alex O'Mara, Deputy Secretary Place Design and Public Spaces, DPIE  
Dr Sarah Hill, Deputy Secretary Strategic Directions and Integration, CEO Greater Sydney Commission